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THE ENGLISH PRIVATE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Education
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
for the Degree of Master of Education

Johannesburg 1980

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		PAGE
	Abstract	i
	Preface	ii
1.	Introduction:	
	Very English in Character	1
2.	Some Theoretical Considerations	
	Advantaged Education	10
	Class-based Education	11
	Elitism and Education	20
	Social Mobility through Education ...	32
	The White South African Elites ...	35
	Some Theological Considerations ...	40
3.	Development of the English Public School System:	
	i Origins	
	Background	52
	The Mother of Public Schools	55
	Prototype of the Upper-class Boarding School	57
	A Learning Community:	
	Architecture and the Public School ...	60
	Boy-government	61
	The Position of Girls	63
	The Church and the Schools	63
	Differentiation from the Grammar Schools	66
4.	Development of the English Public School System:	
	ii The Victorian Public School	
	Background	72
	Towards Reform	75
	Reform from Within	78
	Thomas Arnold of Rugby	79
	The Arnoldian Missionaries	83

The Commissions: i) Clarendon 86
ii) Taunton 89
The Headmasters' Conference 93
The Public School Code 96
Girls' Public Schools 102
The 'English Tradition' in Education ... 105
The Formal Structure 107
The Inner Reality 108

5. Beginnings of the South African Private School System
i The Cape: British Pluck for Ever
Background 1652-1806 117
The Cape Under British Rule 118
English private education at the Cape ... 119
British Settlers 120
The South African College 126
A Native Education 128
Bishop Robert Grey:
St George's, Bishops, St Cyprian's ... 129
The Eastern Province:
St Andrew's, DSG 136
A note on the State Schools 141
An encapsulated society 142

6. Beginnings of the South African Private School System
ii Natal: A Colonial Mentality
Background 1843-1900 148
Early Schools 149
The first boarding schools 153
Rugby-on-the-Veld 155
Michaelhouse 166
The Prep. Schools 170
Conclusion 173

7. Beginnings of the South African Private School System
iii The Transvaal: Boer and Brit

Background 182
Pretoria Beginnings 187
Witwatersrand 188
Effects of the Anglo-Boer War 192
The Reconstruction Period 193
The Saving of St John's 195
The Parktown Culture 197
The Council of Education, Witwatersrand 200
Conclusion 204

8. Consolidation and Expansion, 1910-1980: 'The Essential Heritage'
The English Tradition Continued 209
The Outside World 212
Afrikaners 217
Black South Africans 220
The Inner World 222
Creating a Mythology 224
Tone 226
Getting the Right Head 228
Assistant Teachers 236
Fluctuating Fortunes 238
A Matter of Finance 239
A Question of Identity:
i) Governors 244
ii) Old Boys 245
iii) Private School Incest 247
iv) The essential heritage 249

9. Socio-Political Factors: 'Afrikanerisation' and 'Integration'
The Threat of 'Afrikanerisation' ... 258
The Question of Admitting Blacks ... 268
Conclusion 285

10. Evolution of a System
Background 292
The Archipelago 294
The HMC 296

The Standing Committee of Associated Church Schools 320
The Interim Period 327
The Association of Private Schools ... 331
The Industrial Fund 337
The British Connection 341

11. Conclusion 359

Appendices:

1. Diagrammatic Representation of the South African English Private School System ... 367
2. List of Members of the Association of Private Schools, 1979 367
3. List of Members of the Conference of Headmasters and Headmistresses, 1978 ... 370

Bibiography:

1. General Works 372
2. Individual Schools 379
3. Autobiographical and Biographical Works 380
4 Documents etc. 382

D E C L A R A T I O N

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

J.R. Randall

First day of December 1980

A B S T R A C T

In attempting an historical overview of the 'English' private school system in South Africa (ie those schools associated with the HMC), this study deals with: i) its British public school origins; ii) the beginnings of private schools in this country; iii) the evolution of a system in the face of political threat; and iv) a number of theoretical issues underlying the concept of independent schooling. It also attends briefly to several factors in the South African political economy which have a bearing on the private school system.

The main source for the early history was secondary work published in Britain and South Africa, autobiographical and biographical work, and documents pertaining to individual schools. For the more recent period a study was made of the relevant primary documentation of the major bodies in the South African private school system, as well as other relevant bodies like diocesan synods.

A major conclusion of the study is that the private school system (with the help of the private economic sector) has safely withstood the threat of Afrikanerisation, but that it now faces the challenge of black-white 'integration', and that its future inevitably depends on the type of political dispensation that will emerge in South Africa.

PREFACE

My interest in the subject of this study arises from a number of factors, including a general interest in the position of the English-speaking white community in South Africa, of which I am a member, and a specific interest in the way in which its Establishment functions.

I myself attended a South African private boarding school and was unable to resolve my conflicting attitudes towards such an education. The conflict is perhaps illustrated by the fact that I chose to send my own children to private prep. schools (on educational grounds) and to state high schools (on socio-political grounds, and, of course, financial grounds). The choice of subject for this study thus probably arises at least in part from an unresolved tension about the justification for private school education in the South African context.

The study itself has been subject to a number of externally imposed constraints. In October 1977 the Minister of Justice served restriction notices (a banning order) on me for the following five years. These prohibited me, inter alia, from entering the premises of any educational institution, from attending any gathering, and from leaving the Johannesburg Magisterial district. The limitations these prohibitions have placed on my ability fully to undertake this study will be obvious.

Other limitations arise of course from my own inadequacies. I would have liked to explore more fully the inner life of the schools themselves, but was daunted by the size of the subject which had already reached inordinate lengths. Likewise I wish I was better able to indicate the relative importance of my topic in the wider South African political context and to develop a theoretical framework of the political economy within which to locate the South African private school system.

In the process of my research I was struck repeatedly by the fact that very few of those involved in the South African private school system, including many of its passionate defenders, had any coherent grasp of the history of that system, and of the way in which it originated in the British public school system, particularly as this reached its full flowering in the late Victorian age. It thus seems necessary to provide at least a general historical overview from the medieval beginnings of the parent system, despite the existence of a large number of excellent British studies of the public schools. The middle section deals with the South African schools, both individually and collectively, tracing their history from Victorian times to the present. This draws mainly on the published histories of the schools themselves, and on such other sources as were available, such as centenary publications and school magazines.

The final section, identifying the processes by which the schools came together to form a system, and the way in which the system operates, represents the only significant area of original research undertaken. In this I was fortunate in gaining access to previously unpublished documents, particularly the records of the Headmasters' Conference, the Standing Committee of Associated Church Schools, the Association of Private Schools and the South African Industrial Fund. The information obtained will, I hope, provide considerable insight not only into the operation of the South African English private school system, but also into its relationships with the English Establishment in this country, particularly its relationship with private enterprise and the role of capital in helping to perpetuate an English elite. I must make it clear that the HMC and the Association of Private Schools, through their joint secretary, were unwilling to give me access to their documents without the right to veto any part of this text which 'derived' from either of these bodies. I was not prepared to accept this and consequently had to rely on my own resources in obtaining

their documents.

My sources, both primary and secondary, are acknowledged in the footnotes and in the bibliography. In addition, I am greatly indebted to a large number of people who have given me assistance, advice and encouragement. In the first place my thanks are due to my supervisors, Prof W.D. Hammond-Tooke and Mr Pete Kallaway, of the University of the Witwatersrand, for their advice and friendly criticism. My colleagues in the Department of Education in that University have also given me much invaluable help, in particular Dr P.H. Butterfield, Mr Paul Beard, Mrs Mary Crewe and Mrs Dawn Snell, while my Head of Department, Prof D.R. White, has been unfailingly supportive and sympathetic.

While it may be invidious to single out some individuals from the scores of teachers, principals, parents and past pupils who have given me help, I feel it is only right to record my particular indebtedness to Mr Michael Corke; the late Mr Alan Cheales; Mrs Isobel Nicolson; Mr & Mrs John Patchitt; Mr Patrick Cullinan; Mr Peter Wilhelm; Mr John Kane-Berman; Mr Jonathan Paton; Mrs Sheena Duncan; Mr Eric Mafuna; Mr David Brindley; Mr Mike Kirkwood; Mrs Jill Martin; Prof M. Savage; Prof D. Welsh; Prof F. Wilson; Prof M. Ashley; Brother Jude; Mr A. Smurthwaite; Dr M. Rice; Prof N.D. Atkinson; Dr A.P. Hunter; the Rev. Arnold Hirst; Mr Grant Nupen; the Rev. I. Shapiro; Mr Neville Nuttall. All these people offered me insights and information which helped enrich my study. None can, of course, be held responsible for any errors of fact or interpretation which may be present, nor were any of those named responsible for giving me access to the documents used in the final section of this work.

Lastly, and by no means least, I acknowledge with grateful thanks the support and interest of my wife and the patience, cheerfulness and immense hard work of

Mrs Catherine Watson, who had the unenviable task of typing successive drafts of the text.

P.R. Randall
Johannesburg
October 1980

Chapter 1: Very English in Character ...

> 'If he'll only turn out a brave, truth-telling Englishman, and a gentleman, and a Christian, that's all I want'.
>
> Tom Brown's Schooldays (1857)

> '... Our Founders ... had a vision of a school which would ... turn out Christian gentlemen'.
>
> St Stithian's College Magazine Johannesburg (1956).

Private school education is a small but significant part of the South African education system. This system is characterised by its division into racially segregated sectors in terms of government policy. While the great majority of white children (about 900 000) attend state schools, the Catholic private schools educate about 30 000 and the Protestant schools (both denominational and non-denominational) another 17 000. A small number of black children have been admitted to 'white' private schools, particularly Catholic, since the late 1970's.

The Protestant private schools, which are dominated by the Anglican and quasi-Anglican foundations, and some of those run by private enterprise - now a dwindling minority - most closely resemble the public (i.e. independent) schools of Britain, and have often been founded in conscious imitation of them. This study will focus on this group of schools - between 50 and 60 in number - and in the process will discuss the English public school tradition in South Africa.

The public school is

> very English in character and development. It is difficult to define ... and it is the result of a long evolutionary development ... The public schools are independent and charge, for the most part, high fees: they are thus exclusive and selective.[1]

The 'very English' way in which exclusive, private schools became known as 'public' schools will be described in Chapter 3.

Wherever middle and upper-middle class English people have established themselves in substantial numbers they have carried with them the loosely defined 'public school code', which, as we shall see, became in Victorian times the most important influence in English school education, and it was inevitable that this code would play an important part in the areas colonised by English people:

> The traditional model that young people in independent schools were expected to emulate was the WASP gentleman: the versatile, clean-cut, well-mannered, prudent man of affairs, who, favoured by the circumstances of his birth, plans his life and invests his time and money carefully with the goal of becoming rich, respected, and influential - a pillar of society. It was the idea of the ruling class that set the tone and standard of success in American politics, business and industry, society, education, and the professions from colonial times until well into the twentieth century. [2]

Along with this model went a somewhat vague conception of an 'English tradition' in education, and a vision of Englishness compounded of playing the game, midnight feasts in dormitories, Greyfriars, Billy Bunter, and the sporting life of the English landed gentry. It is no surprising that many private schools in the English-speaking world are set in rolling acres, in country-house type buildings.

In the event many very fine private institutions, with excellent facilities and teaching, have been created throughout the English-speaking world. They may be regarded on the one hand as memorials to the initiative and vision of their founders or, on the other, as embodiments of class privilege. In the course of time these institutions have formed relatively closed private systems, 'running parallel with the national system but having few points of contact

with it'.[3] Also in the course of time, through the operation of what Gathorne-Hardy[4] calls 'the public school psycho-economic law' whereby 'fees were continually raised and most poor pupils were gradually squeezed out', these systems became increasingly elitist and exclusivist, serving the perceived socialisation needs of the upper and upper-middle classes, as well as the need to provide an avenue for social mobility upwards into these classes for a small number of acceptable candidates from the lower classes.

The existence of a special educational sub-sector serving the needs of a privileged minority - the figure in the English-speaking countries seems to be between five and ten percent[5] - inevitably raises profound political and educational issues and has given rise to a vigorous debate on private school education, particularly in Britain, where significant spokesmen in both the political and educational fields have pressed for the abolition of independent, fee-paying schools, while others have argued for their retention on the grounds of the right of parental choice and the claimed academic superiority of good independent schools compared to state schools.

In South Africa the debate must be seen in the context of a developing country marked by wide socio-economic cleavages and disparities along the lines of race, where private school education is essentially the preserve of a numerically tiny but culturally and economically powerful minority within the ruling white minority. The debate cannot therefore be confined to purely educational issues but must ultimately be seen in ideological terms, and in terms of one's perceptions of the place of education in the political economy.[6]

An attempt to explore the debate on private school education, with particular reference to South Africa, will be made in the final chapter of this study.

Before that can be usefully attempted, however, it will be necessary to place the South African English private school system in an historical context, briefly tracing its roots in medieval English choir and grammar schools and, in particular, in the public schools of Victorian and Edwardian England, which provide the formative models for our own private schools. 'I would go further', comments Honey, 'and say that in some notable respects, South African high schools are stuck fast in the 19th century model of the English public school, and have, in fact, stronger links with Tom Brown than have some of their modern British counterparts' [7] (an assertion supported to some extent by the quotations at the beginning of this chapter). Honey sees the whole secondary education system in South Africa as being influenced by the Victorian public school model, and in later chapters of this study illustrations will be given of the extent to which the English public school tradition has permeated the state sector in this country.

But the primary focus will remain that select band of about 50 schools that most closely resemble the English public school model, and which through their membership of the Conference of Headmasters and Headmistresses and the Association of Private Schools form something of a collective closed community, jealous of their role in preserving a loosely defined 'English tradition of education', surviving often shaky foundations and financial insecurity in the nineteenth century, threatened in the twentieth century on the one hand by the forces of an agressive Afrikaner nationalism and on the other by the growing consciousness of the black majority, increasingly buttressed by the industrial and commercial power of the white, English-speaking community, and retaining close links with their British counterparts (closer, in fact, than their links with other sectors of the South African education system).

The attempt to examine these schools as 'a collective closed community, looking into their institutions, their history, their myth as opposed to (and as entwined with)

their reality, their place in and relation to our society',[8] will inevitably lead us to penetrate some way into the foundations of the English Establishment[9] in South Africa. It will also be necessary to look, even if cursorily, at some of the theological implications of the fact that all the schools which form the subject of this study are avowedly Christian. Many of the most important, in fact, are denominational foundations, especially of the Anglican Church, whilst most of the remainder have close links with particular denominations.

Before embarking on an historical analysis and an attempt to place the South African English private school system - understood as the 'WASP' schools as distinct from the Roman Catholic private schools and those maintained by the Jewish and German communities[10] - in a contemporary sociological setting, it may help to clarify many of the issues that will be raised and provide a framework for the subsequent discussion, by briefly exploring such theoretical questions as class-based education and elitism in education. To put it at its crudest, defenders of elitism are likely to favour the existence of a privileged form of private education for an already advantaged minority; proponents of egalitarianism are likely to favour its abolition. It is accepted, of course, that the issue is seldom debated in such simple terms. 'Elitism' is often avoided as perjorative (although, as we shall see in the next chapter, as sophisticated a spokesman as Harry Oppenheimer is not afraid to use it), and an elaborate network of justifications may well be employed in its place, particular recourse being had to the arguments of meritocracy. The opponents of private education often use robust language: Tawney, for example, attacks it not only on th[illegible]nds of 'a special system reserved for children whose p[illegible]nts have larger bank balances than their neighbours', but also because it

> is at once an educational monstrosity and a grave national misfortune. It is educationally vicious, since to mix with companions from homes of different types is an important part of the

> education of the young. It is socially disastrous for it does more than any other single cause, except capitalism itself, to perpetuate the division of the nation into classes. [11]

In the end of course, one's attitude to this question is also coloured by one's understanding of the function of education in a modern society. The view expressed by Halsey is a pointer to the attitudes underlying this present study: 'Education in modern societies has more to do with changing knowledge than with conserving it, and more to do with diffusing culture to wider social circles, or from one society to another than with preserving and transmitting the culture of a particular group'. In a different study, Halsey et al make the point that, in Britain, the state system has played a role in the dissemination of cultural capital, while 'only the independent HMC schools could really be said to maintain a "cycle of privilege" in which cultural capital is reproduced among those from educated homes' [12]. In general terms, much the same can probably be said of South Africa.

Another aspect of the matter is provided by the close connection between the private enterprise system and the private schools. This is clearly the case in Britain [13], and will also be demonstrated in the South African context in subsequent chapters. While it is beyond the scope of this study to attempt systematically to locate the English private school system within the South African political economy, there is an over-riding recognition that it represents one manifestation of the capitalist division of labour, as well as the reproduction of cultural capital whereby the English elites are helped to retain their position.[14] Some of their implications of this will be considered in the final chapter.

Footnotes:

1. T.L. Jarman: Landmarks in the History of Education: English Education as part of the European Tradition, John Murray, London, 1963, p.227.
2. O.F. Kraushaar: American non-public Schools - Patterns of Diversity, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1972, pp. 180 - 1. 'WASP', of course, stands for white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant.
3. H.C. Barnard: A Short History of English Education, University of London Press, 1947, p. 282.
4. Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy: The Public School Phenomenon, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979, p. 318.
5. The figure seems remarkedly consistent. For Britain, see, for example, Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p. 414; for South Africa, C.M. Stimie: The Education of Whites in the Republic of South Africa, Human Sciences Research Council, Report No. IN-24, Pretoria, 1975, p. 34; and Edmund King: Society, Schools and Progress in the USA., Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1965, p. 64; for Australia, Information Sheet 12, Association of Private Schools, Johannesburg, 2/11/79; for New Zealand, J.C. Dakin: Education in New Zealand, David and Charles, Newton Abbot, 1973, p. 81.
6. cf: 'South Africa's social statistics place us very clearly in the third world. It is possible to develop a very sophisticated school system for a privileged group in society, and at the same time to neglect the needs of the majority. A system doing that would retard the overall development of society'. A.P. Hunter: 'Education Policy Issues in South Africa', Conference on Education and the Future of South Africa, Centre for Continuing Education, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, July 1979, p. 3 - 4.
7. J.R. de S. Honey: Tom Brown in South Africa, inaugural lecture delivered at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1972, p. 8.

8. The intentions behind a collection of essays introduced by George MacDonald Fraser: The World of the Public School, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1977, p. 7. This quotation serves as a useful summary of some of the intentions behind the present study.

9. 'Establishment' is used in the sense it is generally understood by political sociologists. See, for example, Geraint Parry: Political Elites, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1969, pp. 86 - 89, who concludes that the term is generally understood to suggest a network of contacts between certain influential groups and institutions. These contacts are frequently informal in nature and 'stem primarily from family connections ... or a shared educational background at public school or at Oxford or Cambridge' (p. 89). Informal contact through club membership and the 'social round of dinners and parties' is complemented more formally in business meetings and official events. This 'very English' series of interlocking elites is clearly very different from that 'characteristic feature of a totalitarian society', a unified elite (cf. Raymond Aron: British Journal of Sociology, March 1950, p. 10).

10. There are several reasons for limiting the parameters of this study in this way. The WASP schools form a distinctive entity within the total educational system that has not previously been examined in its own right. They also represent perhaps the most important educational experience of the English-speaking elites in South Africa. In addition, this group of schools has certain important characteristics not shared by other groups in the private education sector. The Catholic schools are dealt with in several accounts of individual orders and by A. G. Smurthwaite: 'Some Socio-Political Factors in the Private Education of English-speaking Whites in South Africa', M.Ed. dissertation, Rhodes University (in progress), while the Jewish schools are studied by I.B. Kahanovitz: 'An Investigation into the position of the Jewish

Private School within the South African Educational System', M.Ed. dissertation. University of South Africa (in progress).

11. R.H. Tawney: Equality, Unwin (4th ed.), 1964, p. 145.

12. A.H. Halsey et al: Education, Economy and Society - a reader in the Sociology of Education, Free Press, New York, 1961, p. 3; and A. H. Halsey, A. F. Heath, J.M. Ridge: Origins and Destinations - Family, Class and Education in Modern Britain, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1980, p. 199.

13. cf. Halsey, Heath and Ridge, op. cit., p. 36.

14. A radical perspective on the role of schooling in general in the maintenance of the capitalist economic system is provided by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis: Schooling in Capitalist America, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1976. For the question of the reproduction of cultural capital, see Halsey, Heath and Ridge, op. cit., Chapter 5.

Chapter 2: Some Theoretical Considerations

Advantaged Education

Complex issues are raised by the relationship between social and economic privilege, political power and class on the one hand, and the provision of educational facilities on the other. It may help to focus some of the primarily educational issues by referring briefly to the findings of the United States Commission on Civil Rights, as contained in its 1977 Statement on Metropolitan School Desegregation.[1] The Commission strongly endorsed the view that 'schools consisting of advantaged students provide the most desirable learning environment' and 'that the socio-economic character of the student body is the most important school factor influencing educational outcome'. It supported the view that children from disadvantaged backgrounds tend to do best in schools with a majority of advantaged students, and that advantaged students do not suffer from the presence of lower income children in the classroom. Since the Commission saw black Americans as the main victims of disadvantage it advocated desegregation on a metropolitan scale as being educationally desirable, when taking the needs of the whole society into account.

Similar thinking is, of course, behind the movement away from streaming in British schools and towards the creation of comprehensive schools to replace the separate (and socially divisive) grammar, technical and secondary modern schools. It is also one of the important arguments used by those who wish to abolish the public schools, which they see as 'islands of privilege', 'bastions of conservatism', and relics of a bygone age, working against the building up of social cohesion in a class-divided society such as Britain still is. (These arguments will be explored more fully later).

Class-based Education

It has already been suggested that private schools are essentially a phenomenon of the upper and upper-middle classes and that they provide a privileged form of education for a minority.

It is not surprising therefore that societies premised on classlessness are opposed to private education. The only type allowed in the USSR are 'private' kindergartens, essentially child care centres for the convenience of working parents, supported by the State and by collective farms, factories or commercial estates. [2]

There is more involved, of course, in the desire of totalitarian regimes to control all forms of education than a simple wish to end class differentiation and to advance social equality. A totalitarian approach to education implies centralised planning, regarding education as an integral part of national planning and assigning it a high priority in view of its value as an organised social force harnessed to the furtherance of national goals. [3] In this sense the steady movement by Afrikaner Nationalism after 1948 to acquire control of all sectors of education in South Africa can be seen as the outcome of a totalitarian approach which seeks to harness education to its goals. This encroachment posed a grave threat to the very existence of the South African private school system in the decade after 1945; it will be discussed in some detail later.

Against a totalitarian approach which abhors pockets of private (and possibly non-conforming) education, the British laissez faire approach may indeed seem attractive. But a look below the surface reveals that this approach is largely the result of an historical process in which the rich successively secured the best educational opportunities for themselves while neglecting the educational needs of the mass of people (in this process the rich, in fact, often appropriated for their own

purposes the very institutions which had been intended for the poor, a point which will be illustrated when we deal with the rise of the 'great' public schools in the 18th Century). The disarming appearance of the English laissez faire approach to education cannot be allowed to hide the fact that it has been an important factor in the stratification of English society with its class divisions and potential for social conflict (features which are by no means absent to-day). And it clearly has implications for the private school system in South Africa, modelled as this is on the English independent school system and continually re-invigorated as it is from that source, and existing in a society marked by gross disparities along the line where class and race cleavages converge.

Brubacher [4] has described how, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the dominant English tradition favoured private education. The family (at least the wealthier family) was the agency to decide whether to educate its children at home or away from home at a private school. With the transition from mercantilism to liberalism in the English political economy the idea of private education free from government interference received further support on the grounds of political theory. The English tradition of private education appeared just and reasonable: the initiative in providing education, like that in making a commercial contract, should wait for the stimulus of self-interest. Both were the subjects of freee enterprise.

> That many lower class people were too poor or too ignorant to take the initiative in helping themselves did not disturb the English middle and upper classes. Consequently, the only education from which the lower classes benefited during this period was what private philanthropy - motivated by self- interest, of course - found to its advantage to provide for them. [5]

Adherence to laissez faire, coupled with denominational jealousies and anxieties, effectively prevented a public

education act in England until 183. and even then it favoured public subsidisation of existing private educational agencies. It was only in 1870 that the Forster Act provided a stable basis for a system of schools supported by the state and maintained by the local authorities. (The extension of schooling in the middle years of the 19th century must also, of course, be viewed against the need for literate manpower brought about by the maturation of the Industrial Revolution). Thereafter state and private schools co-existed; by the end of the century the great public school represented the one pole of a polarised system, and the local elementary school the other.

In Western Europe the movement towards a national system was far earlier and more rapid. The Prussian legal code of 1794, for example, promulgated that 'all schools and universities are state institutions, charged with the instruction of youth... Such institutions may be founded only with the knowledge and consent of the state'.[6] It is generally accepted that Prussia and Germany in general during the nineteenth century assumed undisputed leadership in the excellence of their state school systems. Even the British colonies of the Cape and Natal were in some respects in advance of British developments in the provision of educational facilities for the mass of their population - at least in so far as their white populations were concerned. In the Cape Colony - the first British colony to have a state-maintained school system[7] - a lengthy process of development culminated by 1841 in 'a strong central educational authority, with greatly increased capability for dealing with the problems of local disinterest (sic)'.[8]

The tardiness of the British developments can largely be explained by deeply entrenched class divisions. 'Indeed, the middle class raised up by the Industrial Revolution

feared the paralysis of individual enterprise, to say nothing of the destruction of the incentive to self-help, if the government were to provide schools'.[9] The prominence of private initiative was also a check on the growth and elaboration of the idea of a national, state-supported education system in America. Many Americans at the end of the eighteenth century argued that such a system was 'socialist' and that a tax for schools was an unwarranted interference with the individual's right to dispose of his property as he wished, while state schools would be unfair competition for those whose 'capital and forethought' had gone to build up private institutions.[10]

Set against these arguments were the views of those who held that the democratic state had a duty to provide education for all children, irrespective of their parents' 'capital and forethought'. It was only after the end of the American Civil War, however, that the idea of free, tax-supported schools was finally implemented.

With the emergence of a new middle class in Britain through the Industrial Revolution, new demands began to be made, not so much for the development of a free national system of schools as for the improvement of the existing private institutions. It is possible to regard the reform of the 'great' public schools that took place in the second quarter of the nineteenth century as actually part of 'an increasing class stratification of schools, which corresponded to changes in the social structure'.[11] Simon makes the point that it is incorrect to regard the Education Act of 1870 as the first effective state intervention in education, since it marked the culmination of a series of measures aimed in the first place at improving the education of the rich.

> It was only after the education of the upper and middle classes had been brought into some kind of order that attention was turned to evolving a system of elementary schools for the working class. [12]

The measures Simon refers to are the re-organisation of Oxford and Cambridge in the 1850's after the Royal Commission ('in opening up the universities in a way conducive to attracting the middle class, the Executive Commissioners effectively closed them to the poor' [13]); the reform of the 'great' public schools - Winchester, Westminister, Eton et al - after the Clarendon Commission of 1864, and the re-organisation of the grammar schools following the Taunton Commission of 1868.

The Education Act of 1870, however, marks a new development away from the situation in which 'for centuries British education was overwhelmingly the privilege of a social elite and had, essentially, the purpose of sustaining the superiority of the elite whereas the great mass of the people remained illiterate'. [14] As suggested earlier, this probably had as much to do with new economic - and imperialist - needs as with any growth of liberalism or social conscience on the part of the ruling class, whose ethos remained predominant.

The Victorian age saw the full flowering of the unique English system of elite education and of the public school mystique. The public schools exerted an overwhelming power on British national life; they 'influenced virtually everything about our country and, through the old Empire and the remaining Commonwealth, a sizable part of the world as well'. [15]

The factors underlying this extraordinary influence will be analysed in the chapter on the English Public School, which, it will be recalled, was the formative

model for the South African English private school. Here, however, we need to note Turner's point that

> the rich are socialised differently from the poor and are thus socialised in a way that reinforces their control... wealthy individuals, full of the self-confidence given them by their social status and playing roles in which they have a wide perspective on the world... are much more able psychologically to participate in politics and, when participating, to manipulate the political institutions to their advantage.[16]

The Victorians made sharp social distinctions, with wealth as one of the major criteria - 'breeding' was another, but in time wealth could buy even breeding. The new Victorian public schools took care to say clearly for whom they were intended. A stock phrase in their prospectuses was that they provided 'a thoroughly good and liberal education for the sons of gentlemen'.[17] It is no surprise therefore to find the same sentiments, even the same words, occurring with regard to South African private schools in the nineteenth century. St Cyprian's School, Cape Town, advertised itself in 1891 as offering 'a thoroughly good education at moderate terms to the daughters of clergy, gentry and professional men', while the Durban Young Ladies' Evangelical Collegiate Institution (whose name was to become mercifully shortened to Durban Girls' College) sought to bring its pupils up 'in a manner that befits an English gentlewoman'.[18] Even lesser establishments like the Uitenhage Proprietory Grammar School, which was founded in 1864 'by certain gentlemen of influence... desirous to secure for their children a more select school',[19] reflected this influence. The saddest examples of it were probably the little 'schools' run in their Doornfontein living rooms by refined spinster sisters eager to supply the needs of parents anxious that their broods 'should not be exposed to too democratic

a school environment - our companions must be from the same genteel social stratum as ourselves'. [20]

The snobbery apparent in the private schools on occasion aroused public resentment. In 1877 the Natal Government was forced to withdraw its grants from private secondary schools because they were supported by the 'well-to-do-classes'. The state schools themselves did not always escape a kind of madness compounded of snobbery, class pride, arrogance and public school mystique. A.S. Langley, educated at a Victorian English public school and for six years house master at an English grammar school, tried to run Durban High School as a 'super-English-public-school' and hated Roy Campbell

> for the fact that my father had founded the Technical College, a 'soccerite' school, for poor children where they could get educated free... Expelling boys for sodomy, laziness, scruffiness, or imbecility, he would always say in front of the whole school of five hundred: 'The Tech. is the place for swines like you'. [21]

Such attitudes would, of course, never be expressed openly in schools to-day. But the sociologist, Bottomore, reminds us that the fundamental cleavage still exists:

> In Britain... children of the upper-class are educated in the major public schools and at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, whence they proceed into business, politics, the administrative class of the civil service, and the older professions; working-class children are educated in state schools... from which they go... into manual jobs in industry or into minor clerical jobs... Some children in each class may escape their fate, but the proportion who do so is too small to affect the general practice. [22]

If for 'public schools' one substitutes 'private schools' (say, St John's College, Hilton, Bishops or Michaelhouse) and for 'state schools' one has in mind those, say, in Soweto or Gugulethu then it is not too fanciful to see some relevance for South Africa in

Bottomore's words. It is clear that the battle against socio-economic inequalities is being consciously waged in both Britain and the USA and that schools are seen in both countries as being in the foreground of this battle, with a ·ral recognition that elite private institutions play an important part in perpetuating such inequalities. What is far less clear, of course, is what should be done about such schools. Despite considerable political muscle being exercised in Britain for their abolition, the independent schools are now probably in a stronger position than they have been for some decades, at least partly as a result of Labour's policy of creating comprehensive schools to replace separate grammar, technical and secondary modern schools. The 1980 Labour Party Conference voted to abolish private schools and integrate them into the state system: whether it will actually do so when it comes to power remains to be seen. The indications are that the proportion of children attending British private schools has increased substantially in recent years.

Even in America, where 'our class distinctions are more subtle than those of the English', it is facile to believe that the country is 'constantly moving into one big middle class'.[23] There has been a noticeable tendency for ambitious parents to invest in private education for their children: in the 1960's non-public school enrolment rose from 10 to 15 per cent of the total national figure.[24] Margaret Mead's suggestive statement about American private schools, that they contain 'all of America's ambivalence about England, about tradition, about class',[25] can be applied equally to other post-colonial societies like South Africa, Canada and Australia.

It is this ambivalence which partly explains the sacrifices that poorer parents sometimes make to send their children to private schools, both here and in

other countries. Private schools in such cases are not only seen as providing a higher quality of education than that available in state schools, but also as providing the necessary social qualifications for entry into a higher social stratum, thus as avenues of upward social mobility into the middle classes, a concept that will be dealt with in a later section of this chapter.

In South Africa, some private school principals are quite frank about this, particularly with regard to what they see as the need to assist in the creation of a black middle class. The clearest and most vigorous enunciation of this purpose has been given by Michael Corke, headmaster of St Barnabas College, a predominantly 'coloured' Anglican private school:

> Of all our institutions, the private schools are best placed to respond positively to the forces shaping the development of the middle class. Like their English counterparts, they have a history of service to the nation, and many have done pioneering work in the field of secondary education; most are Church foundations able to use the authority of the Church to challenge segregation; they serve people who have nothing to fear from an enriched middle class; they are repositories of values and a tradition which is readily understood by the Black Community; and they are geared to developing leaders in business and the professions. [26]

In the fog of nostalgic and platitudinous verbiage so often written about Church and other private schools, this statement is indeed refreshingly honest and direct. It clearly recognises the middle class nature of private school education. It focuses attention on the debate about the role of Church schools in the struggle for racial equality in South Africa. Corke's view is straightforward: these schools should aid in the development of a black middle class, specifically educated for leadership roles. It is, of course, possible to see parallels here with the educational reforms carried out in Britain, at least partly in

response to a new economic reality, during the 19th century (see also the Conclusion to Chapter 9). The opposing view, expressed, for example, by several black delegates to the South African Council of Churches' consultation on racism in February 1980, is that Church schools are 'elitist and racist' and that they admit a few privileged black children from 'bourgeois homes' while the schools themselves remain wholly under white control.[27]

The debate is thus about tokenism; but more importantly it is about the very nature of elite education. In essence the question is whether the type of education espoused by Corke is in the best interest of the black community or whether it is likely to result in a small, alienated and co-opted black minority. It is thus necessary to look briefly at the issue of elitism and education as part of this theoretical framework.

Elitism and Education

Private schools draw the bulk of their pupils from a narrow segment of the social class distribution. In his survey of 42 independent American schools ('a good cross-section of the more prestigious schools'), Baird found that the average family income in 1976 was $40 000 (only two percent of American families earned that much), while eighty percent of the fathers were university graduates. The overwhelming majority of the pupils (88%) themselves aimed to graduate, and their chances were obviously very good, since the schools were highly selective, subjecting their prospective entrants to a barrage of tests and interviews.[28]

The extensive literature on the British public schools reveals a similar picture. These schools give a very good academic education, which

> still leads to higher-paid jobs,
> sometimes to positions of power, always
> to more comfortable and pleasanter jobs.
> The ability to get this education depends
> largely on class and entirely on money,
> and is for this reason self-perpetuating. [29]

In South Africa the good private secondary schools also draw their pupils from a narrow sector: they are selective, making use of entrance examinations, and they are expensive, with fees, including boarding, around R4 000 per year, so that only the well-to-do can afford them. The Church schools in particular experience anxiety about this, and express the desire not to become merely havens for the rich. But the fact remains that no significant solution has been found to this problem. Baird says correctly that to show that wealthy and powerful families send their children to private schools is not enough in itself to prove that the purpose of these schools is to help an elite perpetuate itself. [30] It may not be their purpose, but it seems an inevitable outcome, despite such efforts as the schools themselves may make. In America, some elite schools have actually sought to enlist black and other minority students, mostly on scholarships, but these still form a very small number. Besides the barriers of high fees and rural settings, the schools have 'a strongly upper middle or middle class orientation that may be difficult for many blacks to accept'. [31] (Baird does not attempt to explain this rather cryptic statement).

In Britain, where public schools once deliberately preserved class distinctions, they now attempt, sometimes half-heartedly, sometimes vigorously, to reduce them. The movement really dates from 1919 when the headmasters of Charterhouse, Eton and Marlborough offered to accept a percentage of pupils from state elementary schools if the government would subsidise them. The government refused. Then in 1942 the Fleming Commission recommended that the public school system should gradually be integrated into the

state system, first by taking twenty five per cent of pupils from state schools, and later becoming 'completely accessible to all pupils'. The Headmasters' Conference accepted this, but the means sought to implement it proved unworkable. The government suggested that the Local Education Authorities should find the necessary funds, which they were most reluctant to do. Since then there has been piecemeal progress at some schools but after twenty years 'scarcely enough boys or girls had joined the 200 or so public schools to make a rugger team or fill a dormitory'.[32]

The conclusion seems inevitable: the private schools are willy-nilly, whether they actually like it or not, involved in the perpetuation of an elite. In South Africa the question is, of course, overlaid with the particular problems created by the racial and ethnic heterogeneity of the population. The extent to which South African private schools have served as a mechanism for broadening the base of the English-speaking elite will be explored in a subsequent chapter.

'Early recognition of brillance, the avenue to high salaries and influential positions, and the priceless advantage of having acquaintance with "important" people... It is the private school that most significantly assures him of this entree'.[33] King's words about 'the privileged young American' apply equally in Britain and to a considerable extent in South Africa.

While there are those who condemn this on the grounds that it is undemocratic, there are also influential spokesmen who defend elitism of this sort as the best means of bringing about social progress. Harry Oppenheimer, whose role in support of South African private schools has been very considerable, is one such spokesman:

> ... I strongly hold that progress in human affairs, just as in military affairs, is not generally to be brought about by means of a move forward on a broad front, keeping the pace of advance to what can be managed by the slow and ill-equipped. Progress is nearly always achieved by a breakthrough on a narrow front by a limited number of able, well-equipped men and women who, by their success, create the opportunities for advancement by the masses who follow after. It is along these lines, so it seems to me, that university autonomy and the private school system can best be justified... the achievements of a talented and - let us face it - lucky few can have major effects both psychological and practical in facilitating the subsequent progress of others on an altogether broader front...
>
> ... To reject a policy of elitism in the sense in which I have been describing it is to prefer a policy of equality to a policy of equal opportunity... [34]

One immediately obvious problem when this seductive argument is applied to South African private schools is that it is precisely only the 'lucky few' who can enjoy equal opportunity, and there seems no reason to believe that these few will consciously seek to share their opportunity with others, particularly with others of a different racial or ethnic group, or from a different socio-economic background. On the face of it, elitism in education would seem to be an unlikely way of reducing social inequality and the potential for social conflict, which, presumably, will be seen as desirable goals by professedly Christian schools. These schools themselves frequently describe their aims in terms of producing leaders, even of 'Christian men who will take a lead in our country', [35] or, more prosaically, of providing 'a training to fit them for the professions and for business'. [36] There is often a clear recognition that the schools see themselves as involved in training their pupils for elite roles in society. This was, of course, a distinguishing mark of the English public schools, at least until very recently, with their great

emphasis on producing 'officer material', responsible leaders', and supplying the needs of the civil service in both Britain and its Empire.

The term 'elite' has so far been used without clear definition and we have reached the point where it becomes necessary to examine the concept in some detail. Unlike that characteristic feature of totalitarian societies,a unified elite, [37] western countries are marked by a plurality of elites. With the (historically) recent emergence of elites among its black population, South Africa may be regarded as typical of the western pattern, with the necessary qualifications as a result of its racial structure and the continuing dominance of a powerful political elite identified with one ethnic group.

Summarising the views of 'classical' elitists like Mosca, Pareto and Michels, [38] Parry concludes that the core of the elitist doctrine is that there may exist in any society a minority of the population which takes the major decisions in the society. [39] Because these decisions are of such wide scope, affecting the most general aspects of the society, they are usually regarded as politcial decisions even where the minority taking them are not 'politicians' in the usual sense of being members of a government or a legislative body. This minority gains its dominant position by means beyond ordinary election.

Later writers like Burnham [40] and C. Wright Mills [41] added further dimensions to this concept of elites. Burnham's view - essentially Marxist - is that the basis of any elite's power lies in control over the chief means of production. Mills advances the puralist view that the elite is composed of those who hold the leading positions in the strategic hierarchies: 'if they have many inter-connections and points of

coinciding interest, then their elites tend to form a coherent kind of grouping'.[42] Mills believes it is a liberal myth, in the USA at least, that freedom and democratic values are safeguarded by the existence of a plurality of competing elites. He sees a concentration of elite power, rather than its diffusion. Bottomore's opinion is that the development of industrial societies may properly be depicted as a movement away from a class system to a system of elites,[43] a view formulated, amongst others, by Karl Mannheim.[44] According to this view, labour, for example, can have its own elite, inter-acting with the owners and managers of industry. The term elite is now, in fact, generally applied to functional, mainly occupational, groups which have high status, for whatever reason, in a society.[45] Bottomore points out that among the social groups which have risen to prominence in the tremendous social and political changes of the twentieth century, three elites - the intellectuals, the managers of industry and high government officals (the bureaucrats) - have often been singled out as 'the inheritors of the functions of earlier ruling classes and as vital agents in the creation of new forms of society'.[46]

The independent private schools of Britain and the United States serve the needs of all three elites; those of South Africa, given the virtual exclusion of English-speakers from government, serve the first two. The private schools thus, despite the changing nature of control in society and the greater complexity consequent on the trend away from simple class divisions, still perform some of the historical function that has been theirs, in Britain, for more than two centuries.

The debate in Britain on this issue has inevitably polarised along political lines. On the one hand, the authors of the Black Papers voice the disquiet

felt in conservative quarters at what is seen as a drastic drop in standards in English education consequent on innovations in both policy and practice, and in particular moves by Labour Governments to abolish grammar schools in favour of comprehensives.[47] On the other hand, 'radicals' like Rubinstein and Stoneman[48] see such concern as a manifestation of reactionaries 'who fear too much competition for their children in the fight to remain in the elite'.[49] The only value they attach to the Black Papers is that they 'may well have done us a service in reminding us of the power still possessed by the middle classes to resist erosion of their privileges through educational reform'.[50]

The contributors to Rubinstein and Stoneman's collection ('we want more education for more people, leading to more democracy. We want an education system that is varied and flexible enough to develop fully all the different abilities and talents that children possess and want to use'[51]) vigorously attack 'the elitist education system' represented by the public and grammar schools as the cause of much human waste, both through denial of opportunities to the majority and through the apathy that the system's 'failures' develop towards education and their own potentialities. A constant theme is the class inequality perpetuated by the education system, and the way in which political power and educational provision are inter-related (this point is well illustrated in South Africa, where the unenfranchised blacks receive a per capitum state expenditure on their education that is less than one-tenth of that enjoyed by the enfranchised whites[52]). Inevitably, the most privileged and elitist sector of British education, the public school system, comes under particular attack.

The argument frequently generates more heat than light. The authors of the Black Papers present a

'laughably simple-minded case' in which they argue essentially that 'we should replace the ideologies and simple certainties of today with the ideologies and simple certainties of yesterday'.[53] At the same time, some opponents of the Black Papers themselves indulge in simple-minded and shrill ideological argument: until recently education in Britain was 'hierarchical, elitist, establishmentarian, static, closed, anti-democratic'; even now it is based on an anti-democratic ethic of competition and acquistion which needs to be replaced by one of co-operation and community with a 'multi-directional, multi-dimensional view of human nature'.[54]

The author of these statements, Albert Rowe, a headmaster of a mixed comprehensive, knows better than the working classes that they want: the phenomenon of workers' 'determined rejection of comprehensive schools and support for what they genuinely believe to be "our grammar school" ' he dismisses as unconscious brainwashing (thereby unconsciously contradicting his own statement that they'genuinely believe in them')[55]. This patronising attitude must be seen in the light of Glass's finding that working class parents who wished their sons to go to grammar schools accepted the fact that these sons would move out of the parental class[56] (become 'class traitors' in the jargon of Marxism). Such working class parents, of course, correctly perceive the elite schools as an avenue of upward social mobility within a capitalist system, providing access to middle class jobs. This clearly poses a major problem for would-be educational reformers operating within capitalist structures, a theme beyond the scope of this study, although it has great relevance for South Africa.

The problem is that, for all their fervour and idealism, 'radical' spokesmen do not deal adequately

with issues like parental freedom of choice, or with the question of what actually should be done about the public and other private schools, other than suggesting that they be 'integrated' into the state system. Even if this were done schools like Eton, Harrow and Rugby will probably ride easily at the top of the state system, thereby retaining much of their elite status. The same factors - antiquity, tradition, 'tone', setting, facilities, the pull on good staff - that made them pre-eminent in the private sector are likely to make them pre-eminent also in the state sector. One of the real issues is the need to raise the level of quality of state schools to a position where attendance at them no longer suggests a lack of educational advantage, although one would still be left with the social implications of public school education.

Wilby goes a stage further and suggests that the time and attention given to the traditional academic development of clever children must be reduced and that given to the general development of the mass of children must be increased.[57] He deals with the 'curious notion' that the future is best served by selecting and developing 'our best brains to the fullest possible extent' and points out that international evidence suggests that modern industrial societies depend on a broad spread of educated talent. The United Kingdom's long tradition of elitist education has not fitted it for the modern world in Wilby's view. In comparing this British tradition with the American one, Turner provides a useful framework for assessing the elitist character of an education system.[58] He suggests two 'ideal types' of education system:

i. Contest mobility, in which the elite is open to any person who is successful in a contest which all may enter; the most able are not segregated educationally; and the elite is composed of those who gain goals understood by all.

ii. Sponsored mobility, in which the criteria for elite membership are fully understood only by those who are already members; where the aim is not to create a large well-educated elite but to fill the limited vacancies in the established elite; which involves the selection and segregation of the potential leaders at any age; and in which the inner core of the educational elite will be small.

Parry [59] shows how this second model operates in Britain: only six per cent of the population attend public schools, five per cent attend universities; and concludes that the sponsorship mobility model suggests that entry to the elite is possible only through the elite schools. They provide almost sixty per cent of company directors, over seventy per cent of Conservative MPs, almost half of the 'Great and the Good' who are appointed to Royal Commissions and public inquiries.

But Parry qualifies this by recognising that education has to be seen as only one factor amongst others in elite formation, such as the class structure, status occupations, wealth and political power. Turner regards the British public schools and the grammar schools as part of the same elite education while others see the divide as falling between 'the competitive grammar system and the aristocratic public schools'. [60]

Parry summarises the argument by saying that by contrast with the egalitarianism of the American high school system (Turner's contest mobility model), the British public and grammar schools appear distinctly elitist, admitting as they do only one quarter of the country's schoolchildren. It does not, however, follow that all members of this privileged minority share the same attitudes and the same opportunities to gain positions of wealth and influence. Also, it is clear, as we have already seen, that the independent schools in the USA fall into the sponsored mobility model.

The ideal of an intellectual elite to which all have equal access - the meritocracy - poses obvious dangers, such as the arrogance such an elite is likely to display. Finding it difficult, perhaps impossible, to communicate effectively with the mass of their less-advantaged fellows, the members of a ruling meritocracy might be tempted to establish a manipulative relationship with them, one in which the elite either coerces the majority - perhaps even 'for their own good' - or moves it in desired directions by the use of propaganda and indoctrination.[61] While such a picture may appear overly mechanistic, the increasing complexity of knowledge obviously allows for an Orwellian foreboding.

The safeguard usually proposed is the creation of an education system which pays less attention to the cultivation of an intellectual elite than to providing a general, shared education, founded on common values and ideas, which would form the basis for a greater sense of community.[62] Such a concept has obvious implications for the curriculum and the life-style of schools, and the extent to which the desirable attitudes are fostered in ways both formal and informal.

One of the contentions underlying this study is that the South African education system for whites reflects aspects of both the contest mobility model (the state schools generally) and the sponsored mobility model, with the now centralised and coherent private school system associated with the AMC and the Association of Private Schools most closely resembling the latter.

Some of the old prestigious state schools in South Africa seem to fill a position analogous to the English grammar schools (which, as we have seen, fall into the divide between the two models). These are the schools that historically have been most influenced by the

English public school tradition. They are boys' schools; their early headmasters were mostly public school men from England; and they display typical public school features such as a strong academic bias and the retention of Latin as an important part of the curriculum; a private mythology and the fostering of 'school spirit' and tradition; boarding houses and intense inter-house rivalry; prefectorial and fagging systems: governing bodies - largely symbolic since effective power is vested in the provincial authorities; compulsory uniforms and games; waiting lists of the children of past pupils; powerful Old Boys' societies; and they often have preparatory schools associated with them and acting as their main feeder schools. Every large town in South Africa with a substantial English-speaking community seems to have at least one such school: Durban Boys' High, Maritzburg College, Rondebosch Boys' High, Selborne College, Queens College, Muir College, Craeme College, Dale College, King Edward VII School, Pretoria Boys' High.

The foregoing lengthy but necessarily sketchy discussion has attempted merely to pinpoint some of the social issues involved in a consideration of private school education and to encapsulate some of the major arguments surrounding them. Several major themes have emerged: school segregation, whether racial, class or intellectual in nature, may not serve the best educational needs of society taken as a whole; private education is class-bound, whether it operates in England, America or South Africa, and it serves essentially the socialisation of the upper and middle classes, providing them with a form of segregated and advantaged education; elitist forms of education can be defended or attacked in simplistic terms, but a closer analysis indicates that the needs of modern society are better served by a broadening of the base of education rather than by elite formation.

To conclude this chapter, we shall look briefly at the question of social mobility itself, at some of the relevant data on the South African white elites, and, finally, at some of the theological considerations involved in Christian private school education in South Africa.

Social Mobility through Education

Education has long been an avenue of social mobility. In England in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries there were numerous examples of villeins being fined for sending their sons to school without the permission of their lords. They willingly paid these fines, not so much to see their children educated as to secure their freedom from bondage. thus as a way of helping them escape from their class background. By the end of the fourteenth century some children of the peasant class were managing to enter grammar schools 'so that they could rise in the social scale'.[63] In the mid-nineteenth century the new middle classes which arose as a result of the Industrial Revolution 'looked to the schools to provide... a common platform enabling their sons to associate on equal terms with those of families who, if increasingly outdistanced in income, still diffused a faint aroma of social superiority'.[64] Where the existing schools were inadequate, either on account of their deplorable conditions or their lack of social cachet, new schools were started. This was the age of the proprietary schools, founded by groups of influential local residents who hoped to obtain charters for their establishments. Cheltenham College is one example: opened in 1841, it had 600 on its roll within 20 years. Marlborough College, opened in 1843, in five years had 500 boys, second in numbers at that time only to Eton. Inevitably the new schools were modelled on the 'great' public schools, particularly on Thomas Arnold's Rugby. Many of the 'great' had themselves fallen on hard times - in 1843 Harrow's

numbers were down to 69 - but they were revitalised, partly as a result of Arnold's influence and that of other important headmasters (Arnold's former pupil, Vaughan, raised Harrow's numbers to nearly 500 in fourteen years), but more as a result of their need to maintain their position in relation to the newer schools; the increased wealth generated by the Industrial Revolution; the spread of railways, which made non-local boarding schools a more feasible undertaking; and the growing need to produce 'leadership material' for Britain's Empire.[65]

This is an appropriate place to make the point that this was the period that saw the beginnings of a private school system in South Africa, modelled on the English public schools. Of the early South African schools that have survived, St George's Grammar School Cape Town was founded in 1848; the Diocesan College ('Bishops') in 1849; St Andrew's College, Grahamstown, in 1855; while a small spate of existing schools was founded in the 1870's (St Cyprian's, 1871; Hilton, 1872; DSG, Grahamstown, in 1874; Durban Girls' College in 1877; Girls' Collegiate, Maritzburg, 1877; St Mary's DSG, Pretoria, 1879).

Simon regards the decisive years in the formation of the public school system as the two decades between 1850 and 1870.[66] This period saw the rise of an organised system with a 'clearly defined ethos, serving a particular social class, and claiming both independence from and the highest service to society'.[67]

This system began to provide an important mechanism for social mobility in industrialised Victorian Britain. The newly rich classes could be refined and brought to a position of social superiority, partly through the places they gained at the older public schools and Oxford

and Cambridge, but more significantly through the newer private and proprietary schools they had founded, which increasingly began to nestle comfortably within the public school complex (Clifton, Haileybury, Epsom, Rossall, Lancing and others, as well as Cheltenham and Marlborough). The year 1869 is important as it marks the formation of the HMC in England, when the independent schools took their first major step towards the creation of a coherent system (1929 is the comparable year for South Africa): the values and attitudes that permeated the system, fostered by the movement of past pupils, masters and headmasters from school to school, began to congeal into a clearly defined ethos. Access to this system was thus an important part of the socialisation process of the upper and middle classes which ranged, of course, from the opulently rich and the aristocratic to the penurious but 'respectable' and 'genteel'. Family status depended to a considerable extent on education within the system.

Turner makes the point that since private secondary schools in both America and Britain are 'principally vehicles for transmitting high family status to the children, the mobility function is quite tangential'.[68] At the same time, in the sponsored mobility system, the private schools, populated largely with the children of elite parents, would be the ideal device 'through which to induct selected children from lower levels into elite status'.[69] One way of doing this is through scholarship programmes which would allow promising children to be chosen at an early age for recruitment into the top classes. The English public schools, 'have, in fact, incorporated into their charters provisions to insure that a few boys from lesser classes would enter each year'.[70]

Dealing with the way in which the 'new-rich manufacturing classes' in Victorian England used the

public schools to enable their sons to achieve elite status, Turner concludes that they thereby bowed to the legitmacy of the traditional system - 'an implicit acknowledgement that upward mobility was not complete until the final sponsored induction had been carried out'. [71]

Sponsored mobility is a carefully controlled selection process in which individuals with appropriate qualifications (wealth, influence, ability, even sporting prowess) are admitted to elite status. Taking this analysis one stage further, one may view the sponsored system as providing a mechanism for co-opting individuals potentially dangerous to it by admitting them to elite membership. In the process, of course, the 'recruits change character by adopting elite attitudes and interests',thereby obviating their potential danger to the sponsoring elite itself.

One further dimension may be added to this analysis. Recruitment from the 'lesser classes' provides elite schools with a valuable transfusion of new talent and brains, often 'creamed off' the state system. This works both to the advantage of the former and the disadvantage of the latter.

This is one framework within which to view the careful broadening of the base of the elite South African private school system, to be described in a later chapter. It will also provide a useful perspective when we come to discuss the tensions within the South African HMC on the question of who should be admitted to membership.

The White South African Elites

It will be helpful to our subsequent discussion to locate the white South African elites in terms of the preceding general analysis dealing with the 'Establishment', class, elite formation and mobility.

The most useful starting point for this exercise would seem to be a summary of some of the relevant data in the major study undertaken by van der Merwe et al in the late 1960's.[72] The specifically educational aspects of this study are amplified in an article by M.J. Ashley, one of the authors of the study.[73]

In line with our earlier discussion, van der Merwe et al adopt the viewpoint that no single social stratum is likely to monopolise access to elite positions, and that the model of society resembling a single pyramid is being replaced by a model of several pyramids, each capped by an elite. The White South African elite structure is thus marked by pluralism. The various groups are differentiated in terms of their specialised function and also in terms of their values. In South Africa ideological conflict on major issues works against the development of a unified power elite.

In line with elites in other western societies, the South African elites were characterised by higher levels of education (80% of the elites - defined as the incumbents of top positions in all major societal sectors - had educational qualifications beyond secondary level, as against only 13% of the total white population). Income levels were also well above average.[74]

The membership of the elites was split fairly evenly between the two major white groups: 45,5% were English-speaking and 43% Afrikaners, while 10,3% claimed to speak both languages.

Of particular importance to this study is the finding that 96% of the English-speaking elite belonged to Protestant groups, of which the Anglican Church was the largest, while 80% supported opposition political parties (most of the remainder stated that they had no

political preference).[75]

Another finding of significance for this study is that there is some support for the view that interaction with English-speakers leads to modification of Afrikaner culture and the emergence of a class of Anglicised Afrikaners, with changed social, religious and political attitudes.[76]

The schools attended by the elites, however, offered few opportunities for meaningful inter-action of this kind. A significant minority of the English elites (16%) had attended British schools, presumably of the public school type. (It may be noted in passing that Ashley's description of the elite nature of British education in public schools followed by Oxbridge supports Turner's contention that this represents a sponsored mobility system in that elite positions are earmarked for only a few with certain social and educational backgrounds', and that attendance at these institutions results in a certain uniformity of values, outlook and behaviour).

'The South African private schools by no means play the same pre-eminent role in elite formation as that played historically (and to a lesser extent now) by the British public school-Oxbridge phenomenon, or the American independent school-Ivy League College system or even the comparable Canadian system.[77] One indication of this is that the South African Anglican schools, broadly elitist in aim, educating for leadership, and numerically predominant in the private sector of education, have made a numerically insignificant contribution to the constitution of the South African elites. Only eight per cent of the 'incumbents of top positions' had attended such schools. 'Economic life has been traditionally English-dominated, but even here one finds the top position-holders to be

more likely to come from educational backgrounds other than Anglican private schools... the role of these schools in the formation of the white South African elites is not an important one'.[78]

When one examines the list of schools actually attended by the South African English elites, a number of interesting factors emerge. In ranking order, the schools were:

1. Durban High School
2. South African College School (SACS)
3. King Edward VII School
4. St Andrew's College, Grahamstown *
5. Bishops *
6. Jeppe High School
7. Rondebosch Boys' High
8. Pretoria Boys' High
9. St John's College *
10. Michaelhouse *
11. Kingswood College *
12. Grey High

These are all boys' schools. Seven of them are state schools, the remaining five are private.* On these five, four are Anglican, one is Methodist ('The Methodist schools have much in common with the Anglican although there is less of the consciously elitist flavour').[79] The state boys' schools are all long-established, they have many features which resemble the private schools (boarding, house system, prefect system, 'school spirit' and compulsory games etc). They, in fact, represent the South African equivalent of the British grammar schools, an observation made previously, and together with the private schools they form the group most clearly influenced by the British public school model, a point recognised in somewhat exaggerated language by Peacock: 'Founded on the Arnoldian ideal, our schools have changed with the times, but have nevertheless preserved their identity and those traditions and ideals which bring forth the highest and most noble characteristics inherent in man'.[80] For the sake of perspective, Ashley's conclusion should be given here: 'This group of schools is the most

important by far from the English South African point of view. The holders of 20 per cent of top positions have passed through them, more than all the other English-language schools combined'.[81] In contrast to this, it is important to note that the most significant Afrikaans schools are 'small town high schools, co-educational and essentially tied to their communities'. This group of schools closely resembles the contest mobility model advanced by Turner, although it is necessary to bear in mind that they are reserved exclusively for white children.

It is necessary to point out that the elites being interviewed by van der Merwe et al were presumably at school in the 1920's and 1930's and that some modifications may have occurred since then. Some of the state English schools (Jeppe High, for example) may have 'declined' as a result of changing neighbourhood social patterns, while some of the newer, co-educational state schools, set in wealthy localities, may well have taken their place (Westville High School, near Durban, or Sandown High School, near Johannesburg, are examples that come to mind).

One can add a further dimension to this analysis by pointing to the extent of inter-locking directorships in big business in South Africa, thus providing evidence of a financial elite. Savage has pointed out that 'a miniscule elite, composed of less than 0,003 per cent of the population, namely, the Republic's company directors, watch over assets worth over R10 000 million'.[82] One significant aspect of this is that the financial elite represents a coalescing of the interests of the two white groups, otherwise separated by their schools, universities, churches and politics. This cohesive economic elite includes not only English-speakers (of whom Oppenheimer would be an obvious example) but also Afrikaners like Anton Rupert, Jan Marais

and Tom Muller. Heribert Adam has pointed to a growing alliance between English and Afrikaner big business and a consequent moving closer together of English big business and the Afrikaner political establishment.[83] This carries several major implications for the private schools, particularly those associated with the Anglican and Methodist Churches. Financially, they have been reliant, for example, on the Industrial Fund, which is supported by English big business. The initiatives taken ir the establishment of the Association of Private Schools, which is dominated by the Anglican schools, came directly from within the Anglo-American Corporation itself. Individual schools have been, and sometimes still are, given generous gifts by individual financiers or their companies. But the churches with which these schools are associated are predominantly black churches who are increasingly critical of elitism, their opposition to the racial and other policies of the government is vigorous, and their social teaching runs directly counter to any ethos implied in a convergence of the interests of capitalists and a segregationist government. One of the ironies of the move by white church schools to admit black pupils is that they may thereby be advancing what has clearly become one of the South African government's policies, namely the fostering of a black middle class as a bulwark against revolutionary change (see chapter 9). There are clear theological dilemmas involved here, and this introductory chapter will conclude with a brief examination of some of them.

Some theological considerations

The Education Commission of Spro-cas (the Study Project on Christianity in Apartheid Society, sponsored by the South African Council of Churches and the since-banned Christian Institute of Southern Africa) investigated, as part of its examination of the whole South African education system in the light of Christian teaching, the position of church and other private schools.[84]

The Commission concluded that the continued existence of private schools in the present South African situation could be justified only if

> parents wish their children to have a religious upbringing and to receive denominational instruction which would not be given in schools which are entirely dependent upon state funds. This would be the main justification for church schools.

The Commission also indicated that it felt 'strongly that private schools need to examine their policies in a much more critical frame of mind if they are to make a better contribution to South Africa's needs'.[85] This arose from a recognition that the private school system often mirrors the unacceptable features of the state system such as differentiating between racial groups on financial grounds (the financial resources available to black church schools are far more limited than those available to white church schools); bowing to the prejudiced and even reactionary attitudes of some members of staff, boards of governors, parents and ex-pupils, for fear of losing their support; and failing to implement effective programmes of attitudinal change amongst white pupils.

As a result, the Commission felt that there was 'a very real danger that these schools will perpetuate class and racial divisions within our society'.[86]

The Spro-cas Church Commission, composed of theologians and clergy from all the major Christian denominations, dealt, amongst other matters, with the tensions that inevitably exist within the church. In the first place it is a divine institution, to be understood in terms of God's purpose for the world and for the church itself, which is that it should be 'the sign and the herald of the reconciliation which He has accomplished in Jesus Christ. This reconciliation is between God and man but therefore and immediately also between man and man'.

In the second place the church is a human institution, thus fallible and broken. 'It constantly subverts and contradicts the divine intention by subordinating it to human intentions and aims'.[87] It follows then that the institutions of the church, such as church schools, are themselves imperfect instruments of God's purpose. This, of course, in no way absolves the church and its institutions from a continual search for renewal and wholeness. The gospel imperative is that the believer must be faithful and obedient to God, even if this implies disobedience towards the powers of the world.

Any institution which claims the name of the church must strive to fulfil God's purpose for the world. It must seek God's Kingdom in this world, and it must work for the overcoming of its divisions, since in Christ we are one. It must bear witness to the oneness of man with God, and of man with man. In its quest for renewal it must subject itself to a continual process of self-examination and self-criticism, seeking to overcome its own sinful nature. If the church is to be a faithful witness and an effective means of assisting in the achievements of God's Kingdom on earth, it must organise its own life and government consistently with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Many implications of profound importance for the practical life of the church and its institutions flow from this theological understanding. They include: the removal of all forms of racial division and discrimination from the institutional life of the church; the willingness of white christians to share leadership and on occasion relinquish positions of leadership; the stressing of christian social responsibility by all who teach within the church; the adoption of a life style that is consistent with the life of the Son of Man; courage to resist all that is false or unjust in the life of the community or of the church itself; and the practice of corporate,

visible unity.

The report of the Spro-cas Church Commission concludes with the following words:

> In common with the church in many parts of the world to-day, the church in South Africa is in a period of structural crisis, even though the crisis may be unacknowledged. Indeed this lack of acknowledgment is a very serious aspect of the crisis. An essential mark of the true church is its willingness and ability to examine itself to see whether or not it is being faithful to the Gospel, for the church cannot be the church unless it is always in a process of reformation... This whole study has been directed towards this process of reformation.[88]

Measured against these demands of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the church schools of course fall pitifully short, as do all human institutions calling themselves Christian.

One can illustrate almost endlessly, but a few examples will indicate the way in which church schools deny the Gospel they profess to observe: It was only in the mid-1970's that a leading Anglican boys' school removed a clause from its constitution limiting admission to 'scholars of pure European descent'[89]; in early 1980 the headmaster of a Methodist boys' school led a group of his pupils, armed with sticks, in assisting a raid by South African police on blacks 'trespassing' in a forest on the school grounds[90]; at another Methodist school the traditional practice of inviting the president of the church to conduct confirmation at the school was abruptly ended when an African was appointed to that office[91]; an inter-denominational girls' school, 'founded on secure foundations independent of Roman Catholicism', never got around to paying a pension to its 'coloured' handyman after 47 years of service (although the Old Girls did provide a headstone for his grave).[92] Most public attention has been focused on the refusals of Anglican schools in the Cape in the 1960's

and 1970's to admit black pupils, even when they were the children of Anglican clergy. This and related matters will be dealt with in a later chapter.

The church and its schools are social institutions and inevitably reflect the prevailing norms and attitudes of the society in which they exist. Two things should perhaps be said about this: the church schools frequently display great concern, not so much about unacceptable practices within their own institutions as about efforts to confront them openly. In common with most corporate bodies they often prefer to hush controversial matters up, thereby making it very often difficult to obtain clear and accurate information on any matter but the most innocuous. Gathorne-Hardy writes of 'those profound and mysterious silences which public schools... let fall to protect those who belong to them...'.[93]

The second point is that there is some considerable debate about the extent to which a church school must accept the authority of the church itself. The Anglican Archbishop's Commission on church schools was not prepared to go further than to say that 'in so far as the Church of the Province acting under its Constitution lays down any rule upon a matter of faith or doctrine or manner of worship, a church school would be obliged to observe any such ruling'.[94] The Commission did not believe that the governing body of a church school was bound to comply with a resolution, even of 'the supreme church authority', if it felt it to be prejudical to the interests of the school, on any matter of management, including the question of admission of pupils of different race groups.[95]

This view left a number of issues unresolved, and the resulting tension between church schools and church authorities will be discussed later.

This chapter has attempted to provide a general framework, identifying some of the societal and theological issues involved, for an historical analysis of the development of the South African English private school system. In the next section we shall turn to this history, tracing its origins in medieval England, through the full flowering of the Victorian public school, to the establishment of private schools in South Africa in the nineteenth century and the subsequent welding of these and later schools into a coherent closed system, existing alongside the state system.

Footnotes - Chapter 2

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Chapter 3: Development of the English Public School System

A: Origins

> Older than the house of Commons, older than the Universities, older than the Lord Mayor, older than the Hou-e of Lords, older even than the throne or the nation itself.[1]

Leach's ecstatic cry, quoted above, was about St Peter's School, founded at York Minster in AD 625. There are, however, even older English establishments and it is now generally accepted that King's School, Canterbury, founded around AD 598, is the oldest in England.

There is an extensive literature on the history of the English public schools, and we need here merely to summarise the main stages of their development, both as individual schools and as the components of the coherent system that reached its apogee in the late Victorian age.[2] This is necessary in order to provide an historical context for an examination of the South African English private school system. Many of the characteristic features of the system have their roots in the Engl.sh past, and its structure shows important similarities to the English one.

The first English schools were established by the Church and came into being at about the same time as the introduction of christianity into Britain. Pope Gregory sent Augustine, the prior of his monastery, to incorporate the Britons into the Holy Catholic Church, and he landed in England, together with several other missionaries, in 597. Ethelbert, the king of Kent, was rapidly converted, and Augustine was allowed to establish his episcopal See at Canterbury. With the completion of the first cathedral in that town, 'it is practically certain that a school connected with it started at about the same time. The lineal descendant of this school is the King's School, Canterbury'.[3]

As other Sees were founded across the country - at Rochester, London and Dunwich (since washed away by the sea) - similar schools were started. Over the next few centuries this process multiplied: 'wherever a cathedral, monastery or even large church was built ... they were almost invariably accompanied by schools'.[4] In the seventh century cathedral schools opened at York, Winchester, Worcester, Lichfield and Hereford.

These schools were of two kinds, sometimes combined in one establishment: song schools, to teach choristers the use of the Gregorian chant and plainsong; and grammar schools, to teach the Latin necessary for services. Both these influences can be clearly detected in the subsequent development of the English public school tradition, not only in England itself but also in South Africa. The classical curriculum, with particular emphasis on Latin, was to be a deadweight on the English public schools until well into the late nineteenth century, when the new needs of the rising industrial middle classes forced curriculum changes on the schools, particularly the introduction of science and modern languages. This emphasis on a 'classical education' is also strongly reflected in the early history of the South African private secondary schools and to this day Latin is regarded as an important part of the curriculum of most of them. The song school tradition is clearly seen in schools like St George's Cathedral Grammar School, founded in 1848 in Cape Town, with one of its functions the training of choristers for the cathedral. The boarders received 'daily musical instruction ... it is in fact a system of musical scholarship, ie. the boys are educated and boarded for a nominal sum, becuase they, in turn, give the valuable assistance of their voices'.[5] St John's College, founded in Johannesburg in 1898, was intended to perform a similar function. The first headmaster, the Rev. J.T. Hodgson, was appointed 'under a clear understanding that a choir school ... would be shortly started', and in fact most of the early pupils were choristers of St Mary's Church in Eloff Street.[6]

To return to England in the early Middle Ages: the Church was rebuilding an educational system after the collapse of the system established by the Romans. The Church saw its cathedral schools as a major instrument to christianise and civilise the people. Since it in fact provided the only organised education the Church naturally exercised complete control over it. With only a handful of exceptions, all English schoolmasters until the Reformation were clergy in holy orders, not necessarily the major orders. (The parallel with the South African church schools is again obvious: until the Second World War it was their general practice to appoint clergymen, usually born and educated in England, as headmasters).

A second major function of the early church schools was to train recruits for the church itself, as well as for the administrative needs of the increasingly complex organisation of the new English kingdoms. Regarding the first of these, 'so close was the association, so strong the tradition, that the later public schools were still churning out deans and canons and bishops in dozens. The route to a bishopric via a headmastership was common right up to the 20th century'.[7] In South Africa, too, headmasters of major church schools almost invariably became canons, while at least one became Suffragan Bishop of Cape Town.

It is clear that most of the pupils at English schools in the early Middle Ages were poor boys. The training of the sons of the nobility and the gentry generally occurred in their own homes, or in the houses of other nobles. This training was unlikely to fit them for useful roles in the service of the church nor indeed, until the church became a powerful institution, was there much incentive for them to serve it. Taught 'letters by the manor's chaplain, field sports by the forester, and the use of arms by an old retainer',[8] the sons of the nobility were being socialised for a particular and hereditary leadership role. Generally,

they were sent away from home to board with another noble family, an important element in the establishment of the English boarding school tradition.

On the other hand, there were clear incentives for the brighter sons of villeins to escape their hereditary bondage: the previous chapter mentioned the eagerness with which many were sent to school, even at the risk of fines. The Statute of Artificers (England's first education law), passed by parliament in 1406, finally removed legal restrictions on the right of villeins to attend school: 'Every man or woman of what state or condition ... shall be free to set their son or daughter to take learning at any school that pleaseth them'. In fact the very poor seldom received an education. The church's grammar schools largely provided for the 'nascent middle class, giving them a clerical training for a clerical class to transact the nation's business'.[9]

The practice of taking children into school while very young was probably established at this time. Boys with unbroken voices were needed for the sung services, and the earlier they were taken into song schools the longer would they be of use to the church. In order to occupy them during the time they were not singing, they were provided with an elementary education which they would later complete at the grammar school. Here we see the beginning of the division into lower and upper school, from which was eventually to evolve the prep school and the senior public school. (Or, if one applies this to the state system, the elementary and the secondary school).

The Mother of Public Schools

The first major departure from the pattern we have been describing came in 1394 with the foundation of Winchester College. This ushered in a new era in English schools in that for the first time a separate institution was created for school boys, one not tacked on, as it were, to a collegiate church. For the first time 'a school was

established as a sovereign and independent corporation existing by and for itself, self-centred, self-controlled'.[10]

The founder of Winchester, William of Wykeham, clearly had a charity school in mind, and he stipulated that the school was to admit 'poor and needy scholars'. It is now clear that this term applied not to the very poor, the sons of villeins for example, but to the younger sons of comparatively impoverished nobility and gentry, as well as to the sons of the petite bourgeoisie, the merchants and the tradesmen whose influence was growing. In addition to the scholars, a number of 'commoners' were also to be admitted (not more than ten sons of noble persons). The term derives from the fact that they had to pay for their 'commons' or board. This represents the first identifiable movement towards the admission of fee-paying pupils, from families of at least some wealth. (We have here, also, a typical example of the 'very English' way in which words acquire meanings that, on the face of it, appear to be the opposite of what they actually suggest. The very term 'public school' is another.)

The first commoners were taken by Winchester in 1395; by 1412 they numbered about a hundred and there were complaints that they were beginning to crowd out the scholars. Later, the head master provided special quarters to accommodate yet more commoners. The temptation to accept ever-increasing numbers of fee-payers was obviously great and later foundations like Eton were to succumb in the same way. 'It is important', writes Curtis, 'to note that here we have the beginnings of the present public school system in which the majority of the pupils are fee-payers and not free scholars'.[11]

Jarman summarises the characteristic public school features which can be traced back to Wykeham and his times and which are, perhaps, summed up in the famous Wykehamist motto: Manners Makyth Man. These include corporate life; education in Latin grammar based on 'old Donatus', the

standard text for more than a thousand years; a close connection with the older universities; a prefectorial system; and the religious character of the training given as a basis for formation of character.[12] And in a characteristic burst of lyrical prose Jarman describes Winchester as 'an outstanding example of the continuity, the unbroken thread, which runs through English life. For more than five and a half centuries the school has stood ... and has never failed to be in the front rank among schools'.[13] The enthusiasm is understandable. The great and venerable public schools of England are in fact 'the oldest institutions we have'.[14] It is no wonder that age itself is seen as an important criterion in ranking the schools. In South Africa schools founded before the turn of the century enjoy a subtle prestige denied their newer colleagues, absurd as this snobbery seems in the light of the great age of some of the English public schools. Baird found, in his study of American independent schools, that 'age is important as a psychological fact. The schools have histories, stories and traditions that influence the behavious of students and teachers alik There is a feeling that the past is important, and that precedents add authority to rules and procedures'.[15] Of the 42 American schools studied by Baird, 22 were founded before 1900 and five before 1800.

Prototype of the Upper-class Boarding School

Although on a larger scale than previous schools, Winchester was essentially still a grammar school. It was not until the 18th century that the term 'public school' came to be generally applied to institutions like Winchester, Westminster, Eton and Harrow.

In medieval times these schools were no different in their origins and their functions from other grammar schools. In its medieval usage, the word 'public' meant no more than that the school was open to pupils from throughout the country. Some of the grammar schools' statutes limited entry to children from the locality. The 'public' schools

therefore enjoyed the advantage of being able to attract good scholars from all parts of the country, and as their fame spread many of the nobility began to send their children to them. (This openness remains, of course, one of the advantages still enjoyed by independent schools in Britain, America, South Africa, and other English speaking countries.)

The foundation of Wykeham also signalled the beginning of a process of endowment by wealthy individuals, the crown and, later, liveried companies. They performed part of the task previously performed only by the church. A similar process was to occur in South Africa from the 1870's, when groups of wealthy businessmen came together to found private schools.

In England during the 15th century it seems that the founding of new schools became something of a matter of competition. When Henry VI founded Eton in 1442 he wanted it to 'excel all other grammar schools ... and be called the lady, mother and mistress of all grammar schools'.[16] At the same time he founded a sister establishment in King's College, Cambridge, thereby creating the first links in the public school-Oxbridge chain already referred to.

In 1446 Henry issued a monopoly to the provost of Eton and his successors and the document referred to the school as 'public'. This was one of the first occasions on which the term was applied to a grammar school and it is another indication of the common origin of the two types of school. The term 'public' emphasised the non-local character of Eton, which drew its scholars from every part of the land.

Henry modelled Eton on Winchester, and was able to persuade Winchester's headmaster, William Wayneflete, to become the first provost of his foundation. Eton's statutes were clearly based on those of the older school. For example, 'needy scholars' were borne by the foundation, while the sons of noblemen, not exceeding twenty in number,

were also to be admitted. These oppidans boarded in the houses of the teaching Fellows. In addition a lower class of oppidans was admitted; they dined with the scholars and choristers and paid less for their board.

Gathorne-Hardy makes the point that 'the history from the 14th Century on is that of the entent to which the rich took over the schools entirely'.[17] This applied particularly to the 'public' schools like Westminster and Eton, where by the 16th century the fee-payers were outnumbering the poor. One reason for this is that the statutes of schools usually fixed the masters' wages at levels which soon became adsurdly low, thus increasing the temptation to take in fee-paying boarders. Writing in 1587, William Harrison described the problem vividly: 'They were erected by their founders at the first only for poor men's sons ... but now they have the least benefit of them, by reason the rich do so encroach upon them ... such bribage is made that poor men's children are commonly shut out, and the richer sort received'.[18]

The fee-paying system was a major factor in the emergence of boarding schools. The independent boarding schools of the English-speaking world are unique, and their communal nature was an important reason for the extraordinary power that they developed, particularly in Britain (these 'total institutions' could socialise their inmates virtually unfettered).

The boarding tradition was long established. We have already seen how the medieval nobility were accustomed to sending their sons away to be trained. Even earlier, the monastic schools provided board and lodging for at least some of their charges.

At Eton the oppidans increasingly boarded in town houses, partly because the demand exceeded the places available in the school buildings themselves, partly because this was an established practice at other schools like Winchester.

At Eton a regularised pattern of lodging gradually developed with houses run by Dames or Dominies.

The house system that developed out of this pattern - it was roughly similar for other schools like Winchester, Westminster and Repton - was of crucial importance to the later public schools. As Gathorne-Hardy comments,

> At the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century House spirit was, after religious faith, the most important spiritual reality to a good many otherwise rational people . [19]

By the late 17th century Eton was becoming 'the recognised centre of upper class education and the training ground of statesmen'. [20] From the first time it began attracting the aristocracy in large numbers

> its manner of life and its tone had been moving away from the traditional grammar school pattern. The swarming oppidans, with their money and their private tutors and their attendants, brought with them something of the life of their own homes, some tincture of the household education which Eton and its imitators had supplanted . [21]

As we discuss the building blocks, as it were, that went into the creation of the English public schools, it is appropriate to refer briefly to their traditional architecture, typically evident at Eton and Winchester and faithfully copied in South Africa in such schools as Michaelhouse and St John's. According to Hutchinson and Young [22], this architecture was designed to promote the idea of a learning community. The builders took as their model the best-developed community building of the age, the medieval town house with its halls and rooms grouped round a quadrangle. The quadrangle became the essential feature of communal life 'because of the simple fact that the inmates meet each other many times a day'.

There is an almost uncanny echo of this in the 1978 prospectus of Michaelhouse: this school, established on the bare South African veld towards the end of the 19th century, was planned on the quadrangle system as it was believed that this 'avoids disproportionately narrow loyalties and lack of contact with boys in other houses'. Many of the senior boarding schools in this country are in fact built on the quadrangle plan. It is probable that few of those who teach and learn in them realise that their architecture originated with medieval English town houses.

Boy-government

Another block can be put into place - one of the most distinctive features of the evolving public schools. This was the system of boy-government or the prefect system. Arnold, Rugby's famous headmaster of the 1830's, is frequently credited with having perfected the system, but its origins lie much further back in time.

Wykeham instituted praepostors at Winchester. The statutes laid down that older boys were to supervise the studies of their fellows in the scholars' chambers. Even then this was not an original idea, and seems to have been borrowed from Merton College, Oxford, whose statutes prescribed 'one person in every chamber ... of more mature age ... to have a superintendence over the other fellows'.[23]

In Queen Elizabeth's time praeposters were responsible for a good deal of Winchester's daily work, while Westminster and St Paul's also used older boys for a similar purpose. Arnold's schooldays at Winchester undoubtedly impressed him, amongst other things, with the value of using boys to share responsibility and leadership in the running of a large school. At a time when conditions in the public schools were often little short of chaotic, Arnold probably realised that half the battle was to get the prefects on his side. The result was that he

concentrated on his sixth formers to an almost obsessive extent.

By the middle of the 19th century the prefect system was formalised and existed in virtually every public school. Prefects could beat, and were often greatly feared, more so even than the masters. The practice of fagging is first mentioned in the mid-17th century, and it too became virtually a universal phenomenon, often associated with cruelty and bullying.

Skidelsky's summing up of the prefect system indicates the characteristic way in which public schools formalised practices hallowed with age into instruments of value not only to themselves but to the ruling class they served:

> Originally developed as a pragmatic response to the problem of maintaining order and supervision in large boarding communities with inadequate and incompetent staff, it evolved into a highly conscious technique for training leaders to run the empire .[24]

There are, once again, striking parallels with modern South African private schools. In its 1978 prospectus, Cape Town's Diocesan College for Boys (generally called Bishops) described its prefect system as 'providing the school's disciplinary structure', and claimed that it enabled the school 'to invest a high proportion of senior boys with varying degrees of responsibility and authority'. The fagging system at Bishops is 'strictly controlled and limited to certain times of the day' and it 'improves communication between boys of all ages, impressing on all the importance of community service'. This seems to suggest that fagging is actually a conscious creation based on sound educational principles, rather than a somewhat ridiculous relic of the feudal past, open to abuse and of very dubious educational value.

The position of girls

It will be apparent that the schools destined for 'greatness' were boys' schools. The first girls' public schools were to be established only in the second half of the nineteenth century (the landmark was the foundation of Cheltenham Ladies' College in 1854). Before then, in the medieval period, most girls received their training at home from their mothers, although some did attend local parish schools and a very few went to convent schools which made their first appearance in the early Middle Ages. During the 18th century 'Ladies Academies' sprang up for the daughters of middle class families. In 1836 there were more than a hundred of these establishments in Brighton alone, housing about fifty pupils each, and teaching them a smattering of general education as well as a wide range of 'accomplishments' like dancing, music, drawing and needlework. These academies served a similar social function to the boys' public schools in that they provided avenues of class advancement. As the schools were usually relatively cheap, small tradesmen and merchants could send their daughters to them to acquire the airs of a lady. As will be seen later, replicas of these institutions were established in South Africa in large number during the second half of the 19th century.

The Church and the Schools

It has already been pointed out that the church exercised complete control over English education in the early Middle Ages. By the 15th century the church and its institutions were suffering a decline that was to provide an excuse for the dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century. Henry VIII's break with Rome in 1533 does not seem to have greatly affected the operation of the grammar schools.[25] On the whole schoolmasters and governors appear to have adapted pragmatically to the religious and political shifts of the period. Ogilvie gives the example of the founders of Repton and Tonbridge, who 'were Protestants under Edward VI and Catholics under Mary, like many other people who adjusted themselves to

the religious requirements of their Sovereigns'. [26]

The Dissolution did, however, cause the closing of many chantry schools and some grammar schools, and the position was retrieved not only by new church foundations but by the rising class of merchants, lawyers and country gentlemen. Among the grammar schools founded at this time which were later to become famous public schools were Harrow and Rugby (founded by Laurence Sheriff, of the Grocers' company, who bequeathed his estate for this purpose in 1567).

Whatever the 'religious requirements' of the sovereign, the church continued to play a dominant role in the control of the schools.

Mary intended education to be 'a major agency of the Catholic Counter-Reformation' and for the first time it was formally required of all school masters that they should be examined and licensed to teach by the bishop. [27] The Queen's Council wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1580:

> For as much as a great deal of the corruption in religion grown throughout the realm, proceedeth of lewd schoolmasters ... it is thought meet that you cause all such schoolmasters ... to be by the Bishop ... examined touching their religion: and if they shall be found corrupt and unworthy, to be displaced . [28]

Mary's successors were unlikely to abandon such a valuable tool of eccesiastical control and the system was refined and developed through Royal Injunctions, church canons and Acts of Parliament. Canon LXXVII of the Church of England (1604) serves as an example: 'No man shall teach either in public school or private houses but such as shall be allowed by the Bishop of the Diocese'. It is possible to see this as an early example of the function of schools as mechanism for the control of

'legitimate ideology'. Such control was probably unnecessary in pre-Reformation times since ideological deviance was in fact heresy, a crime so serious that few would have dared to toy with it. In later periods - the Victorian age for example - ideological control, of course, had to be exercised on other than religious grounds.

One of the disadvantages of the grammar schools being tied to the church by the requirements of the licence to teach (as well as being bound, very often, by their foundation statutes) was that it was extremely difficult for new ideas to penetrate them. The conservatism of the church was one reason for the lack of curricular innovation and changes in teaching method. The Enlightenment virtually passed the grammar schools by. With the Restoration, ecclesiastical control was strengthened by the 1662 Act of Uniformity which required all teachers to subscribe their religious conformity and political loyalty before being licensed.[29] In fact, according to Curtis, at the end of the 17th century the church exercised as great a control over schoolmasters as during the medieval period.[30] It was not until 1779 that Dissenters gained the freedom to teach in schools, while Catholics received the same right only in 1790. The church's control over school education was really challenged for the first time only in the early 19th century, when it was a subject of much controversy. The Church of England claimed a line of continuity from the medieval church which gave her the right to be the one body responsible for education in the country.[31] While history and tradition could be advanced in support of this claim, it ignored the changed circumstances of the age, brought about, amongst other factors, by the intellectual heritage of the Enlightenment, the [illegible] of the Romantic Revival, and new social and political pressures caused by the Industrial Revolution.

The last major educational initiative of the Church of England was provided by those churchmen in the mid-19th

century who were concerned that without a christian education civilisation was threatened with collapse. The most notable of these was Canon Woodard who saw the road to salvation as lying with the middle classes: 'Somehow or other we must get possession of the middle classes ... and how can we so well do this as through public schools ... Unless the church, therefore, gets possession of this class at whatever cost, we shall reap the fruits ... of an universal deluge ...' [32] The most notable result of this urge was Lancing College, now a recognised public school just below the 'great' in order, and presumably secure from the 'Communists and Red Republicans' at Canon Woodard so greatly feared.

This outline has seemed necessary in order to illustrate the tradition to which South Africa'a church schools are heir, and to give the background to the period when these schools first became established in this country. It also helps to explain some of the present practices of these schools which might otherwise appear to be merely quaint and rather meaningless. It certainly adds meaning to the appointment of the local bishop as 'visitor' to South African schools which call themselves Anglican, even if they are not diocesan or parochial establishments, and to the fact that at a school like St John's the Bishop of Johannesburg enjoys the constitutional right to hire and fire the headmaster (the college does not actually have a constitution, but rather a very English 'gentlemen's agreement'). [33]

Differentiation from the grammar schools

It was only in the 18th century that the term 'public school' began to acquire its generally accepted modern meaning. But by the end of the 17th century the processes were well under way which were differentiating the 'great' schools from the mass of grammar schools. Winchester and Eton had always been pre-eminent among English schools. Other schools too, perhaps on account of their antiquity or their size, began to occupy prominent positions.

Schools such as these began to attract more and more of the sons of the noble and the wealthy, culminating in the position, already described, where fee-payers outnumbered free scholars.

If a grammar school's statutes forbade the admission of fee-paying pupils, it often sank into insignificance, particularly if its endowments were meagre - possibly a few rural acres. Those schools with endowments of land near London and other large towns were more fortunate. The growth in value of their properties often more than offset the declining value of money. The sheer magnitude of its endowments was sometimes reason enough for the rise of a grammar school foundation into a 'great' school.

In this process of differentiation the 'great' lost a useful social function performed by a grammar school, which provided for considerable cross-fertilisation between the classes and between the urban and rural communities. 'On its benches', writes Ogilvie, 'boys of the most various parentage were taught side by side'.[34] He illustrates this from school registers which provide detailed confirmation of the degree of social mixing. At Oundle (itself to become a 'public school' in the 19th century) the register reveals that in 1626 the sons of noblemen, baronets and knights were educated alongside those of clergymen, farmers, bakers, tailors, cobblers and an undertaker. What is missing from the list, of course, is any representative of the true working classes.

Harrow provides a good example of the elevation of a humble grammar school to one of the 'great'. The statutes drawn up by its founder, the yeoman John Lyon, in 1571, allowed the masters to receive as many 'foreigners' as the school could 'conveniently contain', and under a succession of Etonian headmasters this was exploited to the full. In the end, local non-paying pupils were excluded altogether.

Sometimes the sheer drive of a new headmaster was an

important reason for the rise of a grammar school. Dr Busby, a savage flogger, ruled Westminster for 57 years (1638 - 1695), beginning at a time when its fortunes were at a low ebb, and raising it to a pitch it reached again only in this century.

Underlying all these factors, it is possible to discern an underlying social phenomenon,

> the growth of class dominance and class consciousness in English society. The annexation of first some, then all the public schools by the upper and middle classes was for two hundred years or so one of the fundamental sources of their power . [35]

Footnotes - Chapter 3

1. A.F. Leach: Schools of Medieval England, London, 1915, cited in Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.27.

2. See, for example, Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit.; E.C. Mack: Public Schools and British Opinion 1780 - 1860, Methuen, London 1938, and Public Schools and British Opinion since 1860, Columbia University Press, 1941, Columbia; Vivian Ogilvie: The English Public School, Batsford, London, 1957; G. MacDonald Fraser (ed.): The World of the Public School, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1977; and the relevant chapters in general histories such as those by H.C. Barnard: A Short History of English Education 1760-1944, University of London Press, 1947; S.J. Curtis: History of Education in Great Britain, University Tutorial Press, London, 1953, and T.L. Jarman: Landmarks in the History of Education: English Education as part of the European Tradition, John Murray, London, 1963. The Victorian public schools have recently received particular attention because of their important role in the formative period of modern, industrialised Britain; see Brian Simon: The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1974 (Chapters 2 and 6); and Simon and Ian Bradley (eds.): The Victorian Public School, Gill and MacMillan, Dublin, 1975. In South Africa, an outline history is given in F.J. Stiglingh: 'A Comparative Study of the Public Schools of England and the Anglican Church Schools in the Cape Province', unpublished B.Ed. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1957. There are, in addition, published histories of most of the major public schools themselves and sometimes biographies of their headmasters.

3. Curtis, op. cit., p.2.

4. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.27.

5. 'Early History of St. George's', n.d., mimeographed, p.2. (The 1978 prospectus of this school still lays much stress on music and singing).

6. K.C. Lawson: Venture of Faith: the story of St John's College, 1898-1968, Council of St John's College, Johannesburg, 1968, pp.7,11.
7. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.27.
8. G.M. Trevelyan: English Social History, Longmans, London, 1946, p.76.
9. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.30.
10. A.F. Leach: A History of Winchester College, Duckworth, 1899, p.90.
11. Curtis, op. cit., p.32.
12. Jarman, op. cit., p.118.
13. Ibid, p.111.
14. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.27.
15. Baird, op. cit., p.1.
16. Cited in Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.30.
17. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.32.
18. Cited in J. Dover Wilson: Life in Shakespeare's England, Cambridge University Press, 1911, p.64.
19. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.35.
20. Simon, op. cit., p.300.
21. Ogilvie, op. cit., p.101.
22. M. Hutchinson and C. Young: Educating the Intelligent, Penguin, 1962, p.220.
23. The Foundation Statutes of Merton College, cited in Curtis, op. cit., p.34.
24. Robert Skidelsky: English Progressive Schools, Penguin, 1969, p.53.
25. David Cressy: Education in Tudor and Stuart England, Edward Arnold, London, 1975, p.5.
26. Ogilvie: op. cit., p.52.
27. Cressy: op. cit., p.8.
28. Quoted in A.M. Stowe: English Grammar Schools in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, London, 1908, p.178.
29. Cressy: op. cit., p.11, pp.39-40. While modern teachers may be 'licensed' in rather different ways, the parallels for ideological conformity are obvious (cf. the Credo of the South African Teachers' Council for Whites).
30. Curtis: op. cit., p.99.

31. Curtis: op. cit., p.4.
32. Quoted in Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., pp.112-3.
33. Lawson: op. cit., p.405.
34. Ogilvie: op. cit., p.69.
35. Gathorne-Hardy: op. cit., p.55.

Chapter 4: Development of the English Public School System

ii The Victorian Public School

> The model of the Victorian boys' public school has exercised a decisive influence on the emergent English concept of the 'school' as an educative community, right down to our own times.[1]

Background

By the beginning of the 19th century, the grammar schools were generally in a deplorable condition. If they taught anything at all, 'it was the shrivelled remains of the classics'.[2] Shackled by their statutes and victims of a sinecure system and corruption, many formerly famous schools declined until they had only a handful of pupils. In 1780 Shaftesbury grammar school closed, in 1783 Sherborne had no boarders and very few day scholars, in 1794 Ashbourne had only one pupil, while Repton recorded only 15 admissions between 1779 and 1800.[3]

Middle class parents had turned increasingly to the mushrooming private schools - often pompously called Academies - to have their sons educated. Industrialists, craftspeople and the professional classes sought a useful training for their heirs and to some extent the private schools provided for this need through attempts to include modern languages, arithmetic, history and geography alongside the classical curriculum.

The process of differentiation described in the previous chapter had resulted in the emergence of a distinctive type of school, loosely called the 'great' schools, which can retrospectively be identified with the public schools in the modern usage of the term. The label was often used as a synonym for 'great' school, and by the end of the 18th century was in accepted usage for a handful of leading schools.[4] The grammar school was ceasing to perform its former function of (limited) social cross-fertilisation.

> Instead the typical schools of the 18th century segregated the two ends of society. At the one end were the charity school and the village school, providing an elementary education for the poor; and at the other end were a few great schools which were patronised by the upper class and so began to form a distinct group . [5]

Despite their upper class patronage, the condition of these public schools was almost as deplorable as that of the grammar schools, and their curriculum was just as restricted. [6] The literature abounds in vivid accounts of the brutality, the overcrowding and the sheer decadence of even the most illustrious of the public schools. Dr Keate, headmaster of Eton from 1809 to 1834, once beat a hundred boys in public, and performed the task while being pelted with eggs and books by the rest of the school.

The food was generally sparse and unpleasant. At Wesley's Kingswood College, the boys were fed on a diet of porridge and water gruel. Some died, the cost of their coffins being added to their parent's bills. [7] In most schools, the pupils were expected to provide much of their own food: 'tuck boxes, tuck shops, the scent of frying sausages floating down the corridors of Greyfriars, had their origins in a tradition where if they hadn't fed themselves schoolboys would have starved'. [8]

Drinking, gambling and whoring were accepted pursuits for the sons of aristocrats (Eton even ran a Sixth-form brothel in the early 19th century). Hogarthian profligacy probably reached its nadir in the infamous Long Chamber at Eton. Fifty-two scholars were locked at night into this barn-like room, with its stench, its rats, its drinking, bullying and sexual activities. Fags had to catch rats, push them into stockings and then smash them against the furniture. When an attempt was made to clean the place up in 1858 two cartloads of rats' bones were removed from beneath the floorboards. [9]

Added to the general conditions were an inadequate curriculum and inadequate teaching. At times Dr Keate was trying to teach the classics to two hundred boys at once, in the face of yelling, jeering and hissing, and occasionally a barrage of dictionaries and rotton eggs. Although most of the more memorable vignettes of the time seem to come from Eton, it is clear from contemporary writings that the other public schools - Winchester, Rugby, Charterhouse, Harrow, Westminster, Shrewsbury, St Paul's - were not very different. [10]

The only weapons at the disposal of the masters were floggings and expulsions. The tendency to let the rule of the schools slide into the hands of boys increased and near-anarchy was a frequent result. There were major revolts at Eton (1783, 1810, 1818, 1832); Winchester (1793, 1808, 1818); Rugby (1794); Harrow (1805, 1808); Charterhouse (1808), and Shrewsbury (1818). On occasion the rebelling boys took control of a school, smashed furniture and windows, set fire to books and desks, and were subdued only with the help of the militia. [11]

It must be borne in mind, of course, that this was not only a time of riots and mob violence in English society generally, but of the influences of the French Revolution.

An inevitable result of the conditions we have been describing was a loss of confidence in the schools. Numbers began to drop. Even Eton declined from nearly 700 to 444 in 1835. Charterhouse dropped from 489 in 1825 to 137 in 1832 to 99 in 1835. The picture was the same at Harrow, Rugby, Winchester, Westminster and Shrewsbury. [12]

'In short the Public Schools at this time were an unstable institution, in danger of dying a natural death', writes Ogilvie. [13] Reform was imperative if they were to survive.

Towards Reform

The condition of the public schools, in particular, and of grammar schools, in general, led to an outburst of criticism in the early 19th century. This was aimed at the nature of the education provided in these schools and at the moral standards prevalent in them. The Radical Reformers were the most trenchant in their criticism which, at first based on educational grounds, rapidly began to acquire a political dimension.

Beginning in 1809, the Edinburgh Review and the Westminster Review, the leading Liberal journals, carried a series of attacks. These criticised the devotion of the schools to Latin and Greek, called for the inclusion of modern studies, European languages, geography and mathematics, and then turned to the moral aspect, particularly bullying and fagging.[14]

The public schools were at first able to ignore these attacks, but when there was a further, more prolonged outburst in 1830's the position had changed. We have seen how the internal problems of the schools had weakened their position, with a consequent loss of support and numbers (another, partial, cause was the temporary economic depression of the times). In addition, as Simon points out, the political power of the aristocracy was being undermined by the rising influence of the new middle class, who were unable to find schools to suit their special needs. The attacks of the Radicals on the public schools thus began to have an effect.[15] The general unrest of the period of the Reform Bill (1832) was manifesting itself in a criticism of all accepted institutions, which the public schools could not hope to escape. The general conclusion of the Reformers was that the public schools were irredeemable and that other types of schools should be created.

Roughly parallel with this development was the dissatisfaction of the dissenting religious bodies with

the existing school system. One of the earliest results was a Quaker boarding school at Ackworth, opened in 1779 for the sons and daughters of Quakers 'not in affluence'. The curriculum was wide and included geography, history, French, drawing, handicrafts and some scientific knowledge. A feature was the school's societies, such as an arts society and a horticultural society. In these ways - co-education, a wide and modern curriculum, leisure-time activities - Ackworth was well in advance of the grammar and public schools and foreshadowed their later development.

In the first quarter of the 19th century other dissenting schools were established, some of which were to survive and become important parts of the independent school sector. These include Mill Hill (non-conformist, 1807) and Ampleforth (Roman Catholic, 1802).

Since they served a non-local clientele, the denominational schools were generally boarding schools, and in some cases were conscious attempts to create a new type of public school. Mill Hill is an example of this - its founders consulted the headmaster of Eton on organisation, but opted for a much wider curriculum than that offered by the public schools, dominated as the latter were by the classics. 'These denominational schools,' writes Ogilvie, 'formed a new stream, which contributed a fresh and healthy element to English education'.[16] Their significance for a study of South African private schools is that they were coming into existence at a period when the Cape Colony was finally under British rule (from 1806) and when British settlers were about to arrive in large numbers, bringing with them some of the educational ideas then current in England.

The next major development in the quest for alternatives to the decaying grammar and public schools came from the industrial and commerical middle classes which wanted a

'modern' education 'enshrining utilitarian values and involving the ending of the dominance of the classics ... in favour of science, technology, modern languages and the like'.[17] The results were to be seen in the founding of large day schools, or mainly day schools: the Liverpool Institute (1825), King's College School (1829), University College School (1833), the City of London School (1837).

At the same time there was a demand for an education on the public school model (to anticipate somewhat, Arnold's reform of Rugby was already an important factor) from 'that section of the middle class that was linked traditionally, through a complex web of connections, with the gentry and aristocracy'.[18] Gathorne-Hardy's view is that the middle classes had become so large and amorphous that the best way of ensuring profits was to concentrate on particular sectors of it.[19] In any event a number of important new boarding schools were established on public school lines, but less expensive and with wider curricula. They specialised in the provision of education for clergymen's sons (Marlborough 1843), for the military (Cheltenham 1841, Wellington 1853), for 'enlightened persons' who shared the ideals of Radical Reformers like Bentham and John Stuart Mill (University College School 1830), for the offspring of doctors (Epsom 1855), for the Indian Civil Service and the church (Haileybury 1862). All these schools were to become members of the public school family, joining the original 'greats' who had their beginnings in medieval grammar schools. With their splendid buildings and grounds, their prowess at games, their boarding establishments and prefectorial systems, and their powerful governors, they were soon able to overcome the disadvantage of their lack of antiquity. In 1898, Wellington College's governors comprised two princes, three dukes, three earls, three bishops, six knights and a former Prime Minister.

The important new foundations of the 19th century

were thus either denominational boarding schools, independent day schools in the towns, or private boarding schools modelled on the existing public schools, particularly Rugby. Many of these new foundations were proprietary schools, with debenture shares being mad ailable to investors. Cheltenham, Marlborough, Eps. . and Haileybury were of this type.

All these patterns were to be reflected in the private schools that were established in South Africa from the 1840's onwards.

Reform from within

Meanwhile, to return to the period immediately following the Reform Bill, the old public schools were continuing on their sorry way. We have already noted the drop in numbers during the period 1820 to 1850. The Radical attack reached new heights, and was inevitably directed primarily at the institution that symbolised the public schools as a whole. 'Eton does not belong to the present age', said an article in the Quarterly Journal of Education in 1835:

> It is the effect of a system of jobbing and corruption in all departments of church and state, when patronage was the all-in-all of our aristocratic institutions ... Eton belongs to that old political system: it was part and parcel of it. The system is gone, but Eton remains unchanged .[20]

The Westminster Review in the same year described the results of an Eton education: 'a confirmed taste for gluttony and drunkenness, an aptitude for brutal sports, and a passion for female society of the most degrading kind'.[21]

Faced with internal problems and competition from the new foundations, and in the new reforming age threatened with interference and even the possibility

of being swept away as had happened on the continent, 'the public schools in England produced their own reform when events pressed the necessity on them'. [22]

Another element that must be added to the complex interplay of forces at work in England was the religious revival that can be dated from Wesley and Whitefield in the 18th century. Evangelical fervour and a sense of guilt were becoming dominant 'at precisely the same moment as did that fairly gross materialism which also characterises the age'. [23]

Thomas Arnold of Rugby

It was in this context that Thomas Arnold arrived on the school scene. His work was to lead

> to the salvation of a type of school which, represented in only half a dozen or so public schools, had been in danger of extinction; and not just its survival - its expansion, indeed, into a powerful and coherent system of 60 to 100 schools which, by the end of Victoria's reign, virtually monopolised the secondary education of the English upper and upper-middle classes . [24]

However exaggerated his achievements might have become, Arnold is a towering figure in the history of the English public school, and, indeed, in the development of a public school system. The influence of the Arnoldian legend on South African education has been immense. Two indications of this have been given previously: the recognition that our leading schools are based on 'Arnoldian principles' and Honey's assertion that South African high schools remain stuck fast in the Victorian public school model, a model that Arnold was instrumental in creating. This model dominated the entire later Victorian period, during which most of South Africa's major secondary private schools were established. To take only the 'big five': Bishops was founded in 1849; St Andrew's College in 1855; Hilton in 1872; Michaelhouse in 1896; and St John's College in

1898. The second headmaster of Hilton seems to have had no other qualifications for the position - besides the money to buy the school - than the fact that he had been o Rugby himself. Hilton's founder and first headmaster, the Rev. William Orde Newnham, consciously aimed 'to adapt the traditions of the English public school to the needs of South African boys' and he followed 'the practice of Dr Arnold at Rugby School'. To this day Hilton's 'debt to Rugby is acknowledged in several ways'.[25]

Arnold was not the first public school head to attempt internal reforms. The literature describes the efforts of Dr Samuel Butler (Shrewsbury: 1798 - 1836), who instituted the novelty of examinations as an incentive to work; Dr Hawtrey (Eton: 1834 - 1852), who divided the upper school into manageable forms; and John Russell (Charterhouse: 1818 - 32), who abolished fagging and introduced the monitorial system widely used (because of its economy) in elementary education. But these were piecemeal improvements. The public schools needed a new conception implemented by a man of sufficient vigour, boldness and crusading zeal. In other words, they needed Thomas Arnold, or at least the authority of the legend that grew up after him. His comtemporary biographer, A.P. Stanley; his former pupil, Thomas Hughes, author of Tom Brown's Schooldays (1857); and his son, the poet Matthew Arnold (Rugby Chapel, 1857), were largely responsible for the legend, which was not really challenged until Lytton Strachey included Arnold in his Eminent Victorians in 1918. A later biographer, T.W. Bamford,[26] while generally denigrating, does not attempt to deny the important influence of the Ar oldian principles: 'the fact remains that they comprised a core of ideas that were subscribed to by numerous influential figures, including the founders and headmasters of many new schools. In this sense, there can be no doubt that in 1900 he was still metaphorically a living influence'.[27] As we shall see more fully later, he was still metaphorically a living influence in South Africa in the 1970's.

What were the 'principles' that Arnold developed during his relatively short reign (1828 - 1842) at Rugby School, thereby creating a coherent system that provided a mythology and an authority for the later Victorian public school model? He clearly was not a great innovator: he drew on his own experiences gained in following the traditional educational route of the English upper classes - schooldays at Westminster and Winchester, followed by a classical training at Corpus Christi, Oxford - and on elements already present at Rugby when he became headmaster. His previous teaching experience was confined to private tutoring. By 1828 Rugby had already grown, through the operation of forces already described, from the typical local free grammar school into a large boarding school, second only to Eton in numbers and drawing its nearly 400 boys from all over the United Kingdom.

First he tackled the prevalent brutality and 'sin' by introducing morals and religion into his scheme of education. He had himself made chaplain on his appointment as headmaster, to establish a pastoral relationship with his charges. If fierce moral exhortation was not successful, he fell back on flogging. He was the first important headmaster systematically to implement the novel idea that education involved character training and moral improvement. He sought to replace the 'wickedness of young boys' with 'manly spirit'. He sought allies in his battle, and they were to hand in the prefects. He used the prefectorial system to such effect that he is often regarded as its inventor. He also used the existing house system as a means of promoting moral tone and of unifying the school: each house was to be an epitome of the whole school and the housemasters were given increased authority as well as improved salaries, which meant that they did not have to seek other benefices. Arnold also consulted his staff regularly and drew them into the decision-making of the school.

Rugby moved closer to the concept of a total society under Arnold. He restricted the bounds and sought to organise almost every aspect of the boys' lives as part of his evangelical urge to save them from 'sin' through the inculcation of 'manly spirit'. Yet it is wrong to attribute the later games madness in English public schools to him. Evidently he was bored by games, and their importance was attached to him retrospectively because of the great popularity of Tom Brown's Schooldays with its exciting descriptions of matches and because Rugby football is commonly regarded as having originated at his school. Games became, however, and for whatever reason, an integral part of the composite Arnoldian public school code.

Arnold set his priorities out quite clearly: 'first, religious and moral principle; second, gentlemanly conduct; thirdly, intellectual ability'. (He could have been quoting from some present-day South African church school prospectus! The 1978 prospectus of St Mary's Diocesan School for Girls, Pretoria, follows the order exactly: the school's objective is 'to provide religious, moral, academic and other instruction ...') In terms of the curriculum he was not innovative, believing that the classics should remain the foundation. Other than the classics, 'surely the one thing needful for a christian and an Englishman to study is christian and moral and political philosophy'.[28]

The inequalities of English society made Arnold uneasy and he wrote extensively on religion and politics, earning a wide public reputation. He does not seem, however, to have questioned the rightness of an upper class education, and the literature generally sees him as having a sharp eye for the growing middle class market. He clearly accepted that responsibility should go along with leadership and that one of the functions of leadership was to raise the general level of moral character: at Rugby he saw his prefects as playing this role.

In a wider context he felt that boys at public schools - now not only the sons of aristocracy and the gentry but increasingly also the sons of industrial and commercial leaders - had to learn responsibility towards 'the people'. This was at least partly because a ruling class could not maintain its position unless it behaved according to the ideal of the 'christian gentleman'. As Simon points out, in so doing he provided an education 'designed to fuse aristocracy and bourgeoise, to make the aristocracy more useful and the boureoise more polished - one which corresponded with, and in turn helped to form, the outlook and aspirations of the Victorian upper-middle class'.[29]

The Missionaries

Arnold undoubtedly had a profound influence on many of his boys. Oxford tutors were described as being taken aback by the character - 'thoughtful, manly-minded, conscious of duty' - of their students who had been to Rugby.[30] While Rugby itself remained in a state of inertia for nearly twenty years after Arnold's death (it would have been blasphemy to alter anything shaped by the master), disciples were carrying out missionary work, taking the gospel to [illegible]stant parts.

Several of the disciples - particularly Arnold's own pupils or assistant masters - were directly involved in the launching or the consolidation of many of the important new foundations whose origins have already been described.

Cotton at Marlborough, Benson at Wellington, A.G. Butler at Haileybury, Percival (who is said to have insisted on his footballers wearing knee-breeches to reduce the risk of sexual excitation) at Clifton, all carried the message. Some of the old grammar schools also benefited. Two of Arnold's pupils raised Warwick and Bromsgrove out of their slough; Rugby masters brought Birmingham's King Edward's School, Manchester Grammar

School and Bedford School to unprecedented levels. (Obviously, the climate was ripe for renewal, and the middle-classes were clamouring for schools on the Rugbeian model). We have already seen one example of missionary work in the colonies across the seas. Here is a succinct summing up of the Arnoldian principles, taken from the 1978 prospectus of Kearsney College, Natal, whose aim is 'to prepare boys for adult life in a Christian atmosphere under disciplined conditions with the opportunity to develop leadership and character'. And an even more succinct one from St Alban's College, Pretoria, which aims 'to train thoughtful, disciplined Christians'.

We need to look briefly at the story of one of these disciples, since it illustrates a number of facets of the Victorian public school. C.J. Vaughan, one of Arnold's former pupils, was regarded until very recently as a great Victorian headmaster. At the age of twenty-eight, in 1845, he was appointed headmaster of Harrow when its numbers had declined to 69. Vaughan 'took the school in hand, revitalised it and in fourteen years raised its numbers to 469', [31] in the process of restoring it firmly to its place among the public school greats. Ogilvie's account stops at this point, as do the accounts of other historians writing before 1964.

Later writers have been able to reveal the reason for Vaughan's sudden resignation after fifteen years, a reason which was suppressed from public knowledge for more than a century. [32] Dr Vaughan, who preached continually against vice and sin and imposed a strict outward discipline on his school, was in fact involved in an affair with one of his pupils, who revealed the secret to another boy, Symonds, who in turn told his father. The father confronted Vaughan and demanded his resignation as the price of silence. Symonds's diaries recorded the facts, as well as descriptions of Vaughan's Harrow as a sort of adolescent jungle 'where lust and

brute strength raged completely unrestrained'. [33]

When in 1863 Vaughan accepted the offer of the Bishopric of Rochester, Dr Symonds sent a warning telegram reminding him of the threat of exposure. So Vaughan resigned again and for the next sixteen years occupied the relatively humble position of Vicar of Doncaster before finally becoming, after Dr Symonds was safely dead, the Dean of Llandaff.

This story illustrates graphically the change that had come over the moral climate of England since the days of Nicholas Udall, headmaster of Eton from 1534 to 1543. Udall was dismissed for cruelty, theft of the college plate and buggery. Having secured his release through the good offices of a friend at Edward VI's court, he managed to persuade the Eton bursars to pay him arrears of salary and was then appointed a Canon of Windsor and headmaster of Westminster. (He also managed, somewhere in his career, to write Ralph Roister Doister. the first regular English stage comedy).

The story of Vaughan also illustrates the way in which from Victorian times the public schools have been able to contain, within the family as it were, scandals that would be damaging to their public image - Gathorne-Hardy's 'profound and mysterious silences'. Suppression of the truth, hushing-up, the wall of silence, are, of course, not peculiar to public schools, but in these total institutions they may acquire a particularly obsessive quality.

The third factor to be illustrated by Vaughan's story is the problem of homosexuality. The problem is common to all schools, 'but public schools, because they were single-sexed, boarding and increasingly enclosed and isolated in a peculiar way, intensified it. They intensify it still'. [34]

The Commissions: 1. Clarendon

Simon has analysed the way in which the movements for reform, firstly of Oxford and Cambridge, secondly of the public schools, and thirdly of the grammar schools, between 1850 and 1870 effectively resulted in the creation of an elite system of education closed to any but members of the aristocracy and the upper middle and middle classes.[35] The position of the universities need not concern us here, except to note that their reorganisation resulted in their attracting more students from the new proprietary boarding schools such as Haileybury, Cheltenham, Marlborough and Wellington, 'whose pupils were now brought together at Oxford and Cambridge with the products of the older public schools'.[36] These newer schools were themselves rapidly acquiring the status of 'public schools' and gradually becoming fused into the upper class educational system previously represented solely by the old 'great' schools and Oxbridge.

As far as the 'great' public schools themselves were concerned, despite the apparent success of Arnold and his disciples, criticism continued and reached a crescendo in 1860. The attacks came from the Radical middle class but clearly touched a sensitive nerve in the aristocracy, which was becoming concerned that 'their' schools were rapidly being outdistanced by the newer ones, and that they needed reform if the aristocracy was to maintain its position of superiority. The task thus was to modernise and improve the 'great' schools

> while at the same time bringing the lesser public schools up to a standard which met the needs of the middle class, who wished their sons to have a reasonably useful education. Thereby Eton and the rest could once more take their place at the head of a system of upper-class schools .[37]

In the event, a Royal Commission was appointed in 1861 under the chairmanship of Lord Clarendon, who felt that the inadequacies of the public schools placed the

'upper classes in a state of inferiority to the middle and lower'. [38] All but two of the commissioners were themselves products of the nine public schools chosen for investigation - Eton, Winchester, Westminster, Charterhouse, Harrow, Rugby, Shrewsbury, St Paul's and Merchant Taylor's.

The commissioners were clearly sympathetic to the schools, but this did not prevent the latter from resisting any 'interference'. Only two of the schools allowed the commissioners to enter. The headmasters 'filled the public prints with passionate denials of the need for a Parliamentary investigation' and, when the commission was actually appointed, 'they continued before that august body their frantic defence of their institutions...' [39]

The commssion's report, the outcome of three years of painstaking work, was published in 1864. It found that the level of classical studies was deplorably low, and that the public school products compared unfavourably with those from the newer foundations. In arithmetic and mathematics the public schools were especially defective, and the general standard of teaching was poor.

In organisation and government the commission uncovered abuses, particularly at Winchester and Eton. It proposed a complete transformation of the governing bodies. As regards the curriculum, the commission supported the introduction of modern studies, while retaining the classics as the central core of education.

One of the most important recommendations was that the schools be given authority to ignore their founders' provisions relating to 'poor scholars' or 'free' pupils from the locality. These had already largely gone by the board, as schools devised various strategems to exclude, or at least segregate, the boys of the local 'lower classes' (Simon gives an excellent account of

these. [40] By 1862, the number of 'free' places had shrivelled to insignificance (70 each at Eton and Winchester, 60 at Rugby, 44 at Charterhouse, 40 at Westminister, 32 at Harrow - segregated in a 'humble tenement' and on no account to 'mix themselves with the games and etc., of the Public School' - and 26 at Shrewsbury). The commission's recommendation thus meant there would be no remaining legal barrier to the schools admitting only fee-paying pupils, and thus becoming exclusively for the sons of the well-to-do.

In fact, the commission felt that the traditional rights of the poor should be abolished entirely by recommending that entrance to all the schools should be made a matter of competitive examinations, 'a solution both entirely in accordance with the laissez faire business ideals of the Victorian upper classes and singularly effective for securing its end, since a good deal of expensive preparation was necessary to pass public school entrance examinations.' [41] (An important factor in the development of a preparatory school system was the need to provide this 'expensive preparation').

The Clarendon Report met with opposition, both from the left, which saw it as reactionary, and from the right, which resented any interference with the public schools. The Public School Bill was finally introduced in 1868 to give effect to the Report's recommendations. Simon's conclusion on the matter is worth repeating.

> So schools which had in the past bred statesmen and churchmen for the tasks of government were successfully adapted to train a new kind of ruling class. In the coming years, not only were they to prosper but also more aspiring grammar schools were to become minor 'public' schools and the upstart proprietary schools were to be drawn in to swell the galaxy. Indeed, it

> was these last - truly middle-class foundations - which perhaps best gave expression to the public school ethos in the golden age of the system, from 1880 up to the first world war ... All in all, by insisting on the preservation of the classics as the main core of teaching, and by ensuring the final separation of the public schools from those for other classes, the Clarendon Commission created an efficient and entirely segregated system of education for the governing class - one that had no parallel in any other country. The Commissioners had done what was required of them, and had done it well. [42]

The Commissions: 2. Taunton

Public attention having been focused on the whole question of secondary education by the Clarendon Commission, it was an understandable consequence that the bulk of the country's secondary schools should be investigated. The School Inquiry Commission (the Taunton Commission) was appointed in 1864 to inquire into the education given in those schools which had not been covered by the Clarendon Commission.

Simon gives a comprehensive and excellent account of the work, the findings and the recommendations of the Taunton Commission, which presented its report in 1868. [43] We need merely note here the most important of these where they have direct relevance for our study.

It is clear that the inquiry was a most thorough and painstaking exercise, 'the most far-reaching educational enquiry ever to have been undertaken, and providing the most complete sociological information pertaining to education ever assembled in this country' [44] (Britain). The Commission found that most of the old endowed grammar schools were in a deplorable condition and the whole system - or lack of system - chaotic. In contrast, the educational character of most of the

new proprietary schools - Marlborough, Cheltenham, Clifton et al - stood very high. Private schools, which had proliferated, were further evidence that the middle class had lost confidence in the grammar schools. But most of these were 'mainly or wholly commercial' and exhibited the worst vices of the small school system. A few of the private schools, those catering for the professional and upper middle class, were educationally good: the remainder were very bad.

The Commission's findings revealed the extent to which schools reflected the increasing class stratification of Victorian England. The very rich tended to patronise the public and other boarding schools. The great mass of the middle classes sent their children to proprietary day schools, private schools and those grammar schools which still had acceptable standards. The working classes sent their children to the local elementary schools, which were also patronised 'by the tail of the lower middle class, lesser shopkeepers, warehousemen and clerks'.[45] (Much the same pattern was developing in South Africa in the last quarter of the 19th century, as we shall subsequently see).

The Commission's proposals were premised on the need to secure an efficient education for the middle classes as a whole, making due provision for 'proper' class distinction while also allowing for a strictly controlled amount of upward mobility. This required the integration of schools into a coherent system with clearly defined objectives and curricula. Three grades of schools were advocated, each charging a defined fee and having a specific purpose:

1) the first grade schools would aim at University entrance and serve the upper middle and professional classes (the proprietary boarding schools and certain grammar schools which aspired to public school status fell into this category);

ii) the second grade schools should be day schools, preparing for the army, the civil service, commerce and the medical and legal professions. The leaving age would be 16 and it was envisaged that these schools would be patronised by the 'mercantile and trading classes';

iii) the third grade schools would have a leaving age of 14 and belong 'to a class distinctly lower in the scale'.

This division of secondary education into three grades or types (roughly upper, middle and lower - and thus echoing the social stratification), with the public schools floating at the very top of the system, was an uncanny foreshadowing of the tripartite division that was instituted in Britain after the Second World War, when secondary schools were divided into grammar, technical and secondary modern. This tripartite division gave way only in the 1970's in favour of a policy of comprehensive secondary schools.

A key recommendation was that all the old endowments should be scrapped and that all the schools should charge fees suitable for their grade. 'Indiscriminate gratuitous instruction' (i.e. free education) ran counter to the Victorian laissez faire code but, as Simon clearly shows, the result of abolishing endowments for free education and charging fees in all schools was to subsidise the education of the middle classes. He also describes the process of social mobility which was envisaged: 'The poor were not, of course, to be altogether excluded from higher grades of schools; they had but to prove their worth to secure a more extended education and so to step into another class'.[46] The Commission envisaged this occurring through a selection of those who were able to compete successfully with members of the class to which they aspired: 'If the son of a labourer can beat the sons of gentlemen that goes a long way to prove that he is capable of using to advantage

the education given to gentlemen' [47]. An elaborate system of scholarships (or exhibitions) was proposed as the means of facilitating the passage of children from the local elementary schools through the three higher grades.

One important outcome of the Commission's work - embodied in the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 - was that some of the grammar schools which were already well on the way to becoming public schools were given a further boost: free of the need to admit local free scholars and able to draw their entrants via an entrance examination from all over England. and also able to charge relatively high fees, they were soon to fit comfortably into the public school family. Oundle, Repton, Tonbridge and Bedford are examples of old grammar schools which became elevated in this way.

Summing up the effects of the various commissions and enactments from the first Universities Act of 1854, Simon says that

> all these operated to establish a firmly based, and, by comparison with the past, a rationally organised system of secondary and higher education, one primarily designed for the benefit of the Victorian upper middle class but which ensured the preservation of aristocratic privileges and pretensions while also opening new opportunities to professional men and the more properous tradesmen. [48]

As Simon makes clear, this system was established at the expense of the working class. A national attempt to provide an adequate educational system for all social classes still lay a long way ahead.

We have now sketched the educational structure that had emerged by the late 19th century, both reflecting the new social realities and attempting to satisfy the needs of the upper middle classes of industrial, Victorian England. In essence it resembles Turner's

sponsored mobility model, and it constituted a definite form of elite education which was to form the basic English pattern for the next hundred years. This structure powerfully influenced educational policy in the British colonies of Natal and the Cape of Good Hope, and was to be an important factor in the reconstruction efforts of Lord Milner in the Transvaal after the South African War. It is necessary to understand its essentials for a proper grasp of the position of the South African private schools in their formative years.

We can return now to the English public schools as such, the prime focus of this chapter, bearing in mind that the original nine 'great' schools were rapidly being joined by the new proprietary schools - which had been given a good rating by the Taunton Commission - and some of the old prestigious grammar schools which had been given a tremendous boost by the same Commission's proposals.

The Headmasters' Conference

It is clear that the Taunton Report, despite its proposals for a class-based and therefore socially divisive secondary education system, represented a most important advance on the previously disorganised and chaotic position (although it is probably also true that the earlier 'chaos' had made social mobility via schooling more possible than it now became in a carefully organised system). It was its detailed plans for a great national system - with central, parliamentary, control; a national examination system; regular inspection of schools; a modernised curriculum - that aroused the anger and the fear of several of the 'great' schools and their younger compatriots. Even although the 'great' nine were specifically excluded (their position had been dealt with by the Clarendon Commission) most of them felt anxiety at the principle of government interference in education (in long-term

historical terms it is clear that the government, representing increasingly the interests of the new powerful industrialists, was in fact attempting to fill the vacuum that had been left by the decline of the church as the country's sole educational authority). Those newer public schools that were directly affected of course felt even more threatened and it was from amongst their number that the impetus came for a closing of ranks, for the strength that would come from unity. This impetus took two forms. First, there was much behind-the-scenes lobbying which succeeded in castrating the proposals of their radical elements.[49] The Endowed Schools Bill of 1869, as we have seen, actually assisted the newer public schools. It set up Education Commissions with discretionary powers to introduce reforms, and on the whole the Commissioners were totally sympathetic to the public schools and those grammar schools which aspired to public school status.

Second, there was a movement to establish a body representative of the headmasters of the public schools which resulted in the formation of the Headmasters' Conference in 1869. The initial move seems to have come from Hutchinson of the King's School, Canterbury, who wrote to the headmaster of Uppingham, Edward Thring, in February 1869 suggesting that the headmasters of the endowed schools should meet to discuss the proposed legislation.

Thring had become headmaster of Uppington in 1853. It had been a small country grammar school, founded by the Archdeacon of Leicester in 1584. Thring was ambitious to develop his school into a large public school in which he would be able to implement his own ideas, which included such sound features as small classes, optional practical courses, and separate curricles for the boys.[50] Thring opposed the Endowed

Schools Act which would bring Uppington under the jurisdiction of the local Education Commissioners. He believed this investigation threatened to curtail the freedom of schools like his and to prevent them from developing along their own individal lines.

Despite his fears, Thring was reluctant to attend the meeting proposed by Hutchinson, being concerned about the class of headmasters who would attend. Eventually he was persuaded and to his relief found them to be 'a very superior set of men' (a phrase used by Percival for the title of her account of the formation of the HMC).[51]

Twenty six headmasters attended that first meeting, from such schools as Sherborne, Tonbridge, Bromsgrove, the King's School, Felsted, Lancing, Norwich, Repton and Bury St Edmund's - all public schools of a rank well below the 'great'. Thring now became the main mover in the creation of a permanent body. Although the start was shaky - only twelve headmasters attended the second 1869 meeting at Uppington - in the following year 35 headmasters were present and in 1871 fifty. Eton and Harrow joined in 1874 and soon, 'in the most tactful way, the great schools dominated the conference'.[52]

As the demand for admission to the HMC grew, conditions for membership were established: the schools had to be educationally satisfactory, they had to send an adequate number of their pupils to the universities, and they had to have independent headmasters and governing bodies. At first the number of members was limited to 150. In 1937 the figure was increased to 200 and the rules for admission were modified to allow direct-grant schools to be admitted, and even maintained schools if the Committee was satisfied 'on the general question of the freedom of the school and headmasters'.[53] The modern British HMC thus encompasses a wide range of

independent schools, not all of which would necessarily qualify for the title of 'public school' in the public mind.

The formation of the HMC was a crucial step in the concentration of the public schools into a coherent system. It provided both an informal and a formal means of contact and exchange of ideas and information, as well as mutual support in times of crisis. It also provided a ready model for similar bodies in other English-speaking countries. When the South African HMC was founded in 1929 it was closely modelled on the British body and maintained contact with it. Its role in the development of a private school system in this country will be considered in chapter 10.

The Public School Code

The 'public school code' is implicit in much of what has already been written, but it may serve a useful function to look at it more closely, since it was a vital element in the educational tradition that was exported to other parts of the English-speaking world and thus it played an important part in the establishment and development of a private school ethos in South Africa.

Manliness, loyalty, esprit de corps, leadership, 'character', sense of responsibility: these are the distinguishing values which have been listed again and again by headmasters and headmistresses and by Speech Day speakers since Victorian times. The influence of the Arnoldian principles is quite clear. Here is a characteristic statement by the headmaster of St Alban's College, Pretoria:' ... the growing boy does need a male hand to guide him from original sin and incipient thuggishness towards the ideals, principles and courtesies of true manliness'. [54] Made in 1977, this statement would probably have been warmly applauded at public school speech days a century before.

'Moulding the character' is another term for the schools' role in imposing conformity on their products. By the end of the 19th century in England the type was recognisable by its attitudes, its accents, its manners. The public boarding schools were the socialising agencies for the upper and upper-middle classes. There is an extensive literature on the subject and it would serve little purpose here to attempt to duplicate it. Gathorne-Hardy has already been quoted on the importance of House Spirit. The power of the House as a socialising agency is indicated by Pringle,[55] while Watson gives a vivid description of the drive towards conformity, almost as urgent now as it was in Victorian times:

> Nowhere is the drama of real life enacted with greater fervour than in the boarding House of the English Public School. Nowhere more than in the House is the competition so passionate, opposition to structural equivalents so lusty, loyalty so infectious. Nowhere more than in the House is the reward for conformity to group expectations more evident, the price of rebellion more terrible, or the subjugation of the individual to the group more complete ... (The House is) probably the most potent tool for socialising children and for structuring relations among them.[56]

It is not only the fact that boarders increase a school's income that causes them to be favoured. Boarders are more fully part of the 'total institution' and thus more easily 'moulded' into the required prototype. There are numerous examples of the way in which schools - not only public and private schools - have attempted to promote boarding. Queen's College, Queenstown, a government school, in 1910 adopted different blazers to distinguish the boarders from the day boys, much to the jealousy of the latter which actually culminated in a mass fight one Fifth of November evening when the boarders were lighting bonfires, a fight which was quelled only when the police were called in.[57] Another state school,

Maritzburg College, had separate houses for boarders and day boys until Froggie Snow (headmaster 1937 - 41) changed to mixed houses, 'despite bitter opposition', in an attempt to make the day boys feel part of the school and to eliminate a previous headmaster's 'contempt for the oppidani'.[58] To this day some schools encourage day boys to become boarders in their final year or two. The Ridge Prep. in Johannesburg until very recently made this a condition of admission (the decline in boarding is a universal phenomenon in the contemporary independent school sector).

In considering the anthropology of boarding schools Gathorne-Hardy makes a number of interesting points.[59] For example, the age at which many cultures seek 'to place the individual on the social map and explain that map to him' is between eight and ten, and then again at puberty, around the age of thirteen. These correspond roughly to the ages at which children enter prep. school and senior school. If in both cases the schools are boarding establishments, the entry to them acquires a greater degree of shock and tension - equivalent to that induced by rites de passage - caused by what amounts to extrusion from the family. The effect is to realign dependency and loyalty from the immediate nuclear family to a wider grouping. If, as is commonly the case on entry to the senior school at puberty, the extrusion from the family is accompanied by specific and traditional initiation ceremonies, the effect is so much greater. Gathorne-Hardy sums up the parallels as follows:

> In the boarding system, the public schools discovered, quite by accident, an immensely powerful instrument for bringing about social change and imposing the knowledge and mores of a culture ... It brought about a profound re-alignment towards the school, and thereafter the country and community as a whole.[60]

This process would have been most marked when the boarding system was at its height, in the late 19th century. As Mack says, what the British Empire needed then was

> manly, well-adjusted, honourable boys moulded into unthinking conformity and imbued with a passionate idealising loyalty towards authority, whether school or nation. Such boys the public schools have turned out by the thousands .[61]

As Ogilvie points out, this was a type of man 'admirably fitted for maintaining a static political and social system and for building an Empire'.[62] It was the type of man, very often, who was involved in the creation of English private schools in South Africa.

The prefectorial system obviously played an important part in the training for responsible leadership which was an imperial requirement. Nor should one under-estimate the role of the Officers' Training Corps,[63] the organised games[64] and the elite clubs and societies that were and still are a feature of many schools in the independent sector (Eton's Pop is the most famous. In South Africa, Kearsney College has its Demosthenes Society with a limited membership by invitation, its Forum and its Parliament; Bishop's its Ten Club; St Stithian's College its Twelve Club; Kingswood College its Hammersmiths, a discussion group of about a dozen seniors).

When to all these factors are added the rural settings in which many independent schools are placed, the socialisation process is intensified. In Victorian Britain, the aim of parents in sending their children to the newer public schools was to help them 'join the aristocracy and the landed gentry' (i.e. the ruling classes)and since the country house was the symbol of

these, 'public schools set themselves amidst parks and woods, in the largest houses possible'.[65] Baird describes sumptuous rural establishments in America, and in South Africa there are the examples of Hilton College with its graceful white buildings and its 3 400 acres of hilltops and river valleys, or Michaelhouse with its turreted, ivy-clad stone buildings and its 368 hectares of Natal midlands countryside.

Fostered by powerful, autocratic and often eccentric headmasters, the public school code acquired a mythological importance. As late as the 1950's, R.F. Currey, the headmaster of St Andrew's College, Grahamstown, was able to write of a private school headmaster as being 'king in his own little kingdom', a situation in which 'humility is not easy to practise'.[66] Percival gives an account of some Victorian headmasters which speaks of the unified image - a compound of the close and the chapel - which the headmasters, despite their own diversity, promoted partly through the HMC,[67] while Gathorne-Hardy is, as always, entertaining in his description of the vigour, the ambition[68] and the virtually uncontrolled power of the giants, as well as their more bizarre eccentricities.[69] The closer contacts brought about by the formation of the HMC and the cross fertilisation brought about by movements of staff between the schools all helped in the creation of a common public school mythology. This mythology was popularised in an extensive literature and rapidly influenced all sectors of English education. 'This has happened principally because lesser schools have tried to emulate the great ones, but also because for the past century generations of British children, both boys and girls, have absorbed the public school myth'.[70]

Several excellent studies have been made of this subject, starting with the essay on 'Boys' Weeklies' in 1940 by George Orwell, himself an old Etonian,

who was the first 'to sniff out the extraordinary fact that the fantasies of the public schools had succeeded in bewitching large parts of the population whom they had not really been addressing'. [71]

The public school myth penetrated into such unlikely areas as the Borstal system with its Houses, prefects, and 'character training'. [72] In South Africa, after the Boer War, the British High Commissioner, Lord Milner, wanted all new provincial high schools modelled on British public school lines. In particular, he wanted the Johannesburg Boys' High School, started in 1902 and later to become King Edward VII School, to be 'another Winchester College'. [73] Ironically enough, that led him initially to oppose St John's College, a private Anglican School which was to become possibly the closest South African equivalent of the English public school.

The point has already been made that there is a group of South African white state schools which approximate to the English grammar schools. In England itself, the grammar schools

> tended too readily to take the public schools as their model. Masters from public schools often became headmasters of grammar schools and introduced modified forms of such institutions as houses and prefects ... Vitalising as this influence was in many ways, it was unfortunate in others. Its worst effect was to put a snob value on the traditional curriculum . [74]

Snobbery led to the birth of a large number of 'boarding and day establishments of doubtful academic integrity ranging from Dotheboys Hall to the pseudo-public schools ... institutions run on short budgets, by headmasters of dubious qualifications and by underpaid ushers, catering usually for the middle class pretensions of impoverished parents'. [75] (The present writer can recall being interviewed for a post in the

late 1950's by a businessman turned school proprietor/ headmaster in rural Natal: his short-lived little school had an elaborate system of houses named after saintly knights of old and with an authority structure among the boys who started as 'pages' before becoming 'knights' and eventually 'squires'. The one qualification that the headmaster seemed anxious to secure in his prospective assistant was the ability to ride a horse).

The extent to which English children's literature has been - and to some extent still is - dominated by the public school myth should not be under-estimated. A cursory examination of the library shelves of a small Johannesburg prep. school in 1980 revealed a wide range of books with titles like Manor House School; The New House Captain; The New House at Springdale; The School Chums; St Catherine's College; New Girl at Minster; Three Terms at Uplands; Teddy Lester, Captain of Cricket ('Teddy Lester, captain of cricket in Jayne's House at Slapton School, sat in his study, No.25, with his head bent over a sheet of paper ...') two editions of Tom Brown's Schooldays; and Shirley at Charterton.

The last-named poignantly reflects the 'pretensions of impoverished parents' and their simple conviction that an expensive boarding school in a gracious setting provided the best kind of education: ' ... should she have carried off an entrance scholarship to the famous girls' school of Charterton' (the echo of Charterhouse is presumably intentional), 'it would not only mean for Shirley an excellent education in the happiest of surroundings, but for her widowed mother the joy of seeing the favourable conclusion of much scheming and contriving with small means on her part to set Shirley's feet on a path that might lead to a successful life'.

Girls' Public Schools

Shirley at Charterton also indicates the way in which the model of the Victorian boys' boarding school dominated

the girls' public schools that were established from the late 1850's onwards.

> That same rich class-obsessed middle class market which was making boys' public schools so profitable also existed, if to a lesser extent, with girls. Its influence on their own public schools is as decisive on the founding and in the growth.[76]

When Cheltenham Ladies' College was established in 1854 it advertised itself as an institution for the daughters and young children of noblemen and gentlemen.[77] By 1898 the formidable Miss Beale was ruling an empire with 900 girl subjects, from kindergarten to a teacher training college. Some girls spent virtually their entire childhood and adolescence within the institution.

Roedean was established by the Misses Lawrence near Brighton in 1889. It grew swiftly and by 1897 there were 130 shareholders and a working capital of £60 000.

Being part of the age, these and other establishments - St Leonards (1877), Wycombe Abbey (1896), St Felix (1900) etc - inevitably reflected Victorian conventions: the emphasis on religion, patriotism, class feeling. They also mirrored the prevailing boys' public schools in their country house settings, autocratic headmistresses, their stress on character and upliftment.

They differed from the boys schools in their acceptance of an inferior role in society for their products: 'I desire to institute no comparison between the mental abilities of boys and girls, but simply to say what seems to be the right means of training girls so that they may best perform the subordinate part in the world, to which I believe they have been called', said Miss Beale, Cheltenham's massive headmistress.[78] In addressing the annual prizegiving gathering at the

Durban Young Ladies' Evangelical Collegiate Institution (later Durban Girls' College) in 1881, the Colonial Secretary described the school's aim as being to bring the girls up 'in a manner that befits an English gentlewoman' which really implied that they should be content to be 'household treasures' whose 'first and foremost thoughts are of home and home happiness'.[79] Under these circumstances, the girls' private schools, both in England and the colonies, were generally content to offer merely 'a veneer of general knowledge, some skill in music, painting, needlework and graceful deportment'.[80]

This, however, was to change after the turn of the century, when some of the girls' schools went to quite extraordinary lengths in an attempt to emulate the boys' schools, not only academically but in terms of discipline, organised games and a general move to turn girls into boys via drill by military instructors, musketry and masculine uniforms (a bizarre outcome of the Arnoldian stress on 'manliness'?). One inevitable result was 'that psychological monstrosity - the woman who goes through life trying to perpetuate her own boyhood'.[81] But the earlier tradition of the 'household treasure' still dominated some of the girls' schools right up to the Second World War, as we shall see when we come to consider the history of St Andrew's School, Johannesburg, in a later chapter.

The English girls' public schools clearly influenced their South African equivalents. Rosedean (South Africa) is an obvious example, but there are others. Durban Girls' College, for instance, was modelled on Cheltenham Ladies' College, down to the decision to issue debenture bonds[82] as a means of financing its establishment.

The 'English Tradition' in Education

This may be an appropriate place to look briefly at the 'English tradition' in education, referred to in the first chapter of this study, since it is closely entwined with the whole public school code, and since it too had its roots in the Victorian public school.

The first point to note is that this 'English tradition' is vague and loosely defined. When speaking of it, headmasters and others constantly resort to terms like 'character', 'values' and 'standards'. As Baird found in his study of American independent schools, there is often confusion between true values such as courage or honesty, and manners, such as wearing a tie to dinner. Many heads who felt that values were declining might in fact have been confusing 'the morals of the country club and the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount'.[83] There is a striking example of this confusion in the 1977 report of the headmistress of an Anglican girls' school in Cape Town:

> While there are unmistakable signs at St Cyprian's of deteriorating standards, I do believe that we are, as yet, in a better position than many other schools. The vigilance and unceasing concern of the staff and the Christian principles on which our training is based are helping us weather the moral storm - except in one regard - the attitude towards school uniforms. We are gravely worried about this ...[84]

When we come later to analyse the statements of South African private school principals we shall see a far greater concern with manners, school uniform, 'scruffiness' and relatively unimportant social conventions than with genuinely important moral and ethical issues. Yet their utterances are heavy with language like 'a unique opportunity to help a boy find himself, and to find his neighbours, perhaps even to find his God'[85]; 'education in its true and broadest sense ... well-

adjusted boys with open and enquiring minds and a proper sense of values' [86]; 'we shall have to continue to teach and rely on old-fashioned concepts like loyalty, unselfishness and service'. [87]

There is a comfortable belief in the independent schools that they are more successful than other schools in inculcating 'a proper sense of values'. While, however, this may very often be the stated aim of a school, its actual aims may be far more mundane: preparing candidates for the Common Entrance examination and winning as many scholarships as possible; preparing for University entrance; winning as many inter-school competitions as possible. Baird found this in the USA. Whereas most pupils and teachers in the elite schools chose such values as independence, originality and self-fulfilment as most important (the second choice for teachers was 'living your religion in your daily life'), they perceived the actual goals of their schools as getting pupils into college and developing their intellectual ability. [88]

Teaching 'values' and beliefs, is, of course, very difficult. Even the Jesuits had limited success, and it has been argued convincingly by writers like Bamford and Gathorne-Hardy that Arnold actually did very little to raise the general moral and spiritual tone of Rugby.

At another level, the 'English tradition', with its frequent reference to a 'liberal education' (actually a carry-over from the old 'liberal arts' taught in medieval times and with very limited relevance for 'liberalism' as understood to-day), is seen as encouraging intellectual independence and freedom of the individual. Teachers 'who believe in the English tradition are reluctant to mould a child according to rigid rules'. [89] The writer of these words then goes on to praise the Victorian public school as the formative influence in the English tradition. As we

have seen, it was the 'moulder' par excellence.

Another South African educationist goes further back, to the time of Pringle and the 1820 Settlers, for the inspiration of the English tradition, which he defines as respect for the individual; compassion for the weak and under-privileged; free speech and expression; the right of a man to defend himself before his peers.[90] These may well be fine elements in the English concept of democracy. The point being made here is that it is wrong to mix them up somehow in the ethos of the Victorian public school and then simply to assume that they form part of the package deal of values being offered by independent schools to-day.

Marshall[91] has a useful corrective on this whole matter, stripping away some romantic notions. He points out that the 'tradition' has only limited validity and cannot be applied to the state sector, which has greatly altered even during its own brief history. 'Nor, in the sense of a centuries old persistence of character, is the term really applicable to the private sectors'. Although as an institution the grammar school may have a thousand years of history behind it, its present character derives from the 19th and 20th centuries. The public schools, too - 'the most firmly embedded and traditionalist part of the private system' - bear little resemblance to their original form, having been, as we saw in the previous chapter, reconstructed in the 19th century. Marshall in fact can identify only one underlying continunity in English education, and that is 'the influence of the class structure'. The ideal of intellectual freedom and critical enquiry in English school education is, of course, of very recent date.

The Formal Structure

We have now briefly considered the most important of the building blocks that went into the structure of the

English public school. Some of these have clearly not received sufficient attention. There is the question of games, for example, which reached a pitch akin to madness in the late Victorian and the Edwardian ages - the 'ideal' public school type must surely be C.B. Fry (1872 - 1956), educated at Repton and Oxford (where he gained a triple blue), a test cricketer, soccer international, F.A. cup finalist and world long jump record holder. Nor has sufficient attention been given to the innovations wrought by headmasters like F.W. Sanderson, who ran Oundle from 1892 to 1922 and whose work in curriculum design - including mathematics and mechanics, anthropology and agriculture - and in methodology - group work, individual assignments, workshops and farm activities - was to have a profound influence on secondary education generally.[92]

But, however inadequate our individual building blocks, an attempt has been made to recreate an outline of the formal structure, the outer walls as it were, of the public school model which dominated secondary education in Victorian England and was greatly to influence the private school system in South Africa. To conclude this chapter we must establish the point that the public school model in fact consisted of two realities, the one comprising the formal systems of the schools, their curricula, the HMC, the pious sentiments of Governors and headmasters, and the other the inner life of the schools, the reality experienced by their inmates.

The Inner Reality

The literature is full of accounts of the austere, even harsh, conditions in the Victorian public schools. Perhaps these should be seen as part of a whole spartan initiation process evolved by the Victorian ruling class to harden and discipline those who were destined to enter its ranks. At a South African girls' boarding school in 1872, the rising bell rang at 5:45 whereupon

the girls had to take a cold bath, summer or winter, followed by prayers at 6:30 and then morning prep. to 7:30. The afternoon's activities included cleaning the domitories and taking a daily walk, with evening prep. following supper.

While the robust and the 'manly' may have thrived on the regimen, the effeminate, the non-conforming, the eccentric, the creative were often simply crushed. Gathorne-Hardy describes the first two years at boarding school as usually being sheer hell for most, with its hounding and bullying and having to come to grips with largely incomprehensible petty rules and conventions.[93] Some of those who passed through the system were psychologically maimed for life, fixated in a kind of insane loyalty (Cyril Connolly's 'permanent adolescents').[94] A good many Old Boys who achieved distinction execrated their schools but it is astonishing how many were devoted to their old schools even when they had been very unhappy there. After the First World War a whole crop of writers expressed their revulsion: Alex Waugh, H.G. Wells, Robert Graves, Aldous Huxley, Graham Greene, George Orwell, Cyril Connolly, W.H. Auden ('The best reason I have for opposing Fascism is that at school I lived in a fascist state').[95]

Many of these themes - the harshness, the suffering, the picking on 'oddness', the spartan conditions, the lack of any real education and, finally, the astonishing irony of loyalty despite everything - are contained in the private memoirs of Lord Lee,[96] who vividly described a Victorian upper middle class education, with the particular horrors attendant on being a 'charity boy' (he was an orphan). He was ragged and bullied on account of his poverty. The only reference to his preparatory boarding school (Canon Girdlestone's at Sunningdale) is to his headmaster, 'a pedagogue of the old school who believed devotedly in corporal punishment'. His subsequent five years at Cheltenham were

> by no means happy, nor do I look back to my schooldays with any sort of pleasure ... There was much bullying, and ... bad feeling and neglect of boys ... for breakfast and tea nothing but thick slices of tinned loaf, spread very thin with butter, and lukewarm tea ... I recall, as retribution for having laughed during a Divinity lesson, being first caned on the right hand until I could hardly hold a pen and then being ordered to write out the whole of the first Aeneid of Virgil and afterwards to parse every word of the first 100 lines. This took me at least a month ...

Despite all this, and despite believing that the content of his education was virtually worthless, when Vicount Lee was elected in 1917 as President of Cheltenham College and chairman of its Council for life, he regarded it as 'an honour which I appreciated above nearly all others that have come to me and one which has more than compensated for the humiliations and oppressions which had been meted out to me as a boy'.[97]

It is beyond the scope of this study to explore the reasons for the extraordinary hold that boarding schools have on their past pupils - Gathorne-Hardy's anthropological parallels may be part of it, as may be the intense psychological conditioning of the total institution at a time of intense emotional and sexual development (Gathorne-Hardy comments validly that to ignore sex when dealing with the education of adolescents is little short of frivolous).

Skidelsky's words are appropriate at this point:

> The English public school probably leaves a deeper imprint on the characters of those who attend it than any other educational institution. Its secret is simple. Adolescence is a time of intense emotions, possibly the most intense that people ever experience ... The public school both amplifies and concentrates them. It amplifies them by throwing

> people together in close and intimate relations and by providing them with a rapid succession of emotionally charged events and experiences; it concentrates them by focusing them on one place and on one small community. People may leave their school loving or hating it, or both; they rarely leave indifferent to it.[98]

The loving can even acquire a mystical rapture, as evident in this description by an old girl recalling the 50th birthday of Durban Girls' College: 'It seemed · if the fields and the skies and the jacarandas overhead and the balcony above us were filled with people - the College family of other generations - with us and around us and watching, silently. The School became a holy place and I felt awed and very near to tears'.[99]

Footnotes - Chapter 4

1. J.R. de S. Honey: Tom Brown in South Africa, inaugural lecture, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 1972, p.3.
2. Vivian Ogilvie: The English Public School, Batsford, London, 1957, p.96.
3. Ibid, p.97.
4. Ibid, p.100.
5. Ibid, p.86.
6. Cf. S.J. Curtis: History of Education in Great Britain, University Tutorial Press, London, 1953, p.126.
7. Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy: The Public School Phenomenon, Penguin, 1979, p.63.
8. Ibid, p.51.
9. See detailed descriptions of the Long Chamber in, for example, Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., pp.70-71; Ogilvie, op. cit., p.124.
10. See, for example, Sidney Smith, himself an old Winchester Scholar: cf. Curtis, op. cit., pp.140-1; and a contemporary schoolmaster quoted in Ogilvie, op. cit., p.125.
11. The histories give detailed accounts of the more lurid rebellions.
12. Culled from Simon, Curtis, Ogilvie and Gathorne-Hardy.
13. Ogilvie, op. cit., p.129.
14. See, eg, Curtis: op. cit., pp.140-141.
15. Brian Simon: The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780-1870, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1974, p.101.
16. Ogilvie, op. cit., p.118.
17. Simon: op. cit., p.6.
18. Ibid.
19. Gathorne-Hardy: op. cit., p.112.
20. Quoted in Simon: op. cit., p.102.
21. Westminister Review, Vol. XXIII, No.46, October 1835, quoted in Simon: op. cit., p.101.

22. T.L. Jarman: Landmarks in the History of Education - English Education as part of the European Tradition, John Murray, London, 1962, p.227.
23. Gathorne-Hardy: op. cit., p.79.
24. Honey: op. cit., p.4.
25. These quotations are taken from the prospectus of Hilton College, 1978. For the criteria for establishing the 'big five', see Chap.10, f.n.95.
26. T.W. Bamford: Thomas Arnold, London, 1960.
27. T.W. Bamford: 'Thomas Arnold and the Victorian Idea of a Public School' in Brian Simon and Ian Bradley: The Victorian Public School, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1975, p.70.
28. Quoted in Ogilvie, op. cit., p.143.
29. Simon: op. cit., p.284.
30. Cf. Ogilvie: op. cit., p.146; Gathorne-Hardy,p.83.
31. Ogilvie: op. cit., p.149.
32. Cf. Phyllis Grosskurth: John Addington Symonds, Longmans, London, 1964,pp.30-41; Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., pp.88-94. (Gathorne-Hardy follows Grosskurth's account which is based on Symonds's diaries kept while he was a boy at Harrow).
33. Gathorne-Hardy: op. cit., p.90.
34. Ibid, p.94.
35. See Simon, op. cit., Chapter 6.
36. Ibid, p.298.
37. Ibid, p.303.
38. Quoted in Mack (1941), op. cit., p.27.
39. Ibid, pp.29-30.
40. Simon, op. cit., p.312-315.
41. Mack, op. cit., pp.32-33.
42. Simon, op. cit., p.318.
43. Ibid, p.318ff.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid, p.322.
46. Ibid, p.326.

47. Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission, 1868, Vol.1., p.596, quoted in Simon, ibid.
48. Simon, Ibid, p.335.
49. Cf. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.110.
50. Curtis, op. cit., p.181.
51. Alicia C. Percival: Very Superior Men, Charles Knight, London, 1975.
52. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.111.
53. Curtis, op. cit., p.182.
54. Speech day address to St Peter's Preparatory School, Johannesburg, 1977, reproduced in the school magazine, pp.7-8.
55. J.D. Pringle: 'The British Commune' in Encounter, Vol.26, No.2, 1961, pp.24-28.
56. Graham Watson: Passing for White, Tavistock Publications, London, 1970, p.73.
57. M.A. Peacock (ed.): Some Famous Schools in South Africa, Longman, Cape Town, 1972, p.205.
58. Ibid, p.156.
59. Gathorne-Hardy, Ibid, Chapter 20.
60. Ibid, p.474.
61. Mack, 1938, op. cit., p.125.
62. Ogilvie, op. cit., p.189.
63. Geoffrey Best gives a useful account in 'Militarism and the Victorian Public School' in Brian Simon and Ian Bradley (eds.): The Victorian Public School, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1975.
64. See, for example, J.A. Mangan: 'Athleticism: A Case Study of the Evolution of an Educational Ideology' and Eric Dunning: 'The Origins of Modern Football and the Public School Ethos', both in Ibid.
65. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.140.
66. F.J. Stiglingh: 'A Comparative Study of the Public Schools of England and the Anglican Church Schools in the Cape Province', unpublished B.Ed. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1957.

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49. Cf. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.110.
50. Curtis, op. cit., p.181.
51. Alicia C. Percival: Very Superior Men, Charles Knight, London, 1975.
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58. Ibid, p.156.
59. Gathorne-Hardy, Ibid, Chapter 20.
60. Ibid, p.474.
61. Mack, 1938, op. cit., p.125.
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65. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.140.
66. F.J. Stiglingh: 'A Comparative Study of the Public Schools of England and the Anglican Church Schools in the Cape Province', unpublished B.Ed. thesis, University of Cape Town, 1957.

67. Alicia Percival: 'Some Victorian Headmasters' in Simon and Bradley, op. cit., pp.72-94.
68. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.106.
69. Ibid, pp.117-118.
70. G. MacDonald Fraser: The World of the Public School, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1977, p.4.
71. George Orwell: 'Boys' Weeklies' in Inside the Whale, Gollancz, London, 1940; Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., pp.228-239; David Pryce-Jones: 'Secrets in the Family' in G. MacD. Fraser, op. cit., pp.124-135 (from whom the quotation comes); Patrick Scott: 'The School and the Novel', in Simon and Bradley, op. cit., pp.34-57.
72. Cf. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.239.
73. Peacock, op. cit., p.117.
74. Ogilvie, op. cit., p.179.
75. Bob Bell: 'Public Education and Private Payment' in H. Pluckrose and P. Wilby (eds.): The Condition of English Schooling, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979, p.123.
76. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.260.
77. Linda Blandford: 'The Making of a Lady' in G. MacD. Fraser. op. cit., p.200.
78. Quoted in Ibid, p.200.
79. Quoted in Joyce Wrinch-Schultz: The Happy Ship, a history of Durban Girls' College 187. 1977, Durban, 1977, p.24.
80. Ibid, p.10.
81. Ogilvie, op. cit., p.193.
82. Wrinch-Schultz, op. cit., p.10, p.12.
83. Leonard L. Baird: The Elite Schools, Lexington Books, Mass., 1977, p.88.
84. St Cyprian's School Magazine, Cape Town, December 1977, headmistress's report.
85. Cordwalles magazine, 1977.
86. Cowan House prospectus, 1978.
87. Kingswood College magazine, Feb. 1978, p.21.
88. Baird, op. cit., passim.

89. A.N. Boyce: 'The English Tradition in Education', Transvaal Education News, April 1976, p.8.
90. K. Hartshorne, reported in The Glave, St Alban's College magazine, Pretoria, 1977, p.25.
91. T.H. Marshall: 'Social Selection in the Welfare State' in A.H. Halsey et al (eds.): Education, Economy and Society, the Free Press, New York, 1961, p.393.
92. See, for example, Alicia Percival, 'Some Victorian Headmasters', op. cit., pp.89-94.
93. See Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.198.
94. Cyril Connolly: Enemies of Promise, Andre Deutsch, London, 1938.
95. Quoted in David Pryce-Jones, op. cit., p.124.
96. A Good Innings, the private papers of Viscount Lee of Fareham, edited by Alan Clark, John Murray, London, 1974. Lord Lee was a war hero of the First World War, a member of the Imperial Cabinet, and a Conservative M.P. He is best remembered for the gift of his country house, Chequers, to the British nation as a residence for the Prime Minister.
97. Ibid, p.16.
98. Robert Skidelsky: English Progressive Schools, Penguin, 1969, pp.71-72.
99. College News, Durban Girls' College, No.1, n.d. p.2.

Chapter 5: Beginnings of the South African Private School System

i: The Cape: British Pluck for Ever

Background: 1652-1806

European settlement commenced at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652, and from then until 1795 the colony was ruled by the Dutch East India Company. The educational provision for the Dutch colonists was both meagre and haphazard. Small elementary schools were established in Cape Town and outlying villages like Stellenbosch, Paarl, Swellendam and Graaff-Reinet. It was largely due 'to the zeal and efforts of the Dutch Reformed Church that these people did not grow up altogether destitute of education'. [1] Education at that time was seen chiefly as an means for perpetuating a religious order, and not as a function of the state. [2] Two types of teacher were employed, the sieckentrooster sent out from Amsterdam to minister to the sick and prepare the youth for confirmation, and the itinerant schoolmaster, usually a former soldier or sailor who earned his living by moving from farm to farm teaching the rudiments of learning. (That this character persisted until well into the 19th century can be seen from Bonaparte Blenkins in Olive Schreiner's Story of an African Farm).

After the first British Occupation of the Cape (1795-1803) during the Napoleonic Wars, the Batavian Republic was instituted in Holland and it took over control of the Cape under the Treaty of Amiens. This short interlude was marked by the work of the Commissioner-General, J.A. de Mist, who, amongst other things, carried out an extensive survey of education in the colony and proposed enlightened and far-reaching changes, which included 'a unification and co-ordination of the random efforts that had hitherto controlled and maintained the schools'. [3] This was to be in effect a state system of education controlled by a Board of Education (the Committee of Scholarchs) under the

chairmanship of the Governor and financed by taxes and levies on all landowners around Cape Town. The influence of the European Enlightenment on de Mist's thinking is clear.

The second British Occupation of 1806 prevented these plans from being fully implemented. There is also some doubt that they would have been acceptable to the conservative burghers of the Cape, who regarded de Mist's proposals as too secular and who objected to their financial implications.

The Cape under British Rule

Atkinson has pointed out that, with the exception of Ireland, British imperial expansion was 'marked by little official interest in the educational needs of newly colonised territories'.[4] Where there were significant numbers of English settlers, as in Australia, Canada and New Zealand, it was largely left to their initiative to establish schools. In South Africa, however, a rudimentary education system already existed, which provided some basis for development and which also required extensive reform. De Mist's survey had revealed its deficiencies, partly the result of inadequate support by the local community. Since the Cape was not formally ceded to Britain until the Peace of Paris in 1814 the Colonial Office was less than vigorous in instituting an effective educational system before then, particularly as Britain herself hardly had such a system.

After 1814, free government schools were established by the new Governor, Lord Charles Somerset. In 1822 English became the only official language of the colony and the medium of instruction in the free government schools, which numbered 25 in 1828. Many of the teachers in these schools were Church of Scotland men (James Rose-Innes at Uitenhage, William Robertson at Graaff-Reinet, Archibald Brown at

Stellenbosch and others).[5] Another aspect of Somerset's anglicisation policy was the importation of Presbyterian clergymen from Scotland to man the Dutch Reformed Church at the Cape.

The Dutch-speaking colonists inevitably reacted against attempts to anglicise them and established a number of private Dutch schools. These increased in number until there were 112 in 1841.[6] This is the beginning of two important patterns in the history of white education in South Africa:

i) the dualism whereby English and Afrikaners receive their education in separate institutions, a significant factor in the failure to create unity between the two major white groups;

ii) the stimulus given to private education in one group through its fear of political and cultural domination by the other group.

There were to be two further major manifestations of this second pattern. After the defeat of the Boer Republics in 1902 and in reaction to Milner's anglicisation policy, Christian National schools mushroomed in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State in order to provide private education through the medium of Dutch and according to the tenets of the Dutch Reformed Church (see Chapter 7); while English fears of Afrikaner nationalist domination after 1948 led to increased demands for English private school education and directly to the further consolidation of an English private school system (see Chapters 9 and 10).

English private education at the Cape

Scattered throughout the literature dealing with the period from 1814 onwards are references to short-lived private schools - a Prospect House Academy here, an Educational Institution there; a grammar school here, a Bishop's College there. As the names suggest, these were either private venture establishments or attempts to create denominational

foundations. Many disappeared without trace, some amalgamated with stronger neighbours (the Educational Institution joined St George's Grammar School; Prospect House Academy in Queenstown was absorbed into a larger private school), and some were the precursors of famous schools (Bishop's College in Maritzburg was transmogrified into Michaelhouse).

A very few survived all vicissitudes to emerge in their own right as present day South African private schools. The oldest of these is St George's Cathedral Grammar School, established in Cape Town in 1848. Whatever its eventual fate, each school bears some testimony to the initiative and enterprise of the English community in South Africa in providing education for its members. Nor should it be forgotten that the English community, through its churches and missionary societies, played the major role in the provision of education for black South Africans until the Bantu Education Act of 1953.

Evidently there was already a private English-medium school in Cape Town in 1807.[7] With the small English population mostly limited to government officials and military men, there was little demand for English schools until the Cape became a permanent British possession in 1814.

British Settlers

After 1814 immigration from Britain increased significantly. Morse Jones lists 267 heads of families who landed before 1820.[8] Amongst the occupations given (builders, blacksmiths, farmers, carpenters, gardeners, wheelwrights, merchants, tailors, ploughmen and surgeons) are four schoolmasters: William Hopley, Adolph Smith and Frederick Turr, who arrived in 1818, and William Vawser, who arrived in 1817.

Amongst the more than 1 600 heads of families listed as landing in 1820, [9] eight are shown as teachers (James Bell, John Bennet, George Bonsall, A. Duncan, William Howard, William Matthews, Joseph Turpin and Mary Boardman). The remainder are tradesmen, artisans, farmers, agricultural workers and retired members of the army and navy. There are also a number of professional men - clergy, bankers, architects, chemists, notaries - as well as an astonishing variety of craftsmen: china painter, confectioner, bookbinder, printer, worsted twister, taxidermist and umbrella maker. It is strange to think of all these exotic skills being dumped on the veld of the Eastern Frontier, to contend with drought, flood, locusts, snakes, and Xhosa tribesmen.

More teachers arrived during the following five years. Of 250 listed arrivals between 1821-1826, [10] ten are shown as schoolmasters, including James Rose-Innes (1821) and John Fairbairn (1823), who were to play major roles in the Cape's subsequent history. Dr Rose-Innes became the first Superintendent-General of Education in 1829, and Fairbairn is remembered for his role, with Thomas Pringle, in securing the freedom of the press in the Cape thus establishing a powerful South African tradition.

It is important to recognise that the British Settlers were led by people of some substance and education. [11] The evidence is found in the occupations they followed, and also in the 'newspapers, letters, diaries, speeches, books and other documents of the period'. [12] It is necessary to establish this point in view of a commonly held assumption that the Settlers were from the lowest social classes of Britain. Many were members of the lower middle and middle classes and it is important for our purpose to consider the types of education they would have received.

Some had probably received no formal training, other than in their trades, while others would have had a few years of elementary education in parochial and charity schools. Some would have attended the private academies that were a feature of early 19th century England (it is significant that Pringle and Fairbairn opened a short-lived Academy in Cape Town, which Somerset promptly denounced as 'a seminary of sedition').[13] Many would have gone to the old endowed grammar schools, decaying as these were at the time (this was before the reforms described in Chapter 4), and some of the professional people and senior military and naval men went to public schools. (For example: Robert Pate, son of the Governor of Patna in India, was educated at Eton around the turn of the century). A few might have had governesses or private tutors. Thus all the influences and traditions of the English educational system of the period would have been part of the collective consciousness of the settler community and would have influenced their plans for their own children's education.

The Settlers brought about 1 700 children with them and these were soon scattered throughout the settlement. The need to educate them was largely met by schools established through the private initiative of the immigrants themselves. The first of these schools was that of W.H. Matthews at Salem, begun in July 1820. Boarding accommodation was soon added for pupils coming from distant parts. Other schools were founded at Bathurst, Cradock, Grahamstown, Port Elizabeth, Port Francis and Somerset East. The Bathurst School, founded in 1825 by the Rev. William Boardman, was set up as a grammar school.[14] We have already seen how settlers like Rose-Innes, Robertson and Brown were appointed to run the free government schools established by Lord Somerset.

15

An analysis of the outline biographies in Morse Jones reveals a quite astonishing ferment of educational activity among the British Settlers and their offspring, in marked contrast to the stagnation that existed among the Dutch colonists before 1814 (the reasons for the difference are undoubtedly historical and sociological rather than genetic). We find Mary Adams starting a girls' school in Grahamstown in 1836 and then moving it to Fort Beaufort in 1845; Louisa Biddulph starting a girls' school at Bathurst in 1840 and then moving it to Grahamstown in 1848; Charles Bailie opening a boarding school at Cuylerville in 1834;John Cornfield becoming a master at the 'English school' in Cape Town; Adam Currie teaching at the Grahamstown government school in 1845 and then at the Kat River Settlement school; Aaron Aldum and George Cyrus - both educated at the Salem School - going to the Wesleyville Mission 'to acquire the Xhosa language'; Thos. Doughty running both his book-bindery and a school in Cape Town; Wm. Eaton giving 'private tuition' at George in 1830; Nicholas Gillie becoming master of Wynberg Free School in 1822 and Wm. Howard of Reed Fountain (Rietfontein?) School in 1827; James Hancock opening an art school in Grahamstown in 1824; Elizabeth Hockly opening yet another girls' school in Grahamstown in 1836; Martha and Harriet Mills opening an Academy at Graaff-Reinet about 1822; Sarah Slater running a girls' school at Salem before moving it to Grahamstown; Fred Turr becoming rector of the Latin School in Cape Town; Elizabeth Williams conducting an infant school in Cape Town in 1824; the Rev. Wm. Wright founding schools for Coloured children in Cape Town and Wynberg in 1821; John Younger, after being Somerset's district surgeon, opening a singing school in Grahamstown in 1832 ...

Amid this welter - grammar schools and boarding schools, academies and singing schools, infant schools and art schools - several people should be singled out.

Some were astonishingly peripatetic: Joseph Turpin in 1821 was the schoolmaster-sergeant to the Cape Regiment, in 1827 a schoolmaster at Port Francis, in 1832 opened an Evening Adult School in Grahamstown, in 1838 became Master of Caledon School, and finally turned to missionary work among the Xhosa. William Robinson (1820-1912), the Settler to survive the longest, went to school at Cradock and then taught there until, in 1840, he moved north to establish the first school in Potchefstroom in the Transvaal. The most illustrious was James Rose-Innes (MA, Aberdeen), who, after being appointed master of the Uitenhage School, became professor of mathematics at the newly founded South African College in 1830 until his appointment as the Cape's first Superintendant-General of Education in 1839.

Rose-Innes's son, also James, attended schools in Uitenhage and Bedford and has left a description of his schooling which is of interest on several accounts.[16] The master at Uitenhage was a burly, gruff but kindly Scots dominie, 'apt at wielding the tawse', and the only medium of instruction was English, as it was in the Sunday School, which was presided over by a Dutch dominie. Yet most of the children were not English. A similar situation obtained at Bedford: 'not only was English the sole medium, but there was no provision for teaching Dutch ... a thorough grounding in Dutch at school would ... have brought me into closer touch with a large section of my fellow-countrymen'. The history and geography was almost entirely about Britain and Europe: 'my ignorance of details connected with the Great Trek - then only a generation old - seems almost incredible tod[illegible]' The significance of Rose-Innes's experience, as [illegible]mself says, is that it was typical: he makes the point that while the English children were following their particular curriculum, 'a still larger number, all over South Africa,

whose mother tongue was Dutch, were deriving from their education, their reading, and the tradition of their elders, a very different story'.

If this lack of South African content was true of the ordinary Cape village school, which was the only education which the ordinary parent was able to procure for his children, it was even more true of the private schools which were then coming into existence, with their spirit, their curriculum, their style, sometimes their very buildings, consciously modelled on British public school lines.

For the sake of completeness, we should mention some of the British Settlers who made important contributions to educational and missionary work among Africans. The Rev. Thomas Hodgson and Samuel Broadbent, for example, in 1823 started a mission among the Baralong; John Ayliff founded the Birklands Mission among the Xhosa, which in time became the Healdtown Institute; the Rev. James Archbell prepared a Baralong Grammar; and John Brownlie established the Tyumie Mission in 1820. The educational endeavours of the Settlers were thus not limited only to their own immediate community, but played a part in the development of African education in this country. The institutions that emerged, like Healdtown, Lovedale, and the Kaffir Institution attached to St Andrew's College in Grahamstown, were clearly not free of the all-pervasive influence of the British public school in the late Victorian years.

Summing up the fifty years after 1820, Currey describes how 'all over the Eastern Province schools had been conceived, brought to birth, lived a brief and fitful existence, and then died' [17] (the same pattern was to repeat itself in Natal and, to a somewhat lesser extent, in the Transvaal). This frenetic

pattern of activity was dictated not only by ideals of service and community development, but also by the difficult economic position of the time. It is almost as if, rather than taking in each other's washing, many of the Settlers took in each other's children. So our earlier catalogue of educational activity must be qualified with a recognition that many of the schools were extremely shaky establishments. Barry describes the 'school' run by Mr & Mrs C.E. Ham in Queenstown in the 1850's. [18] They called it Prospect House Academy: there were to be 'professors' of music and dancing, and a 'master of deportment'. The Academy aimed 'to provide a sound English and commercial education ... preparation for mercantile pursuits ... particular attention given to reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic'; it was 'situated in the best part of town' and 'surrounded by extensive play and pleasure grounds'. To supplement the government grant-in-aid of £50 (Mr Ham's school was essentially a civic venture) the headmaster took in boarders.

All this failed to impress the first government inspector to visit the school; he found one master and thirty boys and reported as follows: 'State of school: utterly unfit. Floor: clay. Ventilation: Holes in the wall'. Yet after various vicissitudes Prospect House Academy amalgated with a newer, private school and from this eventually came Queen's College, a member of that select group of state schools already mentioned as being the South African equivalents of the British grammar schools, and, like them, heavily influenced by the British public school tradition.

The South African College

We need to return now to Cape Town and to the mainstream of our subject. A school commission of 1827 had found a doleful state of affairs,with numerous schools of doubtful quality and an inadequate

supply of competent teachers.[19] The following year, however, saw the start of an impressive ecumenical and civic venture which was to result in the creation of the South African College, the forerunner of both the University of Cape Town and the South African College High and Junior Schools. The committee that planned this venture included representatives of the colonial government, the merchants of Cape Town, and the Dutch Reformed Church, the Church of England, the Lutheran Church and the Scots Presbyterian Church.[20] An astonishingly wide curriculum was proposed: English, Dutch, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, rhetoric, logic, metaphysics, universal history, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, astronomy, geography, botany, zoology, mineralogy and chemistry (obviously a commingling of the old classical tradition of the English public schools and the more modern subjects being demanded by the Radical Reformers). SACS was the first major experiment in secondary and higher education in South Africa.

The College was financed through selling shares to the public - 'everybody who was somebody thought it politic to see this (sic) name in the final list and to invest the maximum number of rix-dalers possible'.[21] It will be recalled from the previous chapter that this means of financing was adopted by some of the new proprietary schools in England. Other civic and ecumenical enterprises were later to finance schools in South Africa in the same way, but there were to be few other instances in which both of the major white groups co-operated as they did in the foundation of the South African College. The trend, as we saw with the establishment of English-medium free government schools and fee-paying private schools on the one hand, and private Dutch-medium schools on the other, was in the opposite direction, towards a dual system separately serving the white communities.

A Native Education

There was at this stage little thought given to the possibility of educating black and white children together, although this was not an entirely alien tradition since there is evidence that the schools in the days of the Dutch East India Company took both races. Walker describes how 'christianised' Hottentots were admitted to school alongside white and slave children.[22] And later in the 19th century, after the establishment of mission schools, it was common practice for them to admit white children from the locality. The poet F.C. Slater has described his schooldays at Lovedale in the 1890's.[23] This Church of Scotland school 'seemed always to have at its disposal a most efficient team of teachers' and had accepted white boys since about 1870. Slater's own teacher was Mr J.G. Tooke, inevitably a British public school product (Harrow). Although Lovedale was primarily an institution for blacks, the 30 or 40 white boarders received preferential treatment. They filled the front benches in class, ate at the High Table, were not expected to do menial work - 'the Native boys were marshalled, military fashion, into work companies ... detailed to keep the grounds in order - and on Sundays went to the Presbyterian Church in Alice, while the 'Natives' worshipped in the school hall. The cricket teams were divided into 'Natives' and 'Europeans', although the two literary societies were 'integrated'. Slater, like most of his white contemporaries, liked his 'Natives' to be modest and well-mannered. But 'dandified Natives', particularly if they mispronounced long (English) words, earned his scorn. He failed to be moved by the fact that 'many of the Native pupils were bearded men' who had worked for years to earn enough money to pay for their schooling.

All this seems to be an accurate reflection of the racial attitudes of even sympathetic English-speaking whites. The 'Natives' were indeed a breed apart, and the white man's right to a superior position was simply taken for granted. It was not until the second half of the 20th century that the admission of black pupils became a real issue for South African private schools.

Bishop Robert Gray

We need now to look at the foundations of those important church schools in the Cape which have survived to the present day and which form an important part of the modern English private school system in this country. The first really major figure in the history of the system was Robert Gray, first Anglican Bishop of the Cape of Good Hope.

The son of an Anglican Bishop, Gray was born in Durham in 1809 and followed the established route through Eton and Oxford. In 1845 he was appointed Vicar of Stockton where he was active in 'the improvement and extension of education', having been appalled by 'the lack of schools in the region and the poor standard of learning among the poorer class'.[24] Arriving in Cape Town in 1848, Gray soon busied himself in the improvement and extension of education in the colony as well. His own experience of an English public school education was a major influence in his approach. Another was the movement to establish denominational schools on public school lines, described in the previous chapter. He was a contemporary of both Nathaniel Woodard (who founded Lancing College in 1848) and William Sewell (who founded Radley College in 1849) and it was inevitable that these schools should provide handy models for Gray's own establishments: 'We should wish our Institution to be somewhat similar to Radley', he wrote when planning what was to become Bishops College.[25]

The result of his educational work over the next two decades was 'the first extension outside the United Kingdom of a series of Anglican Public School foundations inspired by the Oxford movement', [26] which had been one of the influences that bore on the Woodard Schools. Historically, the later Anglican Schools founded in South Africa and Zimbabwe (Peterhouse, Falcon and Arundel) are members of this family. 'The family is really an offshoot of the public schools founded to meet the changing social power base of the Anglican Establishment in Victorian England by such High Churchmen as Woodard and Sewell. Accordingly all the schools have a marked High Anglican ethos'. [27]

In his first year at the Cape, Bishop Gray established St George's Grammar School in Grahamstown. This was run by the Rev. F. Banks for the 'sons of Grahamstown's citizens and those of the officers of the garrison', [28] and it had a small boarding establishment. Banks was a mighty beater, in the English public school tradition [29] (it must be remembered that this was a time of public hangings and military floggings). The Grammar School was eventually merged into St Andrew's College when this was established by Grahamstown's first bishop, John Armstrong, in 1855. [30] There was also a short-lived Diocesan Grammar School in Port Elizabeth: its headmaster, F.Y. St Leger (MA Cantab.), became the second headmaster of St Andrew's from 1859 to 1862 in succession to Banks.

In Cape Town itself, Bishop Gray was involved in the establishment of three important schools: St George's Cathedral Grammar, the Diocesan College (Bishops), and St Cyprian's (the first Anglican girls' school in the country). The early history of St George's is somewhat obscure, but evidently there were both a St George's Church School and a St George's Free School in existence before 1848, the year in which the Governor, Sir Harry

Smith, granted a site to Bishop Gray for the erection of a new St George's School (on the site of the present Cathedral Chancel).[31] The school's function in training choristers for the cathedral has already been mentioned (Chapter 3).

Gray's major interest clearly lay not so much in a quasi-choir school teaching junior boys as in the foundation of a college with both 'an upper and a lower department' and modelled on the English boarding schools. In the late 1820's it had already been proposed that a 'King's College', affiliated to King's College, London, and with the Bishop of London as Visitor, be established in Cape Town, and a prospectus had been published.[32] Nothing came of this plan and it was taken up again by Bishop Gray in 1848. He conceived of a College of boys between ten and 17 or 18 - on the lines of Radley - who would be prepared for 'secular employments and professions, as well as for the Church'. The College was to be governed 'by a body of statutes similar to those by which our ancient institutions in the mother country are ruled', and the Bishop was to be the Visitor, with the power to appoint the principal. One of the passages Gray's original communication about the proposed college should be quoted here, as it was to be used again in the 1960's during the fierce debates within the Anglican Church over the question of the admission of black pupils to Bishops. Gray's 'firm belief' was that his institution would 'hereafter become a great engine for the extension of the pure faith of Christ throughout that part of the African continent, by the education of a body of devoted clergy, and a pious and intelligent laity'.[33]

The Bishop worked with surprising speed. A year after his arrival, in March 1849, the Diocesan College School opened in a cottage in the grounds of what became Bishop's Court. There were six pupils, and the

headmaster was the Rev. H.M. White (MA Oxon.). The curriculum was 'based on Winchester'.[34] The school was for boarders only and the fees were high - £50 a year - compared, say, to the £36 charged at 'a highly select school like Mrs G.R. Midgley's at Herschel, Claremont'.[35] As Atkinson has remarked, the Diocesan College was 'the first South African educational institution frankly committed to serving the needs of the wealthy landed and merchant classes now forming within the English-speaking community'.[36]

Interest in the new school mounted and in 1850 it was moved to its present site in Rondebosch. The buildings were designed in England, on the Radley model, and were financed largely by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), which was to play an important role in supporting other similar Anglican schools in South Africa (although its main raison d'etre was to spread the gospel among the heathen).

Canon White returned to England in 1856 and was succeeded by his brother, the Rev. F.G. White (MA Oxon.), who left in less than two years, after a quarrel over money[37] - the first of many such quarrels in the history of the South African church schools. The College was now in something of a crisis. Funds were short, it appeared that the school had not been properly administered, and the numbers had shrunk to 12 (five boarders and seven day boys) of whom some had given notice to leave.[38] Another factor was the 1858 Act establishing Government Schools and School and Education Boards in the Cape. This followed the granting of Representative Government to the Colony. From henceforth, private schools would have to face significant competition from government schools. An additional factor was the economic depression of the 'doleful sixties'. At this point, Bishop Gray realised that 'a Principal trained in

handling English Public School boys was not enough'. The undisciplined young colonists needed 'a firm yet understanding autocrat'.[39]

Such a one was at hand in George Ogilvie, then headmaster of St George's Grammar School. Educated at Winchester and Oxford, Ogilvie (Gog) was a well travelled bachelor clergyman with an aptitude for sport (he is said to have introduced Rugby Football into South Africa). Under Gog St George's had prospered while the Diocesan College had declined.

Seemingly unconcerned about the possible damage to St George's, Bishop Gray promptly installed Gog as headmaster of his Diocesan College in 1861. And 'by his very coming the numbers had increased from a dozen to 59 (46 boarders and 13 day boys)'[40], as boys followed him from St George's (this was a common phenomenon in English independent schools at the time, with boys following popular masters as they moved on to headships). Ogilvie, sometimes called 'the Arnold of South Africa', was undoubtedly a great headmaster, scholarly, firm, kind and humorous and a good administrator. He was the first of a long line of private school principals in South Africa to leave his impress on the system. Under him, Bishops grew in size and stature, inevitable setbacks were overcome, and, in 1874, university classes were added in terms of the Educational Act of that year (these classes were to continue at Bishops until 1911). In 1886 Bishops received a further infusion when it amalgamated with St Saviours Grammar School, a thriving denominational school. This was a familiar pattern - we have already seen how the Grahamstown Grammar School fused into the new St Andrew's College. In this case too the principal of the lesser institution was appointed to run the enlarged establishment (Canon Brooke. headmaster of Bishops 1886-1900). After his retirement, Ogilvie served the

Diocesan College Council (inaugurated in 1885) for a further 30 years until his death in 1916. His association with the school thus spanned a period of 55 years. There are other examples of the formidably long periods for which notable individuals served particular private schools.

Behind the formal structure we catch glimpses of that other world, the reality experienced by the boys themselves. A head prefect of the late 1870's has described the way in which juniors were abused by the seniors, who used

> these youngsters used their fags to such an extent that they failed to learn their lessons, and hid about to avoid being made fags. Sometimes the Seniors... ordered them to sing, and if they failed would thrash them; and sometimes they would send them into the village to buy them liquor and tobacco .[41]

When the head prefect reported the situation to Gog, the latter sought and followed his advice, an interesting example of the importance of boy-rule inherited from the English public school model. The importance of that model, as well as the Oxbridge influence (even the Bishops colours were 'a combination of the light and the dark blue of the two great English Universities'[42]), in the formative years of the first great Anglican boys school in South Africa should now be clear. While his Diocesan College was probably Bishop Gray's chief pride, he did not ignore elementary education, and a network of parochial schools was established across his diocese.[43] As free government schools were established, many of these parochial schools encountered strong competition, but a sufficient number remained to warrant the setting up by the Anglican Church of a central Board of Education to control its schools.[44] This was the forerunner of the Provincial Council of Education (ie of the Church of the Province of South Africa, as the Anglican Church

came to be called), which was established in 1891, a major landmark in the development of a cohesive system of church schools.

The parochial schools were partly intended as feeders for the secondary schools established in Gray's time, of which the Diocesan College in Rondebosch was only the first. A Diocesan Grammar School in Port Elizabeth developed from a parish school. This was the Grammar School of Mr St Leger, which we have already mentioned. St Mark's Grammar School, George, was founded in 1854 and after a chequered careeer finally closed in 1952. A Diocesan Grammar School, started in Kingwilliamstown in 1862, finally succumbed to the competition of the local state school, Dale College, in 1906. St Michael's Grammar School in Queenstown lasted from 1862 to 1900 when it, too, could no longer compete with its state rival, Queen's College.[45]

Needless to say, all these schools were for whites. Gray did not, however, entirely neglect black education and in 1858 started a 'Kaffir College' for 'the training of the mind and the spreading of the gospel'.[46] This developed into the well-known school and training college, Zonnebloem College. Stiglingh records the fact that 'many native chiefs sent their sons there to be educated'.[47]

One major achievement remained to Gray before his death in 1872. This was the establishment of a girls' school comparable to the Diocesan College. He had long cherished this notion and while attending the 1868 Lambeth Conference even recruited women in England for a quasi-order, the Community of St George, for whom he composed an 'Inner Rule of Life' comprising twenty two articles.[48] In due course one of the Community proved suitable to head a girls' school. The result was St Cyprian's, established in 1871 with twelve

girls in a Cape Dutch-house at 61 Burg Street, Cape Town. The demand from 'lonely Karoo homesteads and country society' for boarding places soon made it necessary to establish temporary dormitories and by the end of 1872 there were 60 pupils, of whom 26 were boarders.[49] One result was that other Christian denominations in Cape Town 'were stirred to give their daughters a higher education for fear of their being attracted to the English church'.[50] Another was that in the Eastern Province and Natal, 'diocesan emulation' caused the establishment of similar colleges for girls.[51] On all of these the influence of the new girls' public schools in England (see Chapter 4) was strong.

Gray's educational achievements were formidable: parochial elementary schools, a series of grammar schools and diocesan colleges, some of which survive to this day, the creation of the first senior girls' boarding school in South Africa, the beginning of a coherent system through the formation of an Anglican Board of Education, an Anglican college for blacks (the forerunner of later elite black Anglican schools like St Peter's). He was in fact the founder of the whole sub-system of Anglican schools in this country, which constitute about half of the schools belonging to the Association of Private Schools and which dominate the non-Catholic private education sector in modern South Africa. Even many of the schools that call themselves inter-denominational are decidedly Anglican in origin and ethos.

The Eastern Province: St Andrew's and DSG

Bishop Gray's diocese originally included the whole of the Cape Colony, Natal and St Helena. In 1853 this immense area was divided into three, with the Eastern Cape and Natal forming separate dioceses. John Armstrong (a Charterhouse Old Boy) and John William Colenso (a former Harrow housemaster) were consecrated

bishops of Grahamstown and Natal respectively on St Andrew's Day of that year.

Within weeks of his arrival in Grahamstown, Bishop Armstrong was [illegible]ealing for funds to established a College to se[illegible] three purposes: 'to provide a sound Christian education ... according to the principles of the Church of England'; 'to furnish the means of training men for Holy Orders'; 'to form a centre from which Missionary operations may be more effectively carried out'.[52] Like Gray, Armstrong was strongly influenced by the Oxford Movement (whose beginnings can be conventiently dated from a sermon on 14 July 1833, in St Mary's, Oxford, by John Keble, under the title National Apostasy). As we have already seen, some of the new High Church School foundations like Radley were strongly influenced by the Oxford Movement, and Armstrong would, like Gray, have seen them as models for his own College. (Another public school of this kind was St Columba's College near Dublin, and it is interesting to note that St Andrew's drew a later principal from this school).[53]

The way in which the Grahamstown Grammar School was cannibalised to provide a start for St Andrew's College has been mentioned, as has the way in which St Leger was lifted from the Port Elizabeth Diocesan Grammar School to be its second headmaster. There were other similarities with Bishops: St Andrew's also received financial help from the SPCK in England. In the depressed years of the 1870's and 1880's, and in the face of competition from the local state school, which became Graeme College, its numbers fluctated wildly: there were 20 boys in 1869, 91 in 1880, 17 in 1881. The early headmasters (until 1939 in fact) were all Englishmen in holy orders. There were quarrels between headmasters and the school council. It was to run university classes as a prelude to the creation of Rhodes University. There was,

above all, the same reliance on the English public school model. A recent (1972) description of St Andrew's reveals its indebtedness to this model: boarding houses with 'a hierarchy of prefects and monitors who control much of the daily business': 'a benevolent fagging system'; elite societies with restricted memberships (the Alchemists - a nice medieval touch, the Cornish literary society); major and minor sports; a pipe band; a tutorial system; and Sir Herbert Baker's 'lovely chapel ... very much the heart of St Andrew's.'[54] Currey, himself a former headmaster of St Andrew's (1939-54), has pointed out that the house system was 'in definite imitiation' of the one Arnold had instituted at Rugby.[55]

Unlike Bishops, St Andrew's used some of its SPCK funds to start a 'native branch', which existed as a separate establishment from 1860 to 1867. This was in pursuance of the third of Armstrong's objectives the creation of a centre for 'missionary operations'. After 1867 this missionary department became the Kaffir Institution which survived until 1907.[56] And there the question of educating the 'natives' effectively ended, as far as St Andrew's was concerned, until the debate of the 1960's and 1970's over the admission of black pupils to white Anglican schools.

The headmasterships of St Andrew's reveal a pattern typical of the first century of the South African private school system. This pattern should be seen in the context of the tradition of autocratic Victorian dictators mentioned in Chapter 4. The point has already been made that South African headmasters until about the Second World War were almost invariably English clergymen. Honey suggests that they were mostly second-raters, who had neither the ability nor the status of public school heads in England.[57] Certainly many of them were consumptive: Currey repeats the old joke that

if ever one came across a really first class man in South Africa one should ask him what ailed his lungs.[58] Undoubtedly, however, there were some very impressive headmasters: Ogilvie and Birt of Bishops, Espin - despite his tuberculosis - of St Andrew's, Gain of Kingswood, Langley of DHS (a state school), Falcon of Hilton, Nash of St John's, Currey of Michaelhouse and St Andrew's (he is the only South African in this list). Thomson says that 'to each school of any educational importance there is given at some time in its development, generally in its formative years, an outstanding principal'[59] (she is writing of St Cyprian's great principal between 1890 - 1910, Sr Theodora) and generally this seems to be true. Certainly the headmasters listed all succeeded in consolidating and expanding their often crumbling empires and in imposing the stamp of their own personalities (to the extent that the historian of Hilton can still describe Falcon, headmaster from 1906 to 1933, as 'a spirit that walks', while the whole spirit of DHS is still in thrall to the Langley mystique).

The autocratic tradition occasionally caused clashes of authority between headmaster and governing bodies. There are several examples in the history of St Andrew's and of many other denominational schools. The rule of Dr Charles Ross, headmaster of St Andrew's from 1875 to 1881, was marked by a series of acrimonious squabbles, exacerbated by absurd mismanagement which allowed the Diocesan authorities to control two rival schools (St Andrew's and the Cathedral Grammar School). Having demolished his second master in a series of letters, which he published as a pamphlet, Dr Ross then turned on his Committee of Management, who informed the Visitor that they would not be able to retain office unless their authority to control College affairs was maintained. The bishop's efforts at arbitration failed, as did an attempt to force Ross to dine in the

Hall with the boys. Finally, the Committee dismissed Ross, who refused to go. So the committee itself resigned. All this affected the school very adversely, and all but 17 of the boys were withdrawn. In the end Ross had no alternative but to leave.[60]

The question of succession often created problems, since lay headmasters were unacceptable and it was assumed that only men from England should be considered. After Ross, for example, the problem was solved through the expedient of commandeering John Espin, the Chancellor of the Diocese. In the event, although Espin had had no previous experience, he evidently turned out to be a good headmaster. On Espin's retirement in 1902 (when numbers had risen to 300) a former master acted as recruiting agent in England. From a list of 78 applicants he was instructed by the School's Council to interview the Rev. Dr W. Stuart MacGowan, MA, LL.D. (Cantab.) and the Rev. B. Hugh Jones, MA (Oxon). In the process the Council by-passed the Rev. W. Clarke, Senior Master of St Andrew's itself, who had hurriedly taken holy orders to qualify and who proceeded to embroil the school in a lengthy row. In the event the Council appointed MacGowan (the following year the consumptive Hugh Jones was chosen to be Rector of Michaelhouse in Natal).

MacGowan's short reign (1902-8) was quite disastrous. His directives were resented: 'Ear-pulling, hair-pulling, and banging on the head with a dictionary' were not to be permitted in the masters; 'under no circumstances whatever' were bedroom slippers to be worn to chapel services; 'I therefore lay it down as a definite obligation on every member of the staff that he may never omit to take a Form without letting the Principal know'. It was presumably the tone rather than the content that infuriated. MacGowan quarrelled with his Council on the subject of his salary and allowances,

and there were difficulties about his house. The Council passed a solemn resolution informing the principal that 'there is a wide impression amongst Old Andreans and pupils that too much of his time is taken up with golf'.

After Macgowan's departure, the Council looked to England again for a successor. This time they were fortunate in their choice, the Rev. Percy Kettlewell, with his thirds in classical mods. at Oxford and fifteen years as an assistant master at Clifton.[61] But it obviously was largely a hit and miss business, as will be illustrated again in the recruitment practices of other South African private schools.

To conclude this section on the Eastern Province, we may note the establishment in 1874 of the Diocesan School for Girls in Grahamstown, under the principalship of Mrs Espin, wife of the Chancellor of the Diocese and headmaster of St Andrew's; the establishment of a preparatory school as a feeder for the senior school in 1885; and the fact that fees at all three schools - which together formed a coherent Anglican school system in the diocese, to be formalised in 1958 by the creation of a United Schools Trust - at that time were not so high as to exclude the children of parents of relatively modest means. The full operation of Gathorne-Hardy's 'psycho-economic law' (see Chapter 1) was to come much later.

A note on the state schools

Honey has made the point that the state high schools were 'colonised' by men identified with public school ideals and has given details of the public school experience of the men who ran Dale College and of the way their influence spread to schools like Grey High School in Port Elizabeth.[62] He also makes the point that the predominant influence in South African primary education has probably been a Scottish one,

due to the importation of large numbers of Scottish teachers to serve the state system in the Cape in the 19th century.[13]

An Encapsulated Society

The church schools we have been looking at were intended for white, middle class Victorian English people in a colonial situation. Surrounded by 'natives' and Dutch-speaking colonists, this community was anxious to retain its cultural identity and, for the moment, did not seek to broaden its base by actively incorporating members of other groups.

Its private schools were an important means of transmitting social and cultural mores and of fostering pride in an English heritage. While some Afrikaner children were sent to these schools they never formed a significant minority (we have already seen how Dutch-speaking colonists sought to retain their own language and cultural identity through setting up private schools). As far as the blacks were concerned, their education was seen as part of a missionary task and when the Church schools were involved at all it was merely in the form of a short-lived separate 'native branch'. When, however, English colonists found it to be in their interests to attend mission schools they did not hesitate to do so, albeit in segregated rows in the front of the classrooms.

With the creation of an efficient system of state schools, the church schools faced strong competition. A number closed, and those that survived increasingly became identified with the wealthier classes of the English community.

Alongside the church and state schools there also existed a wide range of private institutions run for profit, comparable to the private schools that sprang

up all over Victorian England to meet bourgeois parental aspirations. These were preparatory schools and academies, of varying quality.

Henshilwood has given an account of one private prep. school in Cape Town around the turn of the century. The description underlines the Englishness of the education offered and the apparent total lack of points of contact with the wider evnironment in which it existed. From other accounts of similar schools in Natal and the Transvaal it would seem to be typical. The school was Milburn House in Claremont, run by a Girton graduate. 'Most of the girls came from families where morals and manners were stressed'.[64] The school followed the 'English tradition' very closely in style, manners and curriculum (Dictation, Transcription, Deportment, Singing, Recitation, Sewing, Drawing - note the 'accomplishments' of the Ladies' Academies described in Chapter 3).

In a later book[65] Henshilwood expands on her description. Dealing with the 'isolation' of the English community, she writes: 'They seemed more conscious of what happened in Europe than of events in their own far north'. Her family attended a local private school although 'there was a tendency for parents to send their daughters to "finish" their education in England'. Of the Afrikaners (still called 'Dutch' at that time), 'we knew little'.

Bertha Solomon, the distinguished parliamentarian, in her autobiography recalls her port-matriculation classes at Bishops in the first decade of the 20th century and how grateful she was that she 'picked up the English accent' of her teachers, most of whom were Oxford men. 'Thus I lost there such South African accent as I had and without any conscious effort learned to speak correct or standard English ...

people I meet in England always assume that I must
English or have been at an English school'.[66]

history of St Andrew's, Currey has particular
the master, a former English prep. school
teaching was 'quite depressingly dull' but
near to greatness because 'for thirty years
St Andrew's boys what an English gentleman was',
Falstaffian school porter on account of 'the
ly English quality of the man'.[67]

, gentlemanliness, an Oxford accent, an
'finishing' school, genteel 'accomplishments',
education: these were the educational ideals
English-speaking middle classes in South
extent they still are. At the turn of
they fostered a cultural chauvinism and
reached extraordinary heights at times.
College Old Boy puts it: 'The British
and was at the height of its glory
of British stock, one and all the world
ag-wagging imperialistic jingoes, and
loved it!'[68] The attitudes are perhaps most
in a telegram sent by the boys of
after the relief of Mafeking:
and congratulate you. British
[69]

point to turn our attention
private school education in Natal.

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Chapter 6: Beginnings of the South African Private School System

ii Natal: A Colonial Mentality

Background: 1843 - 1900

English settlement in Natal dates from the arrival of a group of traders at Port Natal (later Durban) in 1824. Missionaries from Britain and America arrived over the next decade to evangelise the Zulu. Voortrekkers moved into the territory in the late 1830's and proclaimed it the Republic of Natalia, with its capital at Pietermaritzburg. In 1843 Natal was annexed by Britain after a short skirmish with the Boers. At first treated as a province of the Cape Colony, in 1856 it received representative government and a Legislative Council of its own. Before this Durban and Pietermaritzburg had attained corporation status. British settlers entered in considerable numbers (some 5 000 in three years) and villages sprang up at places like Verulam, Richmond and York. By 1880 Durban and Maritzburg were connected by a railway line, which, after the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, was extended to Johannesburg in the 1890's. Villages and towns like Greytown, Newcastle and Ladysmith came into being. The colony gained the status of self-government within the British Empire when Responsible Government was introduced in 1893. The economy of the colony rested heavily on trade and agriculture, particularly sugar on the coast and timber in the midlands.

The bulk of the Trekkers having departed after the British annexation of 1943, Natal acquired the most English character of the various political segments of Southern Africa. Yet the white English community was always a minority, greatly outnumbered by the Africans. Even the Indian community, whose origins lay in the importation of indentured labourers to work the sugar plantations from 1860, rapidly over-hauled the white population in numbers. Our focus,

however, is on the education of the white English-speaking minority, who monopolised political and economic power in this segregated society.

Early Schools [1]

The Trekkers established a Dutch-medium elementary school in Pietermaritzburg in 1839. The next reference in the literature is to a government free school in the same town in 1848, five years after the British annexation. This was followed by another in Durban in 1850. The medium in both schools was English and the level elementary.

Financial provision for education in the colony was totally inadequate and many colonists sent their children to private schools. The official policy was to aid private schools, through subsidising the salaries of their teachers, rather than to open more government schools. But the subsidisation was inadequate: in 1857 an annual grant of £530 was available for distribution between seven private schools. It was clear that non-government agencies would have to bear much of the burden; in line with the historical role of the church in England, the initiative was taken by the churches, 'already experienced in the problems of European life in the Cape Colony, and aware of the opportunities for establishing their influence in a rapidly-developing new territory'. [2]

Soon after his arrival, the first Anglican Bishop of Natal announced his intention to set up an elementary school and a grammar school 'for children of a higher class' (the 'higher' probably referred to educational level rather than social class). An Anglican elementary school was indeed soon opened in Maritzburg and in 1855 Bishop Colenso installed the Rev. W.O. Newnham to head a diocesan grammar school and the Rev. A. Rivett a 'middle class church

school' in that town (the 'middle', again, referring to educational level). Mrs Colenso, meanwhile, was conducting a class for European girls in her home. (All the denominational schools were exclusively for whites). Colenso wished to strengthen Anglican influence in the young colony. The other denominations had been busy: the Methodists opened schools in Maritzburg, Durban and Verulam in the 1850's, the Lutherans established Natal's first boarding school at Hermannsburg in 1864, and the Catholics founded a parochial school in Maritzburg in 1852 and another in Durban in 1860. Colenso proposed joining the offices of parish priest and teacher (thereby also gaining maximum benefit from the government subsidy). The other denominations naturally resented this and the quarrel at times became acrimonious.

In 1858 the Lieutenant-Governor appointed a Board of Education on which the various denominations were represented (the Natal Mercury fulminated against Anglican predominance on the Board), and in 1860 the first Superintendant of Education was appointed, Robert Mann, who had previously run Colenso's mission station at Ekukanyeni. Mann's policy was to give priority to undenominational schools and thereby avoid inter-denominational jealousies over allocation of the meagre state funds.

Government-aided secondary education began in 1863 with the establishment of Maritzburg College, followed in 1866 by Durban High School. By 1866 there were four government and 63 aided schools. The latter were largely rudimentary affairs, possibly a cottage where a few children would be taught the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic. Young farm children often had to rely on tutors.[3] The need for boarding schools to take children after they had passed through the elementary grades was becoming urgent. Several English

children were sent to board at the German school in Hermannsburg, including some who were to figure prominently in Natal's subsequent history, like Sir George Leuchars and Sir Charles Saunders.[4]

It was a fertile field for those with entrepreneurial instincts. Beatrice William recounts how her grandfather started a succession of schools in Natal in the 1860's.[5] His private school in London lost so many pupils to the recently established Anglican Board schools that 'I am now bringing my energies to your fair Natal'. His establishments in fair Natal included The City Academy in Maritzburg, for pupils 'intended for trading and commercial pursuits, and agriculture, fees £2 per quarter'; Town Hill College; a school at Balgowan; another at Weenen; and a Prospect House Academy (a popular appellation this, as we recall from Ham's riotety establishment in Queenstown), which was to become the Weston Agricultural College near Greytown. This busy educationist planned his schools simply:

> I would send my two sons ... with some natives to a place that I thought would be central for farmers, yet healthy for children. I would buy or hire ground. This I did six months before the beginning of a new term. They would build huts with thatched roofs large enough for schoolrooms, for a dormitory and a house for the family .

In the towns, small academies comparable to Milburn House in Cape Town (see the previous chapter) offered girls an education in French, music, drawing and dancing (the accomplishments again!) with the aim of producing young women who were 'respectable and good, accomplished and socially competent, where necessary practical, but certainly not scholarly'.[6] There was, for example, Miss Sarah Crowder's 'select academy in the parlour of her pretty little thatched cottage in Pine Terrace'.[7]

'Certainly not scholarly' aptly describes the education of Renault Acutt. As a young boy on the North Coast, Acutt walked three miles each way to his tutor, the Rev. H. Shildrick, 'alone through cane-fields, along footpaths, up and down hill, in all weathers and without a single habitation on the way'. His playmates were often Zulu and Indians and he spent nearly all his free time 'shooting birds with a catapault, trapping, snaring and learning many of the clever tricks the Zulus knew, all of which have helped me to be observant and independent'.[8] At the age of ten Acutt went as a boarder to James Forbes' school, the Berea Academy, in Durban, where he received an 'abnormal number of canings' but had 'a wonderful time'. Forbes himself was a heavy drinker and once, when he hit a boy unfairly, several boys sneaked out of the dormitory at night and made their way to the Umgeni River. In passage reflecting the mores of the time, Acutt describes how at the river they 'robbed a Kaffir woman of an axe she was using to cut firewood and stole some mealies from her field as well' and then, arriving at the seashore, they robbed Indian fishermen of their fish. When they finally returned to school Forbes overlooked the incident 'after a long dissertation on the enormity of our doings'. After leaving the Academy at fifteen, Acutt went to Johannesburg where he eventually became a successful entrepreneur.

The more affluent sections of the colonial community inevitably desired boarding schools on the lines of the English public schools. In 1866 the Rev. John Reynolds opened Rugby House in Pinetown 'on the plan of the late Dr Arnold of Rugby':[9] it did not survive beyond the end of the decade but during the 1870's major developments took place in private school education in Natal, and the foundations were laid of some of the most famous of the province's independent schools.

The first boarding schools

Of the four important boarding schools established in the 1870's, three were situated in or near Maritzburg (Hilton, 1872; St Anne's Diocesan College, 1877; Girls' Collegiate, 1878) and only one (Girls' College, 1877) in Durban, although the latter had overtaken Maritzburg in population and was the major commercial centre of the colony.

There were several reasons for this. Maritzburg remained the capital and the seat of the governor. British civil servants and military officers gave the town much of its tone, and for some of them local boarding schools were preferable to sending their children to England. Secondly, Maritzburg was the centre of a rich agricultural area and the demand for boarding schools came from farming families all over the midlands. A third factor was Durban's heat and humidity: many families there preferred to send their children inland to higher altitudes and cooler summers for their schooling. The lady principal of Durban Girls' College once casually explained: 'some of our pupils are absent this quarter but may be expected to return as the weather gets cooler'. [10]

Interestingly enough, Durban has no major private boarding schools to this day. They largely remain in the midlands, clustered around Maritzburg (in addition to those already listed: Michaelhouse, 1896; St John's DSG, 1897; Epworth, 1898; Wykeham, 1905). The nearest they venture to the coast is the fringes of the Valley of a Thousand Hills, before the descent to the coastal plain (Kearsney - which migrated from a steamy site on the North coast, 1921; St Mary's DSG at Kloof, 1919). The private preps which feed all these senior schools follow the same geographical pattern.

The second interesting point about our original list of four schools dating from the 1870's is that only one is a boys' school. This pattern, too, has continued to the present. Of the twelve senior schools in Natal belonging to the Association of Private Schools (1980) only three (Hilton, Michaelhouse and Kearsney) are boys' schools, while one (Treverton) is co-educational. And in those boys' schools a large proportion of the pupils come from other parts of Southern Africa. One reason may be the old-established and prestigious state schools with boarding establishments like Durban High and Maritzburg College (the competition from which proved too much for a Bishop's College in the 1870's), as well as the later creation of excellent state high schools in affluent areas of Durban and Maritzburg. (An interesting sidelight on this matter is the fact that the very oldest private school in Natal is a girls' school, Inanda Seminary, established north of Durban by American missionaries for Zulu girls, and recently admitted to membership of the HMC).

Whatever the reasons may have been (another was that the Natal government was tardy about providing state secondary schools for girls), it is clear that English-speaking Natalians were anxious to secure a private education for their 'household treasures'. The Anglicans were early in the field and in 1869 the first girls' boarding school in Natal (apart from Inanda Seminary, which falls outside our scope) was opened at Richmond, in the midlands. This was St Mary's Diocesan College, which survived effectively only until government grants were withdrawn in 1877 (as mentioned previously, this was because of public resentment at aid being given to the wealthier levels of colonial society). Another factor was a series of heated disagreements between the lady principal, Miss Cresswell, and the warden,

Archdeacon Fearne. By October 1877 there were only five pupils and the school finally closed in 1883. Meanwhile Miss Cresswell had already moved to Maritzburg where, under the auspices of Bishop Macrorie, she opened a school called the Manse. This became in 1878 St Anne's Diocesan College. [11]

Rugby-on-the-Veld

Chronologically, pride of place belongs to Hilton College, and its establishment needs to be examined in some detail, since it is of a different kind from the earlier boys' schools - St George's, Bishops, St Andrew's - already described. To this day Hilton is in a unique position (it is, for example, the only non-denominational school amongst the leading boys' private schools in South Africa) and much of the reason for this derives from its early history.

Mention has been made of Bishop Colenso's diocesan grammar school founded in Maritzburg in 1855 under the Rev. Wm. Orde Newnham, and of how this school faded out with the establishment of Maritzburg College in 1863. Newnham later tried unsuccessfully to establish a school in Ladysmith before founding Hilton College outside Maritzburg in 1872 . Hilton was essentially a private enterprise rather than a denominational venture, although the school had a marked Anglican ethos. The Anglican Church was 'the most widely-spread denomination in the colony and regular attendance at church was not only taken as sufficient evidence of commitment to Christianity but was almost taken for granted as the mark of a gentleman' [12] - and non-Anglicans found it difficult to acquire quite the right social cachet. So wealthy Anglican families turned with relief to Newnham's new school, founded on the right lines and promising to provide the proper sort of tone. One Zululand family sent its son on foot ninety miles to the school while the young

Ahrens undertook a three day journey from Hermannsburg, first on horseback to Greytown (with two 'natives' carrying his belongings), then by post-cart to Maritzburg, followed by a train journey to Hilton Road from where he walked the final five miles.[13] The first intake of fifty boys came 'from all parts of the Transvaal, Free State and Natal'.[14] This pattern has persisted until to-day.

Newnham leased the farm of a friend at Upper Hilton for his school, and the first buildings were a low thatched bungalow and some stables. The beds were wooden frames with interlacing leather thongs and straw matresses. The food was mostly mealie-meal porridge. Into this incongruous setting Newnham attempted to transplant his ideal of the English public school. At his first prize-giving he stated as his first and greatest desire that 'Hilton boy' should be synonymous with 'gentleman'. When he appointed his first prefects he freed them from school rules on the grounds that 'those who are fit to govern are fit to govern themselves'. Newnham adhered closely to the Arnoldian principles. Learning and cleverness came a long way behind character and esprit de corps. Nuttall makes the point that 'in Newnham's scale of values tone was the alpha and the omega'.[15] (Tone: 'that marvellous Victorian word, typically vague, where the implication is that a school is somehow like a bell (a church bell) which can be made to ring pure, ring true when impurities, flaws, gross alloys are removed - a manly bell').[16] Newnham used much of the same imagery when he called on his 'gentlemen' to be 'upright and true as steel'.[17]

As part of his attempt to instil 'steel', Newnham lost no time, in line with Victorian public school militarism, in establishing a Cadet Corps (still proudly labelled Detachment Number One in South Africa).

As with St Andrew's in Grahamstown, Hilton saw its cadet corps as being rightfully available to the colonial government in its task of subjugating the natives: thus Hilton Corps, volunteered, unsuccessfully, for active service in the Langalibalele uprising of 1875,[18] that sorry episode of colonial double-dealing and repression which Bishop Colenso denounced so vehemently.[19]

Newnham's curriculum followed the accepted classical tradition, with the emphasis on Latin and Greek in the upper forms and English, Latin and arithmetic in the lower. But for most boys the cadet corps, football and cricket were by far the most important elements of their schooldays.[20]

Hilton was government-aided in its early years. The annual grant of £100 was due to end in 1877, for reasons already explained, and this may have been a factor in Newnham's sudden decision to close the school at the end of 1876, when its prospects seemed set fair with 73 boys on the roll.

The school was, however, saved when H.V. Ellis took over the lease. He was to be its second headmaster from 1878 to 1904. Educated at Rugby under Arnold's famous successor, Dr Frederick Temple, Ellis had no university or professional qualification for his new task. Indeed he seems to have been something of an adventurer: after a spell on the diamond fields he settled in Durban where he was appointed Inspector of Nuisances by the municipality and published a slim volume of 'conventionally mild Victorian verse'. At one time he also seems to have run a ginger-beer factory. But Newnham could recognise him as a gentleman.

Ellis clearly intended to run his school on Rugby lines. His first two masters were both public school

and Oxbridge men. His conception of a public school 'was firmly based on the Rugby tradition ... and indubitably derived from Arnold'.[21] Ellis provided symbolic evidence of the spiritual affinity between the schools in Hilton's fleur-de-lys crest and motto. He instituted a system of praepositors on the Rugby model, with flogging powers and certain privileges, and also introduced the game of Rugby to Hilton. Ellis's vigour and robust temperament made his school prosper and in 1882 he bought the property outright for £1 750; henceforth he owned the school in his personal capacity. Conditions remained rugged: open pit latrines lasted until the 1920's, with boys perching on long poles (they were finally abolished after five boys died of enteric fever in 1921).

In 1903, shortly before Ellis retired, the Old Boys bought the school in order to secure its continuation. This arrangement lasted until 1928 when the shareholders surrended their shares to the Hiltonian Society, which continues to run the school as a non-profit venture, with complete control of the school and title to all its assets being invested in the Board of Governors.[22] The 'Covenant of Dedication' which embodies this arrangement - unique among South African schools, although it provides something of a model for later schools to follow - pays tribute to Ellis in these words:

> ... for twenty seven years he adapted the principles of his old school to the simple needs of a young Colony and by the gentleness and nobility of his character earned the affection and respect of all. Nor did he neglect to bring into regular use the pastime of Rugby football .[23]

Education befitting an English gentlewoman

Until the late 1870's there was little secondary education for girls in Natal, apart from the Catholic convent schools in Durban and Pietermaritzburg. Then, in 1877 - 78, came the establishment of St Anne's

Diocesan College and Girls' Collegiate in Pietermaritzburg, and Durban Girls' College in Durban.[24] The first was Anglican and mention has been made of its origins under Miss Cresswell. The other two were both civic, inter-denominational Protestant ventures. Protestant anxieties are clear in the words of Maritzburg's Presbyterian minister who wanted 'a girls' school on secure foundations independent of Roman Catholicism'.[25]

There are several parallels in the early histories of these schools. Their foundations were influenced by the new girls' public schools in England. The example of Durban Girls' College and Cheltenham Ladies' College has already been given, while the 1927 prospectus of DGC states simply: 'The school is organised on the lines of the best Girls' Public Schools in England'. Their first curricula were largely based on the 'finishing school' tradition. At Collegiate the 'basic subjects' were improved with 'the addition of Calisthenics, Music, Languages, Drawing, Needlework and Domestic Economy with Botany and Zoology being introduced later at an extra £1 per quarter).[26] Vocal and instrumental music, deportment and drill were stressed at Durban Girls' College,[27] and St Anne's was 'little more than a ladies academy, placing particular emphasis on the accomplishments'.[28] All three schools started near the centre of town, with somewhat makeshift boarding arrangements, and all three were eventually forced to re-locate themselves in the suburbs to which the more prosperous citizens had moved (Durban Girls' College moved to the Berea in 1906, St Anne's to Hilton Road in 1904, and Collegiate to Clarendon as late as 1964). This pattern of migration, with private schools following their wealthy clientele into the suburbs, occurred also in the early histories of Johannesburg schools like St John's, St Andrew's and St Mary's.

The three Natal girls' schools also suffered from an extraordinary amount of friction involving their early headmistresses. Miss Cresswell - having already quarrelled with the Warden of St Mary's in Richmond - then quarrelled with the Warden of St Anne's and by 1879 she had resigned her 'onerous post' to set up a small private school of her own.[29] Durban Girls' College had Miss Martha Cheetham, ex-principal of Warrington High School in Lancashire, and little short of a tyrant, who fought her staff (one had to take to her bed for a month as a result) and her committee before being replaced by Miss Mary Campbell, who had been the first principal of Girls' Collegiate in Maritzburg. Miss Campbell fought with some of her staff, the school roll dropped drastically, and she was dismissed after seven years, the School Committee tactfully deciding that 'a change in the administration is desirable'.[30] While at Girls' Collegiate, Miss Campbell had been involved in a running battle with that school's committee. Her successor, Miss Annie Rowe, recruited by a selection committee in England, was soon at loggerheads with her committee and a final crisis over meal-times caused her dismissal in 1893.

A result of all these problems was an inevitable loss of confidence on the part of parents and numbers dropped sharply. Some of the lady principals were undoubtedly domineering and held exaggerated opinions of their own authority, rather like the formidable and autocratic headmistresses of Victorian England. Others were ineffectual and even casual to a point of irresponsibility (the extraordinary Miss Campbell once sailed to England in the middle of a school year, leaving her committee mystified by her absence and not sure whether she would be returning: she did in fact return after six months and promptly quarrelled with the acting principal).

Another factor was the composition of the school committees. The eight founders of the Durban Young Ladies Evangelical Collegiate Institution (Girls' College) were merchants and clergymen, and the first committee consisted of eighteen men ('it was essentially a civic enterprise, organised and controlled by a committee of management chosen from the town').[31] The lady principals' reports were presented to the Committee by male members until 1893 when Miss Robertson had the temerity to attend a meeting herself. As late as 1973 the eight trustees were all men, five of them clergy, while there were nine men and three women on the board of governors.[32] The picture at the Evangelical Protestant Day and Boarding School for Young Ladies (Girls' Collegiate) is similar: the founding committee consisted of clergymen, businessmen and professional men. In 1897 the committee resolved not to have women members.[33] Throughout its history, Collegiate has had male chairmen of its Committee of Management (later Board of Governors), although by 1978 women slightly outnumbered men.

Two points are illustrated here. One is male dominance of the girls' private schools, lasting to the present time. The second is that the control structure of the schools inevitably gave rise to conflict. Committees of stuffy Victorian clergy and businessmen were not necessarily the best judges of what should occur in girls' schools and there are many examples of meddling by the committees in the principals' proper preserve. As late as 1937 the Committee of DGC laid down that every detail of the management and supervision of the school was to be always subject to its directions and orders.[34] When the committee inspected the school in that year - after matters had reached the usual point of crisis between itself and the lady principal - it found the crockery an absolute disgrace, cisterns out of

order, desks broken and the place generally 'in a shocking state'.[35] Obviously the Committee itself was culpable for allowing such a state to develop, but the official history heaps all the blame on the unfortunate headmistress. (It may not be too fanciful to wonder whether the long history of male dominance and conflict between headmistresses and governors is a factor in the modern trend to appoint male heads of private girls' schools: Roedean; St Andrew's; Epworth; St Anne's; St Mary's DSG, Pretoria).

When it came to finding successors to their headmistresses the governing bodies invariably looked to England. The founders of Girls' Collegiate in fact hoped that all staff would come from abroad.[36] The Presbyterian and Scottish influence in this school's early history is marked: three of the first four principals all came from Scotland. It was only in 1908 that the first South African teacher was appointed, a Miss van Rooyen who took the Dutch lessons. The lady principals after 1913 were English, and their periods of office became longer, coinciding with improvement in relationships with the committee. In 1961 the first South African graduate was appointed as headmistress, Miss Dorothy Clarkson.

The pattern at DGC is somewhat similar. In its first 100 years (1877 - 1977) all eight of its headmistresses came from England, and of these only three had some previous South African experience. Of them two seem to have been good in their posts, while three were frankly disastrous. An important agency in the recruitment of new headmistresses and assistant teachers was the Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women, based in London. The school history states that 'the school committee had always regarded a woman trained in England as being superior to one who received her university and teacher training in South Africa'.[37]

While this may have seemed obvious in the early years, it is surprising to find the committee, in its belief that English was best, in 1933 rejecting twelve South African applicants - some of them well qualified and experienced - in favour of an obscure teacher from Bedford Girls' School in England.[38] This was the ill-fated Miss Calway, dismissed after four years when the school was found in the deplorable state already described. Despite this sad experience the Committee reaffirmed its desire to have another British head and the selection committee (on which men predominated) once more approached the SOSBW. In the event the school was fortunate, in the hit-and-miss fashion of overseas recruitment already noted in connection with the private Anglican schools in the Cape, to obtain the services of Miss Elizabeth Middleton, BA London, a teacher at Roedean, and headmistress of DGC from 1937-56, who immediately set about improving the whole tone of the place. In the process, however, the committee passed over an eminently suitable local candidate, Miss Elizabeth Sneddon, a former Dux and Head Girl, who later became the first woman professor at the University in Durban.[39]

The pattern of principalships at St Anne's is similar. The school has not yet had a South African-born headmistress and its first headmaster, appointed in 1975, was born in London, educated at Oxford, and taught at St Paul's School in London before leaving for Rhodesia in 1956.[40]

Along with the importation of heads and assistant teachers went the importation of British public school influences and traditions. At first this took the form of an education 'that befits an English gentlewoman ... in fact household treasures'.[41] The influence of refinement, according to the Governor of Natal in 1893, was of the utmost importance to a

young colony, and the purpose of training girls was to produce refined wives to meet their men after the day's work was done, work which was 'compelled into a channel more or less of money-grubbing'.[42] The theme is repeated constantly. The Natal Prime Minister, Sir John Robinson, in 1895 exhorted schools to turn out 'the good old-fashioned, true English type of woman who had made England what it was',[43] and the Governor at a speech day in 1898 appealed to girls to look after domestic economy and cooking, which would make them 'far happier than if they occupied their time in reading novels'.[44]

These were the sentiments of the Victorian middle classes about the role of women. A member of the DGC school committee, Benjamin Greenacre, a prominent businessman, expressed the middle class urge to provide for the socialisation of their children: 'when men were making haste to be rich, some of the outcome of it and the very first use it had been put to, was to send their children to the best school they could get'.[45]

In the internal spirit and organisation of the schools the Victorian public school influence has been very marked. Incredible as it seems, both DGC and Girls' Collegiate adopted the Harrow School Song, Forty Years On (DGC abandoned it in 1939), with its 'visions of boyhood' and its fields ringing 'with the tramp of the twenty-two men'. The Natal schools followed closely the changes that overcame the English girls' public schools as the Victorian age ended (see Chapter 4). The casual, leisurely life ('There were few rules, and in the evenings her drawing room with its pretty furniture, ornaments and pictures, was a centre for the pupils. The little ones sat on the floor and played spillikins and other games, on Fridays they did missionary work ... while Miss Usherwood read aloud from some delightful book ...')[46] gave way to a more regimented

and disciplined order. At DGC 'a competent military man' was found to drill the girls before the turn of the century. Early in the 20th century the House system was introduced to stimulate 'friendly inter-house rivalry'. Uniforms, 'in line with all the best English public schools', came later: ties, blazers, regulation knickers. In 1903 the girls at Collegiate were engaging in manly pursuits like cricket and shooting and in the 1920's undertook mountaineering, riding and hiking. School spirit and tone were also improved with the introduction of school crests and colours. Collegiate adopted as its crest a soaring eagle with the motto Altiora Peto in 1903, and yellow and white colours (known to other Natal schools as curry-and-rice). It is of interest that DSG, Grahamstown, adopted the colours of St Hugh's, Oxford, in 1904, and introduced ties, sailor blouses and sailor hats, as well as a Knight Shield for sporting competitions.

All this indicates that the Natal schools closely followed the English girls' public schools in imitating their male counterparts and stressing manliness as a desirable goal for their young female charges, indeed in going as far as possible to turn girls into boys. It is beyond the scope of this study to consider the possible influence of homosexuality amongst headmistresses and assistant teachers in this process, but it is worth noting that several of the headmistresses were themselves mannish in dress and manner, and sometimes had male nicknames. Until recently all the headmistresses were spinsters and as late as 1935 the committee of DGC decided against employing married teachers.[47] In several cases a headmistress formed a long intimate relationship with an assistant teacher. One headmistress and her 'right hand woman' took their holidays abroad together, retired at the same time and lived together in retirement.

It was inevitable that the girls' schools fostered the same kind of British patriotism and jingoism evident in the boys' schools around the turn of the century. When the news of the relief of Ladysmith came in 1900 the girls of Collegiate rushed into the street, singing and waving Union Jacks which they had surreptitiously made in their dormitories.[48] Durban's delirious loyalty found regular expression in events in which schools participated. In 1934, for example, there was a children's rally at Kingsmead in honour of the 'dashingly handsome young English Prince, His Royal Highness Prince George of Kent' and the following year a pageant - with one Head Girl representing Britannia - to celebrate King George V's silver jubilee, also at the aptly named Kingsmead.[49] The writer can recall participating as a small boy in the last such demonstration of mass fervour on the hallowed ground, during the 1947 visit of the British Royal family.

Michaelhouse

The school's prospectus is able to state with calm assurance: 'Michaelhouse needs little introduction. It is one of the most famous of South African private schools'. Its origins, however, were humble - fifteen boys in two rented houses in Loop Street, Pietermaritzburg. This was in 1896, nearly a quarter of a century after Newnham had established Hilton College in the hills near the town.

Michaelhouse was destined to become the only Anglican diocesan boys' school in Natal. There had in fact been earlier attempts, such as Bishop Colenso's short-lived diocesan grammar school (1855-63) under Newnham. When Bishop W.K. Macrorie was consecrated in 1869 he expressed the need for church schools 'especially for the upper and middle classes, who must be thought of as the most influential either for or against the church'.[50] There is a clear echo here of the views of Canon Woodard

who had been actively founding middle class Anglican boarding schools in England (see Chapter 4). Macrorie's efforts included the foundation of St Mary's in Richmond and Bishop's College in Pietermaritzburg. This lasted only nine years. The reasons for its failure included lack of public support for a classical secondary education, clerical dissension over the type of religious education provided, [51] and competition from both Maritzburg College and Hilton (Newnham had been careful to avoid aligning Hilton to one particular Anglican faction, and Ellis, his successor, was not a clergyman).

Michaelhouse began as a private venture, founded by the Rev. J.C. Todd, who came to the colony in 1893. Todd was originally attached to St Peter's Church in Maritzburg, but apparently took private pupils and canvassed support for a school. [52] By 1896 Todd felt sufficiently confident to open his school in two rented houses. His curriculum was severely classical (he excluded a study of Shakespeare in favour of Latin) and mathematical and he placed great emphasis on religious instruction. He also believed that the Rector (Todd introduced the term from Scotland, where he was educated), should be in Holy Orders, and this was later embodied in the first trust deed

The school almost foundered within two years and the staff were provisionally given notice, but with the help of a bank Todd managed to struggle on. Meanwhile there were moves to turn Michaelhouse into a 'public school' governed by a permanent trust deed and administered by a diocesan committee. About 1900 a board of governors was established in the form of a 'Committee of the Natal Diocesan College, Balgowan'. The decision to move into the country at Balgowan had already been taken, and the first buildings on the bare veld were erected in 1901. Michaelhouse thus

came into line with some of the other private Anglican schools: the creation of a governing body at Bishops in 1885 helped that school survive the financial problems of the 1890's, and control of St Andrew's College was vested in a Council in terms of an Act of Parliament of 1887.

The school's objective was 'to provide under the auspices of the church of the Province of South Africa an educational institution for boys ... which shall provide a liberal education with religious instruction in accordance with the principles of the Church of England'. The Rector was to be a priest and an MA of Oxford or Cambridge. Later he could come from any British university, and still later, in 1910, from any university in the British Empire. In the same year the constitution was changed to allow a layman to become Rector if two-thirds of the governors were in agreement.[53]

The constitution originally laid down that the school should be modelled on the public schools of the Church of England,[54] but this seems later to have been dropped. There is no doubt, however, that the original committee thought of Michaelhouse 'in terms of the public schools in England, whose relations with the established church were traditional but not restrictive'.[55]

The connection with the church thus established, Michaelhouse benefited materially. Synod granted funds towards building costs and assisted with large loans, while the SPCK and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel gave substantial donations towards the chapel built by Todd's successor (only £125 subscribed by 'the Natal public' for the purpose, despite eloquent pleas).[56] The battle-mented tower of the new college building, with its

flag of St Michael, and dormitories named 'Spear', 'Helm' and 'Shield', introduced a medieval English note which apparently did not strike anyone as incongruous at the time. Nor did the compulsory wearing of Eton suits even when the boys were allowed out of bounds to roam the veld.

The seemingly inevitable conflict between headmaster and governors came to a head in 1903 and Todd left after he had ordered a piano for the school without his governors' consent.[57] While Todd may have regarded the governors as meddlesome and parsimonious, the school faced great financial difficulties in the first years of the 20th century. Natal lacked the wealth of the Rand, where mining and other companies were frequently to assist comparable schools like St John's College, nor did it have benefactors of the munificence of Sir Thomas Cullinan, who came to the rescue of St Andrew's College with a gift of £5 000, although wealthy Natal families like the Shepstones, the Greenes and the Tathams did contribute generously.

It is illuminating to examine the pattern of principalships in the formative years of Michaelhouse, as we did for the girls' schools. Todd's successor was Canon E. Hugh-Jones, last heard of when he was an unsuccessful applicant for the headship of St Andrew's in Grahamstown. A public school (Marlborough) and Oxford man, Hugh-Jones was a consumptive who died soon after his resignation in 1910. (For the purpose of perspective one notes that the roll at this time was only 57). An interesting appointment followed. A.W.S. Brown was only 29 and a layman (Michaelhouse introduced a lay head long before comparable schools like Bishops, St John's and St Andrew's). A public school product who had gained a first class Tripos at Cambridge, Brown introduced a 'remove' form to 'avoid clogging the lower school with veterans'.[58]

This reflected English public school practice and foreshadowed similar developments at other South African private schools. Brown joined the forces and was killed in 1916. Eldred Pascoe, his successor (1916-1926), was a reversion to an earlier type. A consumptive clergyman, he had been to Blundells and Cambridge and taught at Uppingham Lower School before becoming junior classics master at Michaelhouse in 1907. Pascoe was followed by W.F. Bushell (1927-1929), son of a Harrow housemaster and educated at Charterhouse and Cambridge. Bushell hoped 'to create greater stability by appointing more South Africans' but found this to be 'surprisingly difficult'.[59] He also introduced a number of public school features: the house system (surprisingly late for such a school), and the 'ad portas' ceremony for distinguished visitors, copied from Winchester. There were difficulties between Bushell and his governors and he resigned over differences about the supervision of the sanatorium.

The next appointment was a major new development. R.F. Currey (1930-1938) was the first South African, not only to head Michaelhouse but any important boys' high school in Natal. Educated at St Andrew's, Grahamstown, Currey was later to become headmaster of that school after his headship of Michaelhouse. He is a major figure in the South African private school system, and will feature in subsequent chapters.

The Prep. Schools

Unlike the senior boys' private schools in the Cape, which established preparatory departments early on (St George's Grammar 1848, Bishops 1849, St Andrew's 1885), Hilton and Michaelhouse did not have feeder schools of their own. One of the factors that made it necessary to create direct lines of supply was the competition posed by the state schools like Durban High and Maritzburg College, which were served by the Durban Preparatory High School and by Merchiston Prep

(started as a private venture by the Misses Allan and Rowe, this school was in financial difficulties by 1909 and was taken over by the Natal government, thereafter effectively becoming the feeder for Maritzburg College).

For a while St David's House, founded in Greytown in 1902 by a group of local people under Sir George Leuchars 'to provide suitable schooling for their sons to prepare them for public schools in Natal or England', [60] served as a feeder school, particularly for Michaelhouse. But distance and difficulties of transport prevented this being an entirely satisfactory arrangement. Meanwhile Bishop Baines had purchased a property in Maritzburg for the establishment of a new preparatory school in 1912. This was Cordwalles, named after a British prep. school attended by the Bishop's nephew. By the time that St David's House closed in the 1930's, Cordwalles had become a major feeder school for Michaelhouse. It is the only Anglican diocesan prep. school for boys in Natal and five of its fifteen governors are nominated by Michaelhouse, whose Rector 'undertakes to give most sympathetic consideration for entry to any boy recommended by the headmaster' of Cordwalles. [61] It is interesting to note the 1976 pattern of distribution of boys leaving Cordwalles: 13 went on to Michaelhouse, 11 to Hilton, one to Kearnsey College, one to DHS, and eight to 'other schools'. It is clear that the great majority of boys are intended to go on to private senior schools, and this is the typical pattern of all the private prep. schools. [62] The range of intake closely parallels that of the senior schools. Of 187 boys at Cordwalles in 1976, 146 came from Natal and Zululand, the remainder coming from East Griqualand, Transkei, the Transvaal, Zambia, Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho and Mocambique. [63]

The oldest surviving boys prep. school in Natal is Highbury, founded in a wood and iron house at Hillcrest in 1903 by Mrs Sibella McMillan, whose father had established Highbury House School in England (this closed down in 1911). In the words of her grandson, the present headmaster,

> Highbury has developed and prospered because it has met the needs of countless parents who have been prepared to spend lavishly on the education of their sons and have wanted the kind of education offered by a private school founded on the same sound principles established in Britain in the last century .[64]

These principles were of course the ones that underlay the Victorian public school ethos, which we have already discussed at some length. The founder of Highbury 'ingrained into us a distinct love of country, of fairplay and the will to win. On Empire Day in those early years the whole school under her direction paraded to honour the British flag'.[65] Like the other preps., Highbury became a kind of mini-public school, with boarding houses, prefects, compulsory games, school colours, a chapel, and a cadet detachment (which early on wore an extraordinary Puritanian-type uniform). There was the same kind of jingoism noted in connection with the senior schools: in 1936 some Highbury boys cut to pieces a tree planted by 'Voortrekkers' on their commemorative Great Trek,[66] while in the 1950's there was still 'an inherent antipathy to the learning of Afrikaans'[67] (the first Afrikaans-speaking teacher was appointed only in 1958).

Highbury belonged to the McMillan family until 1967 when the Highbury School Society Ltd. purchased it. A Board of Governors 'consisting of prominent business and professional men, Old Boys and past or present parents'[68] was set up to administer the school. While not a religious foundation, Highbury is Christian and the boarders must attend Anglican or Methodist services.

The boys generally go to the same schools as those from the other private preparatories: Hilton, Michaelhouse, Kearsney (there are closed annual scholarships to the first two of these),[69] and as with similar schools they are prepared for the Common Entrance Examinations of the senior private schools. An interesting relic of the classical tradition is found in the present headmaster's defence of Latin as giving 'mental discipline, the power of clear, logical reasoning'. He regards Latin as of more value than, say, Zulu for 'those bound for university, the intelligent pupils'.[70]

Other boys' prep. schools were established later, in the same pattern as Cordwalles and Highbury: the Clifton schools at Durban and Nottingham Road in 1924 and 1942 respectively, and Cowan House at Hilton in 1948. These are inter-denominational schools with governing bodies. The major girls' schools have their own preparatory and even pre-preparatory departments.

An interesting feature of the prep. schools is that they play games almost exclusively against each other, and this association extends into other areas. Scripture Union Camps are held for boys from Cowan House, Highbury and Cordwalles, the leaders being boys from Michaelhouse, Hilton and Kearsney.[71] This illustrates not only the exclusivity of this system of schools but is a replica of the pattern amongst public schools in Victorian England.[72]

Conclusion

This brief sketch of the prep. schools has taken us considerably further forward in time than the point at which we left the senior schools in the Cape and Natal. But it has seemed useful to establish the basic patterns, since they were to apply to the other provinces as well.

To complete our sketch of the beginnings of a private school system in Natal we need merely to note a few important subsequent developments. Whereas only one more boys' senior school was still to be established (Kearsney, Methodist, 1921), several more girls' schools were founded around the turn of the century - in line with the observation made earlier, they were all in the Maritzburg area: St John's DSG, 1897; Epworth, the first specifically Methodist foundation, 1898; Wykeham, interdenominational, 1905. Finally, there was St Mary's DSG at Kloof, founded in 1919 as a gift 'from a merchant-benefactor, Walter Butcher, in thanksgiving for peace'.[73]

The picture that has emerged is of a type of school education that served the needs of the ruling classes in Victorian England, transplanted into the colony of Natal, where the small ruling English community attempted as far as possible to re-create the conditions of 'home'. Fostered by a long line of English-born and English-educated principals and teachers, the ethos of the Victorian public school was stamped on the schools of this minority. This system of education also served as a social mechanism to help the local elite maintain its distance from the mass of the white community. The total education system of the white colonisers also obviously provided a means of ensuring racial segregation from the colonised peoples.

The British emphasis, of course, applied not only to the private schools. Brookes has described how the Natal of 1901

> was much less a part of the wider South Africa than it is to-day. With its great plantations along the coast and its very British atmosphere it was more like a large West Indian island than a part of Africa .[74]

At Maritzburg College - a state school - which Brookes attended in the first decade of this century, nearly all the masters came from Britain. When he matriculated in 1911, 21 boys in his form chose French and only four Dutch as their modern language, and 'when there appeared in our form a boy who was described as a "Dutchman" he was almost as strange a figure as a Swede or an Eskimo'.[75] A similar situation obtained at DHS, which by 1900

> had established itself as a public school after the English model. Gabbitas and Thring, that famous London firm through whom the public schools of England recruited so many of their masters, told T.H. Blackmore in 1902 that he was going to the Eton of Natal ... there was a staff of ten - all graduates: five from Oxford, two from Cambridge, the others from London and Aberdeen .[76]

The few prophetic voices that had protested against the values of the colonial community had been effectively ignored or neutralised. Bishop Colenso's celebrated sermon at a memorial service in St Peter's Cathedral, Maritzburg, in March 1879, two months after the Zulu victory at Isandlwana ('Wherein ... have we shown that we are men who love mercy? Did we not lay upon the people heavily, from the very moment we crossed their border, the terrible scourge of war?')[77] found little echo in the schools of the time. The Zulu wars, the Langalibalele affair, the Boer War, the Bambata Rebellion, the Act of Union, all warranted only passing mention in their lives. Even the First World War left them apparently untouched, despite the long rolls of honour that began to appear.

Campbell has described the philistinism of the time:

> I learned nothing much. It was not the fault of the masters ... but of the public school system, which in the Colonies is even more 'public school' than in England. It does little more than to give men a thorough distaste for learning ... It turns them

> loose with nothing but an acquisitive instinct and a few brutal material appetites. The only good thing about it is its athletic side .[78]

Campbell himself was presumably the exception that proves the rule. Interestingly enough, Nuttall makes the point that a private school like Hilton has yet to produce a major creative artist, while DHS has Campbell and Maritzburg College has Alan Paton.[79] (The word 'produce' is, of course, not a good one - schools do not 'produce' people who achieve fame, since many factors other than school education are involved).

Considerable attention has been given to Natal in this study. This is because, in Malherbe's words, 'in Natal private effort has flourished with more success than in any of the other provinces. A reason for this may be the fact that of the provinces Natal has been most under English influence'.[80] Malherbe puts this down primarily to the fact that Natal imported nearly all its teachers from England and Scotland and only in the 1920's began to look to South Africa as a source of teacher supply.[81] Brookes and Webb believe that the dependence on British teachers and clergymen fostered 'a colonial mentality'.[82] The overcoming of that mentality was to pose a major challenge to the private schools in the period from the 1920's onwards and in particular from the end of the Second World War.

The 'colonial mentality' implied not only an exaggerated devotion to things British and in particular the British Crown, but a comfortable conviction that the Empire would forever occupy its rightful place in the scheme of things, with lesser breeds kept firmly in their place. A history reader still in use in Natal schools in the 1920's informed white pupils that it was 'quite clear that the Zulus could not rule

themselves or keep order in their country, so the white men were forced to do it for them', [83] and in the process 'thousands of foolish natives were killed or put in prison'. [84] The private schools played their part in equipping their charges to shoulder some of this burden of the white man.

Footnotes - Chapter 6

1. The details in this section, unless indicated otherwise, are taken from E.G. Malherbe: Education in South Africa, Vol.1 (1652-1922), Juta, Cape Town, 1925; N.D. Atkinson: Teaching South Africans, Faculty of Education, University of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, 1978; A L. Behr: New Perspectives in South African Education, Butterworths, Durban, 1978; St Anne's Diocesan College Centenary Magazine, 1877-1977; and S. Vientzen: A History of Education for European Girls in Natal 1837-1902, University of Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 1973.
2. Atkinson: op. cit., p.90.
3. Cf. Marina King: Sunrise to Evening Star, Harrap, London, 1936, p.55.
4. F.W. Ahrens: From Bench to Bench, Shuter and Shooter, Pietermaritzburg, 1948, p.3. Ahrens was a member of one of the German communities that developed around Lutheran settlements in various places - Hermannsburg and New Germany in Natal, Berlin in the Eartern Cape.
5. A.E. Beatrice William: My Life and Two South African Pioneers, Unie-Volkspers, Cape Town, 1946, p.3ff.
6. Vientzen: op. cit., p.23.
7. Joyce Wrinch-Schultz: The Happy Ship, a history of Durban Girls' College, Durban, 1977, p.9.
8. R.C. Acutt: Reminiscences of a Rand Pioneer 1876-1973, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1977, p.16ff.
9. A.F. Hattersley: Hilton Portrait, Shuter and Pietermaritzburg, 1945, p.22.
10. Wrinch-Schultz: op. cit., p.54.
11. This account is taken from the Centenary Magazine of St Anne's Diocesan College, 1977. Macrorie was appointed in opposition to Bishop Colenso as a result of a theological schism within the Natal Anglican church, which led to the formation of the two Anglican families in South Africa, the Church of the Province of South Africa, and Colenso's faction, the Church of England in South Africa.

12. A.M. Barrett: Michaelhouse 1896-1968, Michaelhouse Old Boys Club, Pietermaritzburg, 1969, p.137.
13. Neville Nuttall: Lift up your Hearts - the story of Hilton College 1872-1972, The Hiltonian Society, Pietermaritzburg, 1971, p.6; Ahrens, op. cit., p.9.
14. Nuttall: Ibid.
15. Ibid, p.7.
16. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.84.
17. Nuttall, op. cit., p.6.
18. Ibid, p.10.
19. For an account of this affair see Norman Herd: The Bent Pine - the trial of Chief Langalibalele, Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1976.
20. Nuttall, Ibid, p.9.
21. Ibid, p.15, 16, 19.
22. Ibid, p.66.
23. Ibid.
24. Their histories are recorded in the Centenary Magazine of St Anne's Diocesan College, 1977; M. Tait: Collegiate - the story of Girls' Collegiate School 1878-1978, Pietermaritzburg, 1978; and Joyce Wrinch-Schultz, op. cit. Vientzen, op. cit., also provides useful information.
25. Tait, op. cit., p.1.
26. Ibid, p.4.
27. Wrinch-Schultz, op. cit., pp.34-35.
28. St Anne's Centenary Magazine, p.2.
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32. Ibid, p.233.
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37. Wrinch-Schultz, op. cit., p.116.
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42. Ibid, p.53.
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51. Cf. Ibid, p.7.
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53. Ibid, p.20, p.30.
54. Ibid, p.22.
55. Ibid, p.21.
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73 St Mary's DSG, Kloof, prospectus, 1978.

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Chapter 7: Beginnings of the South African Private School System

iii The Transvaal: Boer and Brit

Background

In Chapter 1 the point was made that wherever English people have settled in substantial numbers they have founded independent schools aimed at reproducing as far as possible the model of the English public school. One can thus expect that the chronology of the South African private WASP schools roughly follows the pattern of settlement of English people.

a) In the Cape, the first major schools were established between 1848 and 1875:

St George's Grammar	1848
Bishops College	1849
St Andrew's College	1855
St Cyprian's School	1871
Diocesan Girls' (DSG)	1874

These were all Anglican schools, with attendant preps. Interestingly enough, no comparable schools exist for the Diamond Fields, despite a considerable English community there. A possible reason may be that the period of prime activity was relatively short-lived, before attention became focused on the Witwatersrand. The only major private school in Kimberley is Christian Brothers' College, a Catholic foundation.

b) In Natal, the comparable dates are 1872 to 1905:

Hilton College	1872
Durban Girls' College	1877
St Anne's College	1877
Girls' Collegiate	1878
Michaelhouse	1896
St John's DSG	1897
Epworth	1898
Highbury Prep.	1903
Wykeham	1905

This list is much more varied than the one for the Cape, with Anglican, Methodist, inter-denominational and private enterprise schools all represented. The predominance of girls' schools has already been noted.

The formative period in each province thus covered about thirty years, in the middle of the 19th century for the Cape and the latter part of the Victorian age for Natal. In the Cape only two senior boys' schools (Kingswood, 1894; Woodridge, 1966) and one senior girls' school (Herschel, 1922) have been established since its formative period, and only three new prep. schools (Western Province, 1913; St George's, Port Elizabeth, 1936; Somerset House, 1948). In Natal only the Methodist Kearsney (1921), the Anglican St Mary's DSG at Kloof (1919), the Baptist co-educational school Treverton (1971) and a handful of new prep. schools have risen since 1905.

c) The Orange Free State has never had enough English-speaking whites to support many WASP private schools. Although Anglican schools were established in Bloemfontein, they have since been taken over by the state and at present only one private Anglican school in the province - at Welkom - is a member of the Association of Private Schools.

d) The Transvaal picture is the most complex. Before the discovery of gold, some private English schools were established in Pretoria, the capital of the then Boer Republic. The only survivor, apart from Catholic foundations, is the Anglican St Mary's DSG, dating from 1879. A major influx of English 'Uitlanders' began in the late 1880's, after the opening up of the Witwatersrand goldfields, and one consequence was the establishment of new English private schools, of which the survivors are St Mary's, Johannesburg, 1888, and St John's College, 1889.

After the interruption of the Anglo-Boer War, new schools were created, the survivors of which are two girls' schools, St Andrew's (1902) and Roedean (1903). One notes again, as in Natal, the numerical predominance of girls' schools. There appears to have been little significant new activity after this until a rash of prep. schools sprang up after the end of the First World War:

St Katherine's, Johannesburg	1916
St Dunstan's, Benoni	1918
The Ridge, Johannesburg	1919
Pridwin, Johannesburg	1923
Waterkloof House, Pretoria	1923
Auckland Park, Johannesburg	1924
Uplands, White River	1928

One senior girls' school was established in the 1930's (Kingsmead), but the next phase of development occurred only after 1950, thus after the Second World War and the General Election of 1948 which brought the Afrikaner Nationalist Party to power. The industrial development on the Rand in this period, with its consequent growth of the English community, and the fears of English-speaking whites of the cultural and political domination of the Transvaal Afrikaners would seem to be factors in this development. Two senior boys' Anglican schools; a senior non-denominational, co-educational boarding school· a multi-racial senior school; a senior Methodist boys' school; and several new preps. were established between 1950 and 1970.

As a result the Transvaal now has the largest number and the richest variety of private schools in the country. Of the 56 schools listed by the Association of Private Schools, nearly forty per cent are in the Transvaal, and of these nearly three-quarters are located in and around Johannesburg.

It is noteworthy that nearly all the major new private schools established in South Africa in the last three decades are in the Transvaal. The exceptions are themselves atypical of the patterns analysed in the previous two chapters. In the Cape, Woodridge is inter-denominational and co-educational, with a strong emphasis on 'outdoor education' (although the headmaster objects strongly to his school being described as an Outward Bound School,[1] there are strong traces of a Gordonian influence). In Natal, Treverton is a co-educational Baptist senior and junior school with a marked evangelical tone.

The relatively recent foundation of most Transvaal schools suggests that they may be more likely to follow modern educational practice than their older colleagues in the other provinces. Less burdened by the weight of their own past and less encrusted by tradition, they are freer to experiment and to reflect more closely the socio-political realities of the time. For example, Woodmead was founded in 1970 on frankly progressive lines, which owed as much to the English progressive education movement as to the English public school model, while St Barnabas College (founded 1963) pursues a relatively aggressive policy of non-racialism 'with a special commitment to children from disadvantaged communities'.[2] It is possible, in fact, to discern a certain degree of polarisation between the Anglican St John's College (old, traditional, white, High Church) and the Anglican St Barnabas College (new, innovative, primarily black, with 'a simple and down to earth life style')[3] symbolised by their respective locations: the one riding majestically on the Houghton ridge overlooking Johannesburg's affluent white suburbs and the other clinging to the outskirts of a decaying 'coloured' township (any such polarisation does not, however, extend to disagreement over the basic value of an elitist, middle-class private education on sound academic lines).

One must immediately qualify the foregoing by recognising that even the newest schools have made haste to imitate many features of the English public schools, and to surround themselves with all the paraphenalia of 'tradition', 'tone', 'spirit', and the rest. The growing cohesion between the schools as a specific sub-system via the APS and the HMC over the past decade has facilitated this process.

All these factors make it impossible to demarcate an early formative period for the Transvaal schools as neatly as was the case for the Cape and Natal. The

treatment in this chapter will thus necessarily have to differ somewhat from that followed in the previous two chapters. It may be instructive, however, to look briefly at the beginnings of the private school system in this province. In doing this we need to bear in mind that during the early period the English community was a politically impotent although increasingly financially powerful minority, unlike its counterparts in the British colonies to the south. It had a less comfortable reliance on the British Empire and a far less parochial outlook. It was also more aggressively materialistic and acquisitive. As the opportunities of the Rand attracted people from many parts of the world, as well as from other parts of South Africa, the English community was far more cosmopolitan and less homogeneous than those of the British colonies to the south, where the tone was given by settled, wealthy farming, merchant and professional families. Paradoxically, while class differences within the community rapidly became more marked on the Rand, it was also possible for social mobility to occur on a far greater and more rapid scale, due largely to sudden changes in family fortunes.

The English churches and private schools on the Rand played a significant part in polishing the rougher edges of the new bourgeoisie and in facilitating entry into 'respectable' society for a polyglot group of Jews, Germans, East Europeans and working class Britishers, whose rapid rise to wealth made them desirous of emulating the model of the English gentleman. Generated in the context of the Rand's economic development, the private schools were early on drawn close to the Rand's economic power centre, represented variously by the Randlords, the mining and financial houses, and the whole world of English big business, a position which they occupy to this day. The schools have helped to socialise the children of the entrepreneurial, managerial and professional classes and in turn these classes have given them

generous support. The nexus between English big business, the Anglican Church (and to a lesser extent the Methodist Church) and the English private schools is a fascinating aspect of the whole private school system. It inevitably finds its clearest expression on the Witwatersrand. The origins are to be found in the 1890's when Johannesburg was still a dusty mining town.

Pretoria beginnings

The first significant moves to establish private English schools in the Transvaal took place in Pretoria, the capital of the Boer Republic, with its sizeable English commercial and professional community, during the decade before gold was discovered and the major thrust of activity became directed to the Rand. As usual, the Catholics were early on the scene, but prior to the British annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 it was a penal offence for a Catholic priest to enter the country, [4] and in effect for the Catholic Church to exist there. The first Catholic School, the Loreto Convent in Skinner Street, opened only in 1878. [5]

The Anglicans had already started a school for children of all denominations in 1874. This was St Alban's College, which apparently perished before 1879. [6] Its name survives, however, in the present St Alban's College, founded in Pretoria in 1963. Another Anglican boys' school, St Birinus, lasted from 1879 to 1908 when rising costs and debts forced its closure. [7] An Anglican girls' school, St Etheldreda's, was taken over by the Community of St Mary the Virgin and survives as St Mary's DSG. [8] (There is an interesting parallel here with St John's College, Johannesburg, which was saved from closure by the Community of the Resurrection in 1906). There were also at least two private enterprise English schools in the capital, the Pretoria Grammar School and John Laurie's Pretoria Academy, which closed before the Anglo-Boer War. [9]

A Transvaal law of 1874 allowed parental choice of medium and of eight state-subsidised schools in 1876, four were English-medium (Pretoria, Heidelberg, Lydenburg and Zeerust). Many Boers preferred English to Dutch as the medium for their children's education.[10]

Witwatersrand beginnings

The influx of Uitlanders into the goldfields after 1885 led to a demand for English-medium schools on the Rand. Malherbe believes that the Volksraad's Article 344 of 1892 and Law No.15 of 1896, giving state aid for the education of Uitlander children, 'exceeded the limits of liberality' and that 'it is hard to see how a foreign people could have expected better treatment in any other country as far as education was concerned'.[11]

Uitlander resentment, however, was focused on the fact that much of the state's revenue resulted from gold-mining and on the niggardly per capita grant of £5 to £10. In addition, the requirement in the Volksraad's Article 1037 of 1898 that an increasing proportion of all instruction had to be through Dutch led to fears that the English language and culture would be threatened. 'The Transvaal authorities put forward the view that pupils supported by the state should be prepared to accept identification with the cultural traditions of the territory in which they lived'.[12] Large numbers of English-speaking children were withdrawn from government schools; by the mid 1890's there were some 2 000 English-speaking children attending a variety of private schools,[13] many of them under the auspices of the Council of Education, Witwatersrand, founded in 1895 by leaders among Johannesburg's professional and financial community. The formation of the Council in effect created a dual system of education in the Transvaal, a sort of imperium in imperio.[14] The work of the Council of Education was very significant for the Tranavaal's private schools and it will be dealt with in some detail later in this chapter.

While the very rich could send their children 'home' to school (the sons of Lionel Phillips, J.B. Taylor and J.B. Robinson were entered for Eton; the eldest Marks boy went to Harrow),[15] a practice that to some extent continues to the present, the aspirations of less affluent parents had to be satisfied with a wide range of local private establishments, 'usually the parlour of a house somewhere in Doornfontein where an elderly lady presided over mixed classes of boys and girls'.[16] One Uitlander mother wanted 'a more refined atmosphere' for her daughters than the 'general' school run in the Wesleyan Hall. Finding this first in an establishment run by the Misses Dixie in Fordsburg, she then turned to a governess, 'just the right person for the task. She was "English-born" and was reported to have come from the "Upper Class"; her manners were refined and her disposition pleasant and friendly'. Unfortunately, however, this refined lady was also a drunkard.[17]

Beatrice William - her grandfather was the busy founder of Natal schools described earlier - records starting the first 'school' on the East Rand:

> I started teaching my brothers and sisters the day after my arrival. We used the dining room as our school room. It was September, 1888, and before long I had started the first school on the Eastern Reef between Germiston and Jeppes, and had pupils from the Jumpers, Simmer and Jack, Geldenhuis and Primrose Mines on the one side and from the Ruby, George Goch, Spes Bona and Nourse Mines on the other .[18]

As it became clear that the gold mining industry would last a long time, a more settled community emerged and the demand for schools increased rapidly. A 'very happy crowd' gathered in the two rooms of Miss William's corrugated iron house, where she gave English tuition in the mornings and in the afternoons taught drama, music and French. Like most of its contemporaries, this 'school' was short-lived and its proprietress subsequently became a governess.

The Catholics were, as so often the case, the first to open denominational schools. The Holy Family Sisters opened one near the mines in 1887 and in 1889 the Marist Brothers another in Doornfontein.[19] This was the only school of high school pretensions but it had, for Leslie Blackwell's father, the fatal defect of being Catholic, although most of its pupils were non-Catholic. Blackwell Sen., a rigid Protestant, preferred to send his son to the Wesleyan Day School in the hall of the Wesleyan Church on Von Brandis Square, the same 'general' school which the mother of Alice Ralls regarded as insufficiently 'refined'. It was 'a pitifully small affair without even classrooms, for we all sat together in the one hall'.[20] Although Miss Lettie Imprey had started a little 'school' in the porch of St Mary's Church in Eloff Street in 1888 with three girls and two boys,[21] it was only in 1897 that the Anglicans began seriously to consider a boys' denominational school of their own (the origins of the Anglican girls' school, St Mary's, date back to 1888 and Miss Imprey).

In 1897 the Parochial Council considered 'the desirability of starting a church school in the parish, on the grounds that, apart from the institution run by the Marist Brothers, there was no such school for boys in Johannesburg'.[22] With the prompting of the parish priest, the Rev. John Darragh, who is regarded as the founder of St John's College, the Rev. J.T. Hodgson was appointed headmaster of the new school which opened on 1 August 1898 with eleven pupils in Plein Street. Lawson makes the point that 'this humble, unpretentious beginning ... was indeed following the tradition of other great South African Church Schools' (Bishops, St Andrew's and Michaelhouse) all of which were 'children of the Victorian era and of the century which saw South Africa develop from a small settlement at the tip of the continent to a great and expanding civilisation...'[23] This romantic view can not obscure the fact that these

schools primarily served an increasingly exclusive minority within the white English-speaking minority and that their main functions were to train the sons of the professional and business elites for leadership roles and to foster the tradition of the English public school. The 1903 prospectus of St John's College makes this quite clear: 'St John's College was founded to meet the demand for a school for gentlemen's sons on the lines of the English Public Schools'. [24] Any civilising effect they had remained within the confines of the narrow social sector in which they operated, and on occasion they actually diverted energy from a wider social need. We have already seen how the 'Kaffir Institution' declined and finally died while St Andrew's College prospered, while the rescue of St John's College in 1906 by the Community of the Resurrection was at the expense of 'the multitude of Africans employed on the gold mines', amongst whom the brethren had been sent to work. [25] A comparison of the allocation of church resources to white and black education would provide an interesting subject for research.

One other pre-Boer War development should be noted here. The Council of Education, which collected a large amount of money subscribed 'by rich mine magnates for whose interests it was essential that British influence should predominate in the Transvaal', [26] in 1895 surveyed the education available to Uitlander children. In Johannesburg there were fifty-five Uitlander schools: thirteen were in 'regular school buildings', eighteen in churches, and the rest in rooms of private dwellings. Only 46 of 187 teachers were certificated and of 6 500 Uitlander children of school-going age nearly 2 000 were not attending school at all. [27] By the end of 1896 the Council owned three school properties and had taken over responsibility for three others, while part-time science classes were added to its activities in 1897. The Council's most ambitious project was the purchase of

St Michael's College (established in 1890) for £1 700, thereby saving this institution from extinction. The Council acquired a headmaster from England, Mr J.H. Hardwick, a young Cambridge graduate, and opened a new boys' high school, Jeppestown Grammar, on the site. Within a year the school, with more than a hundred pupils, was self-supporting. But 1899 represented

> sad days for Hardwick and the school. War clouds were building up blacker and blacker and Uitlander parents started sending their families away to the coast. At last there came a day when the school had to close down . [28]

Effects of the War (1899-1902)

While private schools in Natal and the Cape benefited from the temporary influx of refugee children from the Transvaal, several private schools in the Transvaal itself were fatally affected. St Birinus could not survive the damage inflicted by the war. Jeppestown Grammar re-emerged as the Jeppe High School after the War, run by the newly created Transvaal Education Department. St John's closed in 1899 and re-opened after the signing of the peace treaty on 31 May 1902. During the war years the Republic's education administration virtually ceased to function, and such schools as were available to Boer children resulted from the private initiative of local inhabitants who, assisted by funds from the Netherlands, opened a few schools in non-combat areas. By the end of 1902 there were 17 such schools with about 300 pupils. [29]

> These schools were to become the nucleus of the system of Christian National Schools that developed in opposition to the schools established by the British authorities when the war ended . [30]

As the defeat of the Boer Republics and the institution of British control approached, those with a keen business sense prepared to move into the Rand to meet the inevitable needs that would arise with a resumption of its mining and commercial life. Two Scots women in Cape Town

cultivated the right contacts and made ready to found a girls' school 'based on British ideas of education' which 'would not only supply a need, but could hardly help but be a financial success'. [31] This was the beginning of St Andrew's School.

Shortly after them came the founders of Roedean (South Africa), Miss Theresa Lawrence (youngest sister of the founders of Roedean School in England) and Miss K.M. Earle (daughter of the Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford). In speaking of these ladies, E.B. Sargant, then educational advisor to the British High Commissioner, Lord Milner, was kind enough to say that they were 'more anxious to bring out to South Africa what they have found to be good and true in the education of girls in their English Roedean than to make the utmost profit out of this new enterprise'. [32]

Both schools were thus private enterprises aimed at securing a slice of the middle class market that had proved so profitable in England and that would inevitably develop in post-war Johannesburg. It is interesting that, as in Natal, girls' schools led the field.

The Reconstruction Period

Milner's anglicisation policy after the war must be seen in the context of an imperial political strategy aimed at the securing of British interest:

> A great Johannesburg - great not only in numbers, but in the character of its inhabitants, in intelligence, cultivation, and public spirit, means a British Transvaal. A British Transvaal turns the scale in favour of a British South Africa, and a British South Africa will go a long way to consolidate the British Empire . [33]

Malherbe sees the outcome of Milner's policy as an 'intensely bureaucratic' machine aimed at 'the

anglicisation of the two conquered colonies with as great a rapidity as possible' and using the power of the state 'to bring about the denationalisation of a people through the medium of the schools'.[34] Milner certainly moved with rapidity. As early as November 1900, before the War had ended, he appointed E.B. Sargant as director of education in the OFS and the Transvaal. Sargant appealed for good teachers would teach the children of the burghers 'our language and our ideals', 'the greatness of the English imperial ideal' and 'English ways of thought and speech'. Wherever possible, headmasters should be Englishmen. In response about 200 teachers arrived from England in 1901. Sargant used these teachers, many of them from public schools, to organise a system of schools 'modelled on the later Victorian public schools'.[35] By the end of 1903, there were 45 state schools in Johannesburg.

A good example is the Johannesburg Boys' High School, later to become King Edward VII School. Starting in temporary premises in a disused cigar factory, this school was intended as something of a cross between an English public school and a gramm school, and its headmaster, in the words of the Secretary for Education, had to be 'a gentleman and one whose character and personality will ensure the existence of a healthy tone ... such as is one of the best features of the English public school'.[36]

The reaction to Milnerism on the part of the defeated Boers was predictable. H. van Rensburg, later Commandant-General of the Ossewa-Brandwag, an extremist Afrikaner Nationalist movement, has described how

> they handed me over to the tender mercies of school teachers who had been imported from Britain especially to 'detribalise' the young Boers entrusted to their care ... Milner was the quintessence of British imperialism at the end of the 19th century.

> He was ruthlessly set on anglicising the whole Boer population, and he set to it with a will. So we young Boer children trooped off to school and received the rudiments of our education through a strange medium. [37]

One major result was the system of CNE schools already mentioned. This is an interesting parallel with the reaction of the Dutch-speaking colonists of the Cape to the anglicisation policy of Lord Charles Somerset in the 1820's (see Chapter 5). It also parallels the reaction of the Uitlanders before the war who, when they felt their cultural identity was threatened by the educational policies of the Volksraad, set up a system of private English-medium schools under the auspices of the Council of Education. (The CNE schools were finally drawn into the state system from 1907, largely through the efforts of Smuts, who was concerned to achieve national unity between the two major white groups). [38]

The Saving of St John's

One would have expected that Milner would look favourably on the private English schools being established on the Rand. This, however, was not the case. Not a public school man himself, Milner did not particularly approve of a private school system operating outside the centralised system he had created. [39] Certainly he regarded the attempt to revive St John's College with disfavour, and a circular was soon sent to the parents of St John's boys, pointing out the 'financial and social' advantages that would result from sending their children to the new Johannesburg Boys' High School. [40] The Council of St John's decided to press ahead in the face of this government competition and the 1903 prospectus already quoted was part of their attempt to draw 'gentlemen's sons'. The stated motive was to provide a religious education that would not be available in the state schools: there may, of course, have been other less lofty motives as well. The 'new theory of state education' which opposed the very

existence of private schools [41] took its toll and the initial enrolment of 180 boys in 1902 dropped to 49 in 1905. The parish council felt it should close the school, but the diocese took over in a renewed attempt to keep it alive. But just as it had proved a task beyond the ability of the parish, it soon proved likewise with the diocese and St John's would certainly have had to close, but for the intervention of the brethren of the Community of the Resurrection originally sent, as we have already noted, to work amongst the Africans of the goldfields.

The Rev. J.O. Nash C.R. was to become headmaster from 1906 to 1917 and can be regarded as St John's second founder. [42] He rapidly visited Bishops College in Cape Town and St Andrew's College in Grahamstown to learn about South African schools, asked for a properly certificated elementary teacher to be sent from Britain and, with some adroit footwork, succeeded in obtaining a gift of £5 000 from Sir Thomas Cullinan, chairman of the Premier Diamond Company, which was sufficient to secure the move of his school from its temporary accommodation on the Union Grounds to the Houghton ridge. In return for his services, Cullinan was duly elected a Life Governor. Several advantageous land deals with the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company followed (a representative of that company was duly added to the school's governing council) until the full extent of 29 acres had been secured by 1920. Meanwhile, in 1909, the Council of Education made its first grant to a church school when it gave St John's £1 500, and this was followed by further help over the years. Assistance was also forthcoming from the Community of the Resurrection itself, not least in the form of brethren who served as headmasters and teachers for purely nominal salaries.

Thus through a combination of Fr Nash's organising

and fund-raising ability, mining capital and, presumably, Anglican fervour, St John's was enabled to survive government competition, which found its most blatant expression in a decision to establish King Edward VII School a mere quarter mile from the Houghton ridge where Sir Herb Baker's lovely stone buildings were rising to house the college.

The role of capital in saving St John's is of great significance in the history of the English private school system in South Africa. This was the first time that capital had been employed in this way on such a scale. It reflected both the wealth of the Rand in relation to other areas of the country and the fact that the new capitalist class desired to support schools for 'gentlemen's sons' as part of its aspirations for a life style modelled as closely as possible on that of the English gentility. This was the start of the long process of mutually beneficial association between capital and the private schools.

There are numerous illustrations of the fabric of the life of wealthy Rand families which reveal clearly their overall aspirations, into which the private school model fitted snugly, during the formative first quarter of the 20th century.

The Parktown Culture

John Wentzel's memoir provides a useful entry point: he describes the splendid baronial houses on the Parktown ridge, on which the mining aristocracy sought refuge from the hurly-burly of the city, places which 'shaped as much as they reflected the taste' of this class and the gracious social life of which they were the centre ... Hohenheim, Dolobran, The Towers, Pallinghurst, Glen Shiel, The View, The Villa Arcadia, The Stone House ...[43]

As Wentzel says,

> during that quarter of a century the leaders of industry, mining, commerce, the stage and the arts ... came from or were considerably influenced in their social ways by Britain - which for them served as an inspiration and example for nearly every facet of manners, fashion and custom ... As far as Johannesburg in general and Parktown in particular was concerned, the British Empire, the Royal Family and British life and culture were to be admired and emulated .[44]

Wentzel's own father was 'the Dutch-German decended son of a small-town lawyer from the Karroo' but the Parktown environment 'fitted like a glove' since he had been 'conditioned by long and intimate association with the new ruling class'.[45] The final stage of his apotheosis was leaving the Lutheran Church for the Anglican, a step taken by many others in the process of becoming thoroughly anglicised and thus fully acceptable in the ranks of the new Rand aristocracy.

The select private schools of the area served the needs of this class, in the process aiding in the assimilation of suitable candidates from less than British backgrounds. William Plomer has described his days at St John's, where the fathers of the Community of the Resurrection - 'mostly excellent creatures, late-Victorian Englishmen from Oxford and Cambridge, dedicated to a somewhat austere Anglo-Catholicism'[46] - taught him and his schoolfellows, among them Afrikaners, Jews, and the sons of Frenchmen, Italians and Germans.[47] In its very early years, St Andrew's even had a Chinese pupil.[48]

Marjorie Juta followed a typical pattern for girls of her class: private tuition at home, then boarding school days at St Andrew's followed by finishing school in England.[49]

St Andrew's itself was very much in the finishing school tradition. In the twenties the girls were still attended by white maids, [50] while in the 1930's the staff featured a resident riding mistress and the informal curriculum included flower arrangement (English flowers, of course), bridge-playing, music and the proper way of pouring tea, with much stress on how the girls walked and talked and on their deportment generally. The headmistress had the right presence, a booming county voice and great dignity: although not particularly interested in her pupils' academic achievements, she once observed that 'our girls do marry well'. [51]

For their younger boys the wealthy Johannesburg families could look to Parktown School, founded after the Boer War by A.R. Aspinall who was 'determined to spread among heathen South Africans the best traditions of the English Public Schools'. [52] Rather incongruously, he first attempted to do this from a corrugated iron building on the present site of Parktown Boys' High School. In 1918 Aspinall moved his school to Mountain View and concluded his new prospectus with the claim that PTS set out 'to prepare the sons of gentlemen for admission to Eton, Harrow and other leading English Public Schools'. [53] The school was later taken over by R.G. Austin, an old Harrovian,and in 1922 it had four boys in the 'Sixth Form': one was later to become Lord Holford, the famous replanner of much of London after 1945, and another was 'a shy, brilliant boy called Harry Oppenheimer'. [54] Most of the 'products' of PTS went on to become leaders of the mining industry, stockbrokers and professional men. [55]

One PTS old boy recalls the period during the second World War. 'It could have been situated in one of the Home Counties for all the headmaster knew or cared'. Latin was taught from Form One, Greek from about Form

Three, and French, or 'as a concession to the world just outside the school gates a language known rather contemptuously as 'Africanz'. Science, maths, history and music 'were fitted in somewhere', and English with a strong emphasis on grammar. The school houses were named after British generals or admirals of the First World War - Kitchener, Haig, Jellicoe and Beatty - and the dormitories after battles of the War. The school was, in Patrick Cullinan's words, 'a tiny world with its own ideals and aspirations' which were logical as long as the old order held: 'I mean the British Raj and its off-shoots like South Africa then'.[56]

Although PTS, St Andrew's and Roedean were not denominational schools, in each case the prevailing ethos was Anglican and the services were usually conducted by Anglican priests.

One final aspect needs consideration in this survey of the beginnings of an English private school system in the Transvaal. This is the role of capital, in particular as represented by the Council of Education, in facilitating the development of individual schools and also of their growing cohesion into a system.

The Council of Education, Witwatersrand

The point has been made that the private schools were early on drawn close to the Rand's economic power centre. This was signified by the help of wealthy individuals: Sir Thomas Cullinan's gift to St John's College has already been mentioned, while Sir Percy Fitzpatrick 'saw to it' that the founders of Roedean 'were allocated ground in Parktown and helped them to finance their building programme'[57] (he was, of course, made a life member of the school's council); and the role of particular companies: we have seen how JCI helped St John's acquire its land.

More important, however, was the institutionalised support of the Council of Education, whose origins have already been sketched. Horton has painstakingly, if uncritically, chronicled the history of the Council and we need not attend to this in detail.[58] The Council weaves in and out of the histories of English schools on the Rand, with a grant here and a loan there, travel bursaries here and exchange schemes there, reducing interest rates and making temporary advances of funds. School governors were often also influential members of the Council (and were usually powerful businessmen). In the years after the Anglo-Boer War this was not confined to private schools. Cartwright has described how in the early years of King Edward VII School, 'the Council of Education was its fairy godmother, waiting patiently in the wings, ever ready to help when help was needed'.[59] The Jeppe High School, the Johannesburg High School for Girls' and the Parktown High School were other state schools to receive help. In fact, at first help was given fairly indiscriminately to state schools, and to Anglican, Catholic, German and non-sectarian private schools. After 1918, however, the Council seems to have dropped its support of Catholic schools, a phenomenon which Horton does not explain.[60] And in 1939 it decided 'to withdraw all assistance from Government schools and a number of other bodies, and to concentrate its school interests on the private schools'.[61] From 1922 some rather desultory interest was shown in black education, but in 1947 the Council resolved that 'non-European work' was not its field. There was also a half-hearted attempt to found a bilingual private school, to attract Afrikaners, but nothing came of it.[62]

From all this it is clear, as Horton says, that 'from the moment of its founding the Council had been concerned primarily with the education of the English-speaking youth, partly ... to preserve and strengthen English culture of the Witwatersrand'.[63] It is also clear that the Council came to see this task primarily in terms of

supporting the private schools (its other major activity, in the field of tertiary education, played an important role in the establishment of the University of the Witwatersrand).

Not only did the Council help in the establishment and development of many private schools. It helped to save some of them during the Depression of the 1930's: not only this, but 'through loans and grants and active participation in the work of their governing bodies it helped them to expand'.[64] The result was that by the outbreak of the Second World War most of the private secondary schools in Johannesburg were actually in a stronger position than before. St Mary's was helped to re-locate itself in the northern suburbs after Jeppe, its original neighbourhood, became less fashionable (another example of the migration of private schools in pursuit of their wealthy clientele). Loans were written off for St Mary's, the Council took over control of Roedean and restructured its finances, and efforts were made to rescue Parktown School.

One must recognise that within its general policy of fostering English education on the Rand, the Council has served class interests. The original members included some of the financial giants of the time (inter alia, Lionel Phillips, Ed. Lippert, T. Reunert, Abe Bailey - the first-named was at the head of both the Council and the Chamber of Mines in 1895). The original resolution of the Council -

> to establish and support a system of voluntary education, suited to all nationalities and creeds, with a single desire of conferring upon the coming race the teaching and tuition which will be calculated to make them worthy and enlightened citizens of a good community[65] -

made no distinction between the social classes, but it is noteworthy that there were no working class representatives. Horton defends this on the grounds that 'it was and is

perfectly natural that representatives of those who provided the funds of the Council should control their disposal'. [66] This raises many prickly issues, since it is tantamount to saying that it was and is right to exclude all but the rich and powerful, who might well have secured some of their wealth and power through the exploitation of cheap labour. [67]

Over time it became even clearer that the Council aimed to serve class interests. In 1914 the rules of election 'were tightened in such a way that effective control of membership was in the hands of the Donor members', [68] in effect the leaders of the mining industry. The ending of support for state schools, the lack of any real effort on behalf of poorer whites, the 1947 decision to eschew black education - these all fitted into a class-based function.

To round this summary sketch off, one must note that by the late 1970's new realities in South Africa were bringing about significant new directions in the Council. While representation and membership remained largely as before - to the powerful businessmen (inter alia S.A.G. Anderson, P.H. Anderson, A.M.D. Gnodde, D.B. Hoffe, C.S. Menell, H.F. Oppenheimer, A.M. Rosholt, T.P. Stratten) had been added educationists (in particular the principals of the University and the Johannesburg College of Education) - there was support for literacy work amongst blacks, concern was expressed about African unemployment and 'Black Education and Future Needs', and an African Field Officer had been appointed. [69]

It is possible that in earlier times blacks were largely ignored as politically irrelevant, while the Council played out its uneasy relationship with Afrikaner political power. Its attempt to create a parallel medium boarding school after the Second World

War had quite transparent motives. The cynical question has to be asked whether blacks can be more easily anglicised than Afrikaners, and whether the new directions in the Council of Education may represent something of a move to co-opt middle class blacks into its constituency.

Conclusion

Whatever the answers to such questions, we have now moved far ahead of the main theme of this chapter, the beginnings of a English private school system in the Transvaal.

The past three chapters have briefly surveyed the origins of this system in each of the present provinces and certain common themes have emerged, the most important of which are the racially exclusive and class-based nature of the schools; their close adherence to the English public school mode. of the late Victorian age, greatly increased by their dependence on principals and teachers from Britain; their imperialistic base; and the beginnings of a close association between capital and the schools themselves.

In the next chapters we need to take the story forward from about the time of Union in 1910 and trace the most significant developments, both in individual schools and in their growing cohesion into an institutionalised system.

Footnotes - Chapter 7

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22. Ibid, p.5.
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24. Ibid, p.21.
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32. Joan Raikes: Honneur Aulx Dignes: Roedean School (South Africa) 1903-78, Lorton Publications, Johannesburg, 1978, p.6.
33. The Times, 11 January 1902, quoted in B.K. Murray: 'British Imperialism, Mining Capital and the Movement for Tertiary Education in the Transvaal, 1902-1922', mimeographed (History Department, University of the Witwatersrand, 1980), p.8. It is clearly beyond the scope of the present study to attempt to enter into the historical debate on the nature of state-capital relationships in the Reconstruction era, although they would have indirectly affected the private schools. A useful perspective is provided by F.A. Johnstone: Class, Race and Gold, London, 1976.
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Chapter 8: Consolidation and Expansion: 1910-1980
'The essential heritage'

Private enterprise and denominational activity had given rise to a scattering of independent schools in South Africa by 1910, concentrated in and around the historical centres of English settlement: Cape Town, Grahamstown, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and the Witwatersrand. There was then little real contact between schools even of the same denominational family,[1] and it is too early to speak of a system. The development of a system embracing the English private schools, operating parallel to the state system, took place gradually, with the formation of the HMC in 1929 as the first major landmark. This process will be considered in detail in Chapter 10. In this chapter the primary focus will be on the schools themselves, taking forward several earlier themes and identifying the major trends from 1910 to 1980.

The English Tradition Continued

There is some truth in Gathorne-Hardy's blithe assertion that the Victorian public school model was simply exported holus-bolus to the colonies: 'When Plumtree was founded in Rhodesia in 1900, there was no nonsense about waiting for traditions to grow up. A master called Hammond sailed out from Winchester and slapped them on entire - fagging, colours, prefect justice, monitorial beatings, everything'.[2] The influence of Radley on Bishops and Rugby on Hilton is clear, but the process was generally more piecemeal than Gathorne-Hardy describes. To the various examples already given one may add the Arnoldian practice of beating the bounds (St Alban's, Pretoria), the Christ's Hospital custom of presenting a bible to each boy leaving the school (Hilton College), the use of the Rugbeian term 'big school' (St John's College), and Winchester's ad portas ceremony for distinguished visitors (Michaelhouse), not forgetting the adoption of public school customs and traditions by state schools

like Durban High School, Queen's College and King Edward VII School.

While overseas traditions may 'enrich and enliven South African practice',[3] one of the features of the period from 1910 was the growth of a feeling of South Africanism in the private schools, particularly after 1945, with occasional resentment against the imposition of practices that smacked too much of the English public school. The Hilton history describes the hostility encountered by J.A. Pateman, educated at Christ's Hospital and Cambridge, and Hilton's headmaster from 1948 to 1953. This hostility was engendered by Pateman's too-close adherence to the English public school tradition; it resulted in a revolt by the senior boys and an expression of lack of confidence by the staff.[4] To rescue their school from the resulting crisis, the Hilton governors called in J.W Hudson after a life time in Natal state schools; after Hudson's resignation in 1957, the board recommended the appointment 'of a man from South Africa with local experience', adding, perhaps as a sop to the school's origins, that he should have had 'some of his education and certain teaching experiences overseas'.[5] This recommendation, which marked a major departure from the practice of appointing British headmasters, was foreshadowed in 1944, when the prefects clashed with the headmaster (T.W. Mansergh, Marlborough and Cambridge, and a former master at Wellington) and demanded a South African headmaster and a purely South African staff. On that occasion, the board supported the headmaster; in Pateman's case the 'revolt' led directly to his resignation.

This is thus a far cry from the earlier position, dominated as it seemed to be by a succession of consumptive English clergymen and imperious English lady principals. Despite the growth of South Africanism,

however, a sense of imperial loyalty persisted until well after the Second World War. At Girls' Collegiate, Miss Webb-Johnson (MA Cantab. and headmistress from 1926 to 1948) aroused in the girls' 'a tremendous love for and pride in the British Commonwealth', and used to parade before her pupils 'with her medals glinting in the sun'.[6] At the Durban Girls' College Diamond Jubliee celwbration in 1937, the programme included a Latin oration, the singing of the Harrow Song, and an extract from Stanley Baldwin's address to the Empire Youth Rally.[7] An Elizabethan Cavalcade in 1969 featured 'Merrie England', the Royal Procession of Queen Elizabeth I and the Long Gallery at Hampton Court,[8] and the Centenary Celebration Service in 1977 included the prayer of the Mary Datchelor School in England, a prayer of Thomas à Kempis and an address by the Bishop of Salisbury, England.[9] No doubt recalling the Imperial fervour of her own youth, one first former's grandmother was 'in an uproar nearly the whole way through'.[10] At Somerset House Prep. in 1977, Family Day was celebrated with a 'Village Green' in which 'the spirit of Olde England was enchantingly captured'.[11] The nostalgia for 'Olde England' is further illustrated in a 'Quest Scheme' run by the school, 'based on the ideals of Knighthhod'.[12] When South Africa left the British Commonwealth in 1960, a housemaster at Kearsney College donned his World War I uniform and emotionally addressed the assembled boys on their English heritage, describing the coming of the Republic as a betrayal.[13]

It is not remarkable that the schools should have celebrated their English heritage, although the emphasis on medievalism and Empire may strike one as somewhat exaggerated, and perhaps these illustrations would not be worth recording but for the singular lack of any comparable celebration of South Africanism, or any significant attempt to do more than merely

recapture something of the glory of a passing age. There is little evidence that the schools consciously sought, before about the 1960's, to foster an awareness of the cultural richness of their Southern African milieu.

As Barrett rightly points out, the private schools inevitably drew their inspiration and their personnel from England, stemming as they did from an essentially English institution.[14] The government schools also owed much to the same source and also drew, in their early days, most of their staff from Britain.

The Outside World

It seems that the great majority of those involved - principals, teachers, parents, governors, Old Boys and Old Girls - have little coherent grasp of the history of the public school system or its South African offshoot, or of the latter's place in the politico-economic context of contemporary South Africa. For most it seems adequate merely to believe, at a level of simple slogan, that private schools are a good thing, maintaining high standards in a deteriorating world and upholding a system of values in which such words as integrity, truth, duty, morality, service and responsibility feature.[15] One typical headmaster's report expresses this as a simple dichotomy:

> The school in many ways epitomises the battle... of law and order, duty, moral integrity, community spirit, high cultural values and optimism... against anarchy, ruthless individualism, selfishness, decadent standards, cynicism and despair .[16]

References to the outside world are not common, however, and one may gain the impression that most private schools exist in a timeless vacuum, in which academic prizes, sports matches and anecdotes about loveable old teachers are the major interests. Hilton College was 'apparently untouched and untroubled' by the events of the troubled early 1960's - Sharpeville and the state of emergency,

bannings, the coming of the Republic, the assassination of Dr Verwoerd.[17] The Second World War 'made little impact' on St Andrew's school, tucked away in Sir George Farrar's old Baker mansion, Bedford Court.[18] In fact the last significant outside event, other than visits to South Africa by British royalty, to have impinged on this school seems to have been the Rand Revolt of 1922, because of fears that some of its girls, the daughters of wealthy businessmen and mining magnates, might be abducted by the striking workers.[19] Perhaps most illuminating of all, the 1939 magazines of Durban Girls' College and Waterkloof House make no reference to world events in that year.

Even in the late 1970's when national and international events were beginning to press on the private school system, any references to them in principals' reports and Speech Day addresses are usually in discreet and indirect terms, tacked on at the end as it were.[20] After the events of 1976 (the black schools boycott, the unrest in Soweto and other black townships, and the resultant exercise of the repressive powers of the state), some principals were frankly pessimistic:

> The year 1977 has been notable for the escalation of international pressure against our country. Many of the fainthearted in our society have fled. Terrorism flourishes on our borders and is slowly beginning in our urban areas. The future is dominated by looming clouds of War.[21]

The exhortation not to flee is a common one. At the centenary celebration of St Anne's DSG, the chairman of the South African Sugar Association expressed 'distress... and some distaste' at 'the exodus from South Africa of a number of people who have enjoyed the good life and made their fortunes here, but now seek to escape from the responsibility of... helping to build a Nation'.[22] (The same exodus was, of course, causing a temporary drop in

the numbers entering the private schools).

At another Speech Day, a former President of the Methodist Conference urged the boys not only to stay, but to fight. 'He encouraged his audience to be ready to defend its vision, saying that those who did duty on the borders did this in order that peaceful change could be accomplished'.[23] In another echo of government propaganda, the editorialist for the same school deplored the west's 'self-destruction', the 'terrorist wars' in Rhodesia and Angola, and 'heavy western pressure for change' in South Africa itself. His solution to the problem of the school's role in such a situation was that 'we shall be led inevitably to the teaching of the Bible'.[24]

Other principals were somewhat vaguely optimistic: 'I believe that we should reaffirm our faith in the beloved country, knowing that ultimately God overrules in the affairs of men... Rather than paying heed to the prophets of doom, we should give our young people a feeling of hope and confidence in the future'.[25]

The Master of Roedean pinned his hope on sweeping but undefined change. He described meeting a former African National Congress leader, who had been tried for treason, detained and banned: 'I have never felt such bitterness and hatred radiating so intensely from a human being... Those of us privileged to educate should set as our goal... a complete change over the next few years in an order of living that engenders such feelings'.[26]

Private school pupils, too, found contact across the colour line a stimulus to re-examination of their attitudes. Representatives from nine private schools met at Loch Vaal in 1978 to discuss change in South Africa, and one reported that 'we had long, involved and interesting conversations with

people from Soweto, and many of us suddenly realised how little we really knew about the situation'.[27] Occasionally, amid the plethora of sweet little poems and tepid prose selected for inclusion in the schools' magazines, a pupil's own writing pinpoints some of the issues.

> In a school like St Mary's the pupils are somewhat sheltered and protected against the realities of the outside world... Unless we have a clear idea of our thoughts and beliefs, we are susceptible to bigotry and prejudice, and we cannot hope to fight against the fear in abundance in South Africa...[28]

Some schools clearly have a policy of encouraging children to write about issues relevant in their own lives and in the wider society in which they are growing up. A good example is the magazine of Durban Girls' College, which has moved a long way from its previous vapid outpourings. Subjects dealt with in the most recent issues include teenage love, drugs and war, and there are articles on detention without trial, the destruction of the Modderdam Squatter Camp and the removal of Coloured people from District Six in Cape Town.

The despair of white liberals is reflected in the opening sentences of one headmistress's annual report:

> As I sat down to write my report for 1977 I felt nothing but distress, pain and confusion at the questions and implications of bannings, imprisonment, of justice perpetrating injustice in the name of justice and in the service of fear...[29]

As part of their 'liberal' tradition private schools frequently invite liberal spokesmen to give Speech Day addresses. One warned his audience of their private school becoming a mere 'ghetto of the privileged',[30] another that whites under-estimate the depth of

black feeling and fail to face up to the real crisis in the country.[31] It is interesting to note that one school held its own 'General Election' four days before the General Election of 1977: the results in both showed a definite swing towards the National Party, as well as increased support for the Progressive Party.[32] Professor D. Henderson spoke to Kingswood College on Freedom in South Africa and the Rev. D. Cragg on social justice.[33] There is a long tradition of this kind of address, possibly mostly ritualistic, in the private schools. In 1927 the Rev. J.H. Glover told Durban Girls' College that

> one of the greatest fears in this country is that the superiority of the European race may be undermined by the African race... There is finally no way of maintaining that superiority unless we Europeans take pains to progress in true wisdom. Repressive legislation, designed to keep down the black people, will certainly not do it...[34]

The long line of liberal speakers is impressive: J.H. Hofmeyr, Alan Paton, Edgar Brookes, Archbishop Joost de Blank, Prof. G.R. Bozzoli, Judge O.D. Schreiner, Bishop G. Clayton, Bishop Ambrose Reeves, Archbishop Denis Hurley. (It is, of course, notable that all are white). At the same time, however, it must be noted that private schools also make use of Defence Force Generals and Cabinets Ministers (the more 'verligte' ones like Dr Piet Koornhof) to appear on their platforms.

In general then, one can identify two distinct and somewhat contradictory themes. On the one hand, the private schools are seen as bastions of decency and morality in a world of anarchy and crumbling values, in which reliance on both the Bible and military service are somehow seen as mutually desirable; on the other hand they are seen as islands of privilege in a sea of social injustice and racial oppression, needing to come to grips with the real issue involved. It is

in the light of these viewpoints that one should consider the racial attitudes displayed by the schools.

Afrikaners

Several examples have been given of the chauvinism fostered in the English private schools in their early periods. This was inevitably reflected in attitudes towards other groups. As Barrett rather delicately puts it, 'the prestige of Afrikaans... was for long somewhat insecure'.[35] Another school historian is more robust about 'the antipathy to the subject'; he recalls how, after the results of the 1948 General Election became known, the boys refused to learn a 'kitchen language', reducing their Afrikaans teacher to tears.[36] At my own church boarding school, an Afrikaner was as rare in the early 1950's as he had been when Edgar Brookes was at Maritzburg College in the first decade of the century: the usual appellation given was 'bloody Dutchmen'.

Until the teaching of Afrikaans became compulsory, it was common for the private schools to neglect it: in the late 1920's, St Andrew's School had only one pupil learning the language.[37]

There is little evidence that the private schools actively encouraged the admission of Afrikaners. One of the few examples was Milner's arrangement for the sons of Boer leaders to go to St Andrew's College after the Anglo-Boer War, which has been described, rather inflatedly, as helping 'enormously towards superimposing on the British Public School foundations of College much of what had made the school uniquely South African'.[38]

Education of the English public school type has clearly had limited appeal amongst Afrikaners, although a small minority (usually 'bloedsappe') has

favoured it: Gen. Louis Botha, the country's first prime minister, for example, sent two sons to Bishops and persuaded several Cabinet colleagues to do likewise. We have already seen that the Council of Education's attempt to establish a bilingual boarding school in the Transvaal in the 1950's failed through lack of support, particularly amongst Afrikaners. A hundred years before, Grey College was established in Bloemfontein and named after Sir George Grey, governor of the Cape from 1854 to 1859. The stated aim was to bring higher education to the trekker communities north of the Orange River, but there was probably also an element of British cultural expansionism in the scheme. In the event, Grey College prospered, one reason being the failure of attempts to re-model it into an English public school. This was the aim of E.B. Sargent, director of education in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony after the Anglo-Boer War. Himself 'a very thorough product of the English Public School and University', Sargent intended Grey College to be a school for 'the upper social classes' of the Orange River Colony. He was opposed in this by his deputy, Russell, who 'rightly pointed out that the social conditions were so widely different between England and South Africa that such an English Public School would be out of place'. The tone of the latter was exclusive, whereas Grey College was originally intended to benefit the Boer people as a whole, amongst whom 'class distinctions were unknown' at that time.[39]

In this connection, it is worth repeating that private education is overwhelmingly a phenomenon of the white English-speaking community.

The only significant examples among Afrikaans-speaking whites have already been given: the setting up of private Dutch-medium schools in the Cape in the 1820's in response to Somerset's anglicisation policy, and of Christian National Schools after the Anglo-Boer War, when the former Boer republics came under Milner's

control. In 1976 there was only one Afrikaans-medium private school in the country, a Catholic convent school in Pretoria which has since closed. In 1975, of the 3 265 pupils in the Transvaal's twelve subsidised private schools, only two came from Afrikaans-speaking homes, while only one child from an English-speaking home went to a private school where English was not the medium of instruction (in this case German).[40] In 1976, there were 108 non-subsidised private schools in the Transvaal, with 29 282 English-speaking pupils and only 719 Afrikaans-speaking pupils.[41] For the sake of perspective, it should be borne in mind that the Transvaal's 913 white state schools in 1975 accommodated nearly half a million children.[42] The position can be summarised as follows:

Transvaal School Enrolment 1975 (Whites)

	Afrikaans-medium	English-medium
State	314 418	146 468
Subsidised Private	719	29 282
Uns idised Private	2	3 625
Total	315 139	179 375

English-speaking pupils thus constitute about 36 per cent of all white pupils in the Transvaal, the province with the greatest number of whites, and English-speaking pupils at private schools (including Catholic schools) about 6,5 per cent of the total. The patterns are reversed in pre-primary education, with English-speaking children in the majority, possibly a reflection of the relatively more privileged socio-economic position of their community, and with greater private than state provision.

Enrolment in Transvaal Pre-Primary Schools 1976 (Whites)

	Afrikaans-medium	English-medium
State	2 360	925
Private	8 277	16 289
Total	10 637	17 214

Source: Transvaal Education Department Report, 1976.

(The threat of 'Afrikanerisation', as perceived by English-speaking whites particularly in the Transvaal, will be considered in the next chapter).

Black South Africans

Although the first Anglican schools in Cape Town evidently admitted some black pupils (see Chapter 9), subsequent private schools were created primarily to serve the needs of the English-speaking white community, and increasingly began to serve its wealther classes, while cautiously admitting some whites of other backgrounds. Such contact as there was with black South Africans was largely at a master-servant level.

The servants often gave long and loyal service, usually with scant reward. The example of 'Isaacs', who worked for Girls' Collegiate for 47 years and received no pension, has already been given (Chapter 6). Charlie Mdinga served Durban Girls' College for 34 years and on retirement in 1975 received a monthly pension of R15.[43] At Michaelhouse the black staff were still living in 'hovels' in the 1930's, and when the Rector was anxious to rehouse them the Board dragged its feet.[44] At the end of the Second World War, the only food provided for the black staff of St Andrew's School was mealie meal.[45] In the early 1950's Kearsney's black staff were accommodated in a primitive 'compound', and the usual appellation given to any of its inmates was Jim Fish. Such black-white relationships as there were were heavily deferential on the one hand and paternalistic on the other.

All this merely reflected prevailing attitudes. The conservatism of governors and Old Boys could act as a brake on more liberal views: when the Rector of Michaelhouse in 1946 accepted a Chinese boy for admission, one of the governors resigned and the

Maritzburg Old Boys proposed a condemnatory motion at the Old Boys' Annual General Meeting. The motion was lost, but the Board of Governors requested that any similar cases should in future be referred to them beforehand.[46] As Barrett points out, 'the episode is significant in illustrating the sensitivity of an institution like Michaelhouse to prevailing opinion'.[47]

After the end of the Second World War in 1945 and the advent of the National Party and apartheid in 1948 there was a sharper focus on the problem of colour. The Churches with which the private schools were associated became increasingly critical of racist attitudes and discriminatory practices. The private schools began gradually to attempt to bring about greater inter-racial contact and a deeper sense of social awareness and service. These varied greatly in scope and efficacy from school to school. Some had included an African language and 'Bantu Studies' in their curricula as early as the 1930's.[48] The social service schemes often seem to have 'something patronising about them, an element of acquiescing in the injustices of society by allowing its dregs to have a few easily afforded and easily given crumbs',[49] which is Gathorne-Hardy's description of the social work carried out by English public schools in the Victorian age.

In 1960 girls from St Andrew's School were given quick visits to African townships to gain 'some insight into how the other half lived',[50] while in the 1970's the Durban Girls' College girls were helped 'to understand the different cultures of the races in their community' through a series of talks and visits to such events as an Indian wedding and tribal dancing.[51] At a more practical level, Michaelhouse boys helped to build a church for the Africans on the estate, and to fence a black TB

settlement at Botha's Hill, [52] while the Durban Girls' College Old Girls' Guild started the first African nursery school and nursery teachers' training centre in Natal. [53]

By the end of the 1970's some private schools were responding to new circumstances: African languages were being introduced in many that had previously not taught them (it is of interest that the Transvaal Education Department gave the lead here, in its primary schools). Kingswood College in 1978 included Xhosa in the junior forms because, in the words of its prospectus, we are living in a rapidly integrating society. The headmaster of Highbury stated that 'the very structure of our society may change in the next decade' and as a result 'we may have to become less exclusive and admit children of other racial groups'. [54] The question of admitting black children was a major issue for the private schools, particularly the church schools, in the late 1970's and this will be dealt with in the following chapter.

The Inner World

While the trend towards wider contact accelerated after 1948, the years after Union were marked by a process of intense inner concentration of the major private schools, particularly the boarding schools, which virtually became total communities. 'With its 400 Europeans, 500 Natives, some Indians and Coloureds, its 300 acres, its own water supply, dairy, vegetable garden and wattle industry, Hilton itself was almost a small town in its own right', [55] while Michaelhouse 'was not only a school and a community of staff, wives and boys; it had to provide many of its own services... which included a farm'. [56] Both schools even had their own cemeteries.

Town schools could not, of course, attain such self-

containment. But they tried as far as possible to control most aspects of their pupils' lives. In 1935 the headmaster of St John's College introduced a rule forbidding day boys to go to entertainments, either public or private, on any night during term, except Saturdays.[57] He defended this rule by comparing the day boys' position to that of the boarders: 'A boarder learns to sink himself in the community of which he is part'.[58] The College's historian quotes with approval at this point a 1967 remark by the headmaster of Rugby: 'If you have a set of intellectual and moral principles you believe in, you've got a better chance of teaching them if you have the boys twenty-four hours a day'.[59]

A former teacher at St Stithian's, a boarding school on the outskirts of Johannesburg, could describe himself as being, in the 1960's, blissfully happy, 'encapsulated in a little isolated community with no political problems, a little world of unreality'.[60] In the boarding schools, in particular, the sense of totality was fostered by the whole paraphenalia of colours, crests and uniforms, and by the strict enforcement of rules governing behaviour and the hierarchical structure within the institution, as well as rituals of initiation, promotion and departure and the observance of customs like compulsory attendance at first team matches. Most of this was enforced by the pupil-rulers, the prefects. In such a situation, eccentricity and 'oddness' could not be tolerated, at least on the part of the inmates (eccentricity amongst the teachers could flourish), and conforming became a prime strategy for survival. The halcyon days of the major South African boarding schools seem to have been from the 1930's through to the 1950's, and during this period they came close to achieving Arnold's dream of all-encompassing communities in which every aspect of the boys' lives could be directed in line with his principles of moral rectitude, Christian gentlemanly

behaviour and intellectual development. The life that seethed below the surface, of course, bore little relation to such fine phrases.[61]

Creating a Mythology

An important aspect of the foregoing was the creation of a mythology for each school. The principals obviously played a major role in this, and so did long-serving teachers who identified almost completely with the institutions they served. Barrett describes, for example, how C.W. Hannah was largely responsible for the creation of the myth of early Michaelhouse, through his written reminiscences and his conversations with boys and Old Boys. The fact that he had served the school virtually from its earliest days obviously gave him an authority which the succession of Rectors could not match. Hannah could not speak of Michaelhouse with detachment, 'but only in terms of ideals which he felt the school had achieved or should achieve; and to create a myth in this way is to contribute substantially to the growth of an institution's roots'.[62]

Another such was J.F. Reece, who came out from England to Kearsney College in 1927 on a three year contract and remained on the staff for forty years. As the last survivor of the staff of the 'old' Kearsney on the north coast he became the authentic interpreter of the school's early days. His authority was enhanced by the fact that he had attended Kingswood in England, the archetypal Methodist boarding school, and he frequently sought to steer Kearsney along the lines of his old school. One of his major contributions was to remain in touch with scores of Old Boys, whose doings he painstakingly chronicled, and it was inevitable that he should be the school's historian. To complete the picture, Reece married one of his colleagues on the staff, his son returned to teach at the school, and after retirement he lived in a

house he had built on the edge of the school's grounds. He inevitably became part of the whole Kearsney myth himself, not least because in his day he was a dreaded beater.[63] Each private school seems to have at least one monumental figure of this sort.

Despite staffing problems, particularly in war time, the major private schools have been able to rely over the years on 'a powerful nucleus of men whose working lives have been given wholly or largely to the school'.[64] Each school has its Mr Chips (or Mrs Chips), and the legends and tales that have grown up around them have become part of the general myth of each school, part of the informal tradition that is so important a part of its tone.

The schools themselves use various mechanisms to reinforce their mythology. At Durban Girls' College, for example, all girls must each year write - and pass - an examination on 'College Affairs' set by the headmistress and marked by the prefects. The questions cover all aspects of the school's history, including the headmistresses in order, the members of the Board, the subjects of the busts scattered about the school, and the names of teachers and head girls. Many of the girls acquire a reverence for their school which borders on the mystical rapture that was found in an Old Girls' recollection of the 1927 Jubilee Celebration quoted at the end of Chapter 4. Another Old Girl, who left the school fifty years later, told the writer that she had never cried as much as on the day she left, and that whenever she can she revisits the school.

The official histories also foster the myth, sometimes in language like 'from infant poverty and ordeal she (the school) has endured to properous centenarian, gathering about her down the years a

rich cloak of tradition, mellowness morality and energy...'

Tone

In describing 'tone', most private school spokesmen become incoherent. A headmaster of St John's talked of 'that indefinable quality', [65] while a headmistress of St Andrew's school preferred 'that indefinable spirit'. [66] A principal of Durban Girls' College managed only 'this indefinable something'. [67] It is, of course, not only private schools that suffer from this problem: the chairman of King Edward VII School's governing body speaks of the school as 'that remarkable, indefinable entity'. [68]

As an inspector of schools said when he visited Girls' Collegiate in 1950: 'Tone is not an easy thing to define or assess, but anyone with experience of schools is immediately aware of its quality at the assembly, in the classrooms, about the school, in the playground'. [69] Apparently on the strength of the hymn-singing at assembly, he concluded that Collegiate's tone was very good. This does not take the matter much further forward.

The whole question of 'standards' is wrapped up in 'tone'. A master at St Alban's feels that teaching is all about maintaining standards, 'and that is what I admire about a man like Livingstone, you know, who marched across Africa in a suit'. [70] But it must presumably involve more than merely hymn-singing or wearing a suit, and Barrett is one of the few writers on South African private schools to have attempted to move beyond the 'indefinable quality' and put some body to the concept of tone.

Barrett points to the importance of sport - the rugby notes of Michaelhouse's 1951 magazine describe

the game as providing 'a training in courage and self-control and the best sort of toughness' - and, more importantly, a school's sporting prowess, as being taken 'as a more or less accurate indication of the tone of a school'.[71] The poor results of the Michaelhouse XV in 1950 caused such serious adverse comment among Old Boys that the Rector felt obliged to deal with the matter in his report to the school governors.[72] Barrett almost goes so far as to suggest that if the sports results are poor, as they were at Michaelhouse in 1949-50, then the examination results will also be poor and that the two together are significant indicators of 'tone'.[73] In fact in 1948 and 1949 the percentage of matriculation failures at Michaelhouse was higher than the average for the state schools in Natal.[74] Barrett acknowledges, however, that the factors contributing to 'tone' are very complex: in 1949, when 'tone was by all accounts poor', the boys were enthusiastic attenders at week-day chapel services on the theme of missionary work.[75] Another factor which Barrett identifies as contributing to 'tone' is the relationship between staff and pupils.[76] He makes the point that the earlier authoritarian ethos had become very considerably modified in most schools by the 1960's, with the boarding schools in particular being characterised by a greater degree of friendliness, since contact is 'so constant and often intimate' (he adds the caution that such contact may be used 'to emphasize the boys' tutelage instead of their developing manhood').[77]

We are now entering the area of intangibles, the 'indefinable', again, and it is probably enough to acknowledge that - despite the constant references to religion and morality - the 'tone' of the private schools is judged in public most commonly by external factors like sports results and examination and scholarship successes. It is no wonder therefore that their prospectuses, magazines and histories devote a

great deal of attention to these matters. To give merely one example, the history of Waterkloof House Prep. (which, incidentally, also adopted the Harrow School Song, 'Forty Years On') devotes two full pages to the sporting exploits of the cricketer, Eddie Barlow, an Old Boy of the school.[78] Where, because of its newness, or its small size, a school cannot yet boast of its records, recourse may be taken to suggestions that it can offer other advantages in terms of 'standards' and 'tone'. For example, Treverton offers handbell ringing, which 'helps develop a team spirit, mutual respect, dependence on one another and a sense of belonging', and horse-riding ('the discipline of caring for a horse moulds character').[79]

Getting the right head

'Tone' is set in the first place by the people at the top, and the private schools have sought principals and teachers who embody the characteristics they regard as desirable. As we saw in previous chapters, staff were recruited almost exclusively from Britain in the formative years. This pattern continued well into the 20th century: the girls' schools relied heavily on the Society for the Overseas Settlement of British Women until the 1930's, and most of the teachers at St Andrew's School, for example, were recruited through this agency on three-year contracts. In the boys' schools, too, the majority of the staff were from Britain until the 1940's. We have noted the resentment this caused at Hilton College, culminating in the 'prefects' revolt' of 1944.

The period of consolidation, roughly between the two World Wars, was marked by powerful principals who consolidated and expanded their schools. Increasingly there were interchanges between schools; these had an important effect on their growing community of interest and the evolution of a coherent

private school system. When the head of Bishops retired in 1915, [80] the appointment of a new principal was postponed until after the war and the Coadjutor Bishop of Cape Town, the Rt. Rev. James Nash, who, as we saw in Chapter 7, had been responsible for building up St John's College after the Boer War, was temporarily made headmaster. The question of his successor was handled in the hit-or-miss manner already mentioned: Nash wrote to a friend, a master at Radley College in England, asking if there was anyone there who might make a good principal for Bishops. The letter was passed on to a young master, the Rev. R. Birt, who after some delay applied for the post and was duly appointed. Educated at Wellington and Oxford, Birt seemed to the Visitor to have the right sort of tone.

Birt remained at Bishops from 1919 to 1943. On his arrival, the buildings were old and inadequate, the playing fields were wastes on which the housemasters' cows grazed, funds were low, the staff was dispirited and underpaid, discipline poor, the curriculum austere and limited, and the boarding establishments were run by masters who kept the profits. Birt persuaded the Council to embark on an ambitious building programme and generally improved and re-organised the school. One of his important innovations was the introduction of a post-matriculation form, a practice followed in due course by other leading private schools.

What Birt did for Bishops, another Englishman, William Falcon, did for Hilton. [81] Educated at St Bees and Cambridge, Falcon came to South Africa with Milner's Kindergarten in 1902. Hilton's numbers had fallen to just over seventy, and the financial situation was unpromising. Natal was still in an economic depression following the Boer War, and the Bambata Rebellion of 1906 had made matters worse. Falcon's immediate predecessor had been an ineffectual

Anglican clergyman who had lasted barely a year in the post. Falcon's own appointment is interesting. While vice-principal of a state high school in Pretoria, established under Milner's Reconstruction policy, he was approached by a former Hilton head boy who had been his room-mate at Cambridge. Falcon was persuaded to apply for the post of headmaster. This is an early example of the old boy network operating in South Africa. It also illustrates the informal system of recruitment, through personal contact, that characterised several important private school appointments. And it is an interesting foreshadowing of the way Hilton later drew on men from the state sector when the school was in a crisis. The example of John William Hudson has already been given: there was also Raymond Slater, appointed headmaster in 1967 after teaching at Glenwood High School, a state school. Slater was the second headmaster of Hilton to have been born and educated in South Africa and the first to be educated at a state school (Durban High School). After Falcon, the other heads were A.W. Mansergh (1934-47), Marlborough and Cambridge, and a former master at Wellington; J.A. Pateman (1948-53), Christ's Hospital and Cambridge, and a former housemaster at the Scottish public school Loreto (several distinguished South African candidates were overlooked in his appointment, including RTS Norwood of Kingswoood College, Grahamstown, who subsequently became Rector of Michaelhouse); Hudson himself (1954-57); and E.L. Harison (1957-67), educated at St Andrew's College, Grahamstown, Rhodes University and Cambridge, and a former housemaster at St John's College, Johannesburg.

Harison was one of the growing body of South African private school men, often with British experience, who were moving about the evolving private school system in this country, acting as agents of cross-pollination. Another is R.F. Currey, the most important of the early group. The son of a private secretary to Rhodes, Currey

Currey was educated at St Andrew's College, Grahamstown (the nursery of many private school headmasters) and Rhodes University. He went to Oxford on a Rhodes Scholarship and saw service in the Black Watch in the First World War. Thereafter he taught for a while at Rugby before returning to South Africa to teach at his old school. In 1927 he and Guy Nicolson became joint headmasters of the Ridge Prep. in Johannesburg, which had had a shaky start under its previous joint heads. In 1930 Currey, after an 'unofficial feeler' from Michaelhouse, was appointed Rector. His eight years saw a substantial imporvement in the school's fortunes. A building programme was carried out, and the school remained full despite the Depression, 'thanks particularly to the Transvaal connection... the Rand was more resilient than most areas during the depression'.[82] Currey instituted an entrance examination, and gave permanent form to the post-matriculation class, which benefited from an annual subsidy for sixth form science work from the Chamber of Mines. During Currey's time at Michaelhouse the 'Transvaal connection' began systematically to come to the aid of private schools outside that province, with donations from mining and finance companies 'which were significant as an indication of the practical interest which financiers and industrialists were taking in education, particularly that provided by independent schools'.[83]

Already in 1934 Currey had been 'informally' approached to take over the headship of St Andrew's College, which he declined. But in 1938 St Andrew's was in a state of crisis and he responded to a more urgent appeal. He was its headmaster for nearly twenty years and raised it from its low ebb in a spectacular feat of organisation and skilful human relations. Currey occupies a central position in the evolution of a private school system in South

Africa, as he was the initial mover in the setting up of a body to represent the Anglican boys' schools, which was the forerunner of the Association of Private schools. This aspect of his career will be dealt with in Chapter 10.

The informal, wink-and-nod method of recruitment operated in some girls' schools too, which also, when necessary, drew on the state sector. A good example of this is the appointment of Miss M. Neave to head St Andrew's School, Bedfordview, in 1949. Miss Neave was headmistress of Pretoria Girls' High when 'a chance, joking remark to a friend who was in the Chamber of Mines... brought her into contact' [84] with C.S. McLean, chairman of both the Chamber of Mines and the governing body of St Andrew's. After 'a friendly informal interview with him', she was duly appointed to the principalship. Miss Neave was the first South African to head the school, having been educated at the Collegiate School for Girls in Port Elizabeth, Rhodes University and Cambridge.

Miss Neave's immediate predecessor had been recruited from England on a three-year contract, but her 'short reign was not a happy one' and when the governors sought to cancel the contract after a year, the HMC intervened by passing as resolution that if the governors went ahead then St Andrew's would be blacklisted. This would have made it impossible for the school to obtain another head, and the governors backed down, which 'necessarily involved two more years of a very unsettled and debilitating state of affairs for the school'. [85] This is one of the few examples where the HMC effectively exercised its muscle to protect what it saw as the rights of principals, and it illustrates the increasing cohesion of the private school system. (In Chapter 4 the formation of the HMC in England was described as 'a crucially important step in the concentration of the

public schools into a coherent system', providing both an informal and a formal means of contact...' as well as mutual support).

Miss Neave's story is interesting in another way, since it illustrates how private schools could all too easily become extensions of their principals' own egos (we noted in Chapter 4 R.F. Currey's remarks about a private school headmaster being 'king in his own little kingdom', a situation in which 'humility is not easy to practise'). Miss Neave's history of St Andrew's (she was headmistress from 1949 to 1970) makes it quite clear that she came to regard the school as her own little kingdom. It is a chilling document: she writes of herself and her 'regime' in the third person (occupying nearly half the book), skilfully demolishes her predecessors and her immediate successor, eulogises the dedicated, devoted and energetic board of governors, overlooks almost all outside events except for passing references to the Rand Revolt and the World Wars and rather more fulsome references to the visits to South Africa of British royalty, and virtually ignores the actual life of the girl community.

By 1970's the day of the eccentric - and egocentric - principal seemed to be largely over. Headmasters had inevitably to be organisation men, keeping their complex little kingdoms operating smoothly and efficiently, justifying the high fees paid by parents. If one considers the various pressures on a principal of a church school, it is understandable that there should be a fear of adverse publicity: this fear is reflected again and again in the discussions of the HMC and the Association of Private Schools (see Chapter 10). On the one hand the principal must consider the attitudes of the governing body, drawn to a large measure from the business community, which will also provide some of the donors and financial backers. Then there is the

general constituency represented by the parents and the past pupils. These will probably exert a pressure for conservatism, for the retention of hallowed practices and traditions, and will look unfavourably on any radical changes or innovations. The pupils themselves will probably be resistant to major change. Then there are the provincial departments and the central government to be borne in mind, and care taken not to offend too much against their principles and policies. On the other hand, the church with which the school is associated will be increasingly critical of elitist white private schools, and pressure will be mounting on such issues as the admission of black pupils.

One outcome of all this and of the histories of the schools themselves, is a clearly discernible traditionalist and anti-progressivist attitude amongst most private school principals, which finds its expression in a distrust of theory and experimentation. One headmaster, quoting Kipling's IF with approval, was pleased to note a movement away from what he described as 'new-fangled methods of education'.[86] Another expressed increasing scepticism 'about the latest pronouncements of educational pundits. One sometimes wonders if these pundits have ever met a classroom full of children'.[87] The same sentiment was expressed by the head of a senior HMC school: 'Many theories have been and are pronounced but for all that... we seem to fall back on the same traditional well-tried methods',[88] while Hilton's headmaster said simply: 'I am a schoolmaster and cannot claim to have great knowledge of educational theory'.[89] When Steyn Krige encouraged his teachers to adopt progressive methods and discuss controversial topics with their classes, the governors of St Stithian's dismissed him in 1968.

Guest speakers sometimes reinforce the traditionalist, conformist and anti-experimental approach. 'It is the

rebellious individuals in a school who undermine basic authority and who later join groups of radical extreme anti-social students...'[90] The distrust of theory is not a new phenomenon: it is merely expressed rather more guardedly by principals (guest speakers can perhaps afford to use more exaggerated and even extreme language). Two decades ago it was possible for the headmistress of an important girls' private school to state forthrightly: 'I don't believe in "educational theory". I don't believe in psychology. I don't believe in freedom from discipline'.[91]

It would be wrong to give the impression that virtually all principals have been dyed-in-the-wool reactionaries. Some have inevitably been enlightened and progressive, and some have been prepared to voice unpopular sentiments. Wilfred MacRobert, who ran Waterkloof House Prep. from 1948 to 1968, for example, admired A.S. Neill, the founder of the most famous of all British progressive schools, Summerhill; disliked corporal punishment and eventually abolished it in his school; was frank about his dislike of the National Party and Boy Cubs; and was equally frank in his admiration of Fr Trevor Huddlestone, the champion of black rights.[92]

A company was formed to purchase MacRobert's school in 1964, and the creation of companies and trusts to take over privately-owned schools has been a marked feature of the period, following the example set by Hilton (see Chapter 6). Amongst those schools were St Andrew's in Bedfordview, Roedean, Kingsmead, the Ridge, Highbury and Woodridge. A variation of this change of control was the sale of the Anglican school, St Andrew's, Bloemfontein, to the Orange Free State provincial administration in 1975, when the diocese could no longer afford to keep the school going as an independent concern.

Before concluding this section on the heads, two comparatively recent developments may be noted. One is the trend for girls' schools to appoint men as principals, which has already been mentioned; the other is the appointment of Rhodesians. At least three senior private schools in Natal now have Rhodesians as principals (Kearsney, Michaelhouse and Durban Girls' College). The movement has not been in one direction only: Peterhouse, a leading private school in Zimbabwe, was founded by a former Rector of Michaelhouse, F.R. Snell, while St John's Prep. in Salisbury, Zimbabwe, was founded by a former teacher at Highbury, Peter Hickman.

Assistant teachers

The British connection, which so heavily dominated South African private schools until after the Second World War, is by no means insignificant even now. To give one example, Roedean School not only has a Master who was educated at the Merchant Taylor's School and Oxford, but five of seven teachers on the junior school staff have British qualifications while fourteen out of thirty-eight senior school teachers have British or Continental qualifications.[93]

Of twelve graduates on the Hilton teaching staff in 1928 only one - the Afrikaans master - was from a South African university. The rest were from Cambridge (6), Oxford (3) Wales and Aberdeen.[94] By 1967, however, there was no Cambridge graduate on the staff. Of the twenty-seven teachers only seven had overseas degrees, with the majority holding exclusively South African qualifications.[95] Much the same pattern applies to other senior schools. Salaries and conditions of service in the private schools were generally poor until after the Second World War. At some schools there was no fixed scale nor any system of annual increments, and salaries were generally below those offered in the state sector. Nuttall, who had

experience of both sectors, concludes that state schools have a better supply of staff, with greater chances of promotion and higher ceilings being important factors.[96] The same point is made by the head of Highbury who chronicles regular departures of staff 'to join the Education Department where there were better opportunities for promotion'.[97]

Overseas recruitment dried up during the Second World War, and retired teachers were frequently brought in to tide schools over. Even after the end of the War it was 'if anything more difficult to find teaching staff than ever before'.[98] At Highbury 'any reasonable applicant was gladly welcomed, particularly if he was a man'.[99] This applied to many private schools at the time, particularly the prep. schools. Low salaries, unattractive conditions of service and the lack of appreciable fringe benefits were causes, and in many cases recourse was had to unqualified staff. Inevitably moves were made to improve matters. Parity of salary scales with the state sector was an obvious goal, but in some cases it was not achieved until the 1970's and in a few not even then. Pension or provident schemes were introduced, and staff housing became a major item in building programmes. The rural boarding schools were able to provide housing for nearly all their staff who required it by the 1970's, while even a town-based school like St John's College, wnich had only five staff houses in 1939, had quadrupled this number by 1968.[100]

All these practical improvements played a part in consolidating the position of the schools after the War, and the establishment of the Association of Private Schools in the 1970's helped to ensure uniform standards and conditions of service. The competition from the state schools could thus more effectively be met.

Fluctuating fortunes

Competition from the state sector, aggravated by the difficulties of finding adequate staff and thereby satisfying parental expectations ('an all-round education, with emphasis on manners, morals and cultural activities', as the parents of one school summed it up in 1975),[101] was an important factor in the closure of some private schools, particularly during the Depression years, and particularly when they were in smaller towns with relatively small English-speaking communities. Thus The Hill School in Pietersburg was forced to close in 1932; St Margaret's School, Johannesburg, in 1930; and St Winifred's and St Mark's in George in the 1930's. After struggling along for some years, helped by the Council of Education, one of Johannesburg's leading prep. schools, the Parktown School, was also finally forced to close.

Some of the survivors experienced considerable fluctations in their enrolments. Girls' Collegiate had 300 girls in the 1920's, but dropped to 190 in 1970, and only when the school moved away from the town centre to the affluent suburb of Clarendon did its numbers rise again, to 300 in 1974.

Kearsney, which began with eleven boys in 1921 in the house of Sir Liege Hulett near Stanger, almost had to close in the mid-1930's, as a result of the Depression and fears of malaria. But the staff took a 20 per cent salary cut, and the school moved to the more salubrious setting of Botha's Hill, where Dr C. Scott denoted 25 acres and the sugar baron J. Crookes paid for one of the houses.[102]

Kearsney, which is now, with 530 boys, the largest private school in Natal, illustrates the almost agressive drive by the Methodist schools (Kingswood, St Stithian's and Epworth are the others) to match

the best Anglican schools. Kearsney's own growth in the 1950's and 1960's was quite phenomenal under S.G. Osler, its ambitious headmaster (and former rugby Springbok), who was 'determined to put the school very much on the map, by a systematic policy of growth in buildings and numbers'. [103]

The pre-eminence, in Natal at least, of Hilton and Michaelhouse was undoubtedly a spur. St Stithian's, founded only in 1953, is now the largest boys' private school in the Transvaal, while Epworth has more boarders than any other girls' private school in the country.

A Matter of Finance

Through various expedients, the major schools managed to weather the Depression. Hilton and Michaelhouse dropped their fees, in consultation with each other. St Andrew's School had reduced its boarding fees as long ago as 1923 in a vain bid to attract more boarders. By 1925 the position was grave enough for the governing body to consider appointing 'a lady of suitable address and personality... to bring St Andrew's to the notice of those parents whose daughters the school would like to enrol'. [104]

Against this, of course, the period from 1910 has seen a steady progression in the relative size of fees charged by the private schools. St Andrew's can serve as an example: in 1910 its senior boarders paid 26 guineas a term; in 1946, 50 guineas; in 1958, £260 (about R520); in 1966, R630, in 1978, R730; and in 1979, R775. [105]

Fees, however, represent only one source of income, and every major private school has launched at least one major funding appeal, usually associated with an important landmark in its history, such as a Diamond Jubilee or a Centenary Celebration, and supported by

prominent figures in the financial world. Some of these are extremely well organised and elaborate. Roedean, for example, chose its 60th birthday (1963) to launch a trust fund, which was inaugurated at two dinners on successive nights in the Johannesburg City Hall, attended by 400 people on each night. The guest speakers were H. Oppenheimer and W.D. Wilson, chairman and deputy chairman respectively of the Anglo-American Corporation. The general theme was the need to help private schools overcome financial insecurity by providing capital funds for expansion and improved facilities. After two nights of banqueting, 120 canvassers were dispatched to approach all members of the 'Roedean community', armed with a brochure containing a foreword by Sir Robert Birley, a former headmaster of Eton.[106]

The sums involved in such appeals can be very substantial, ranging from the Golden Jubilee Appeal of a prep. school like Uplands, White River (R175 000), to the R3 million being canvassed by St Barnabas for an entirely new school complex (of this R2 million had been raised by July 1979). It is of interest that some state schools adopt a similar pattern: Parktown Boys' High, for example, inaugurated a Parktonian Foundation with a goal of R350 000 at a banquet in May 1980. The main aim of the Foundation is to improve facilities, and, in particular, to buy houses for boarders and staff. Staff housing will 'attract and keep good staff and insulate pupils from the national shortage of male English-speaking teachers'.[107] Another aim is to appoint professional coaches in all major sports to guide the boys to the 'highest competitive standards'. (The legacy of the English public school model is clear: boarding establishments, resident staff, the emphasis on sport).

A major feature of the period since 1910 has been the systematic extension of the pattern of funding established

first on the Witwatersrand, whereby industrialists and financiers help to support the private education sector. During the economic slump following the Boer War St Andrew's College in Grahamstown might well have had to close down (in 1906 the principal's offer to have his salary reduced by £100 was accepted, the Council adding that it would have to be cut by a further £200 unless matters imporved) were it not for help from the 'mining connection'. De Beers Consolidated Diamond Mines donated £2 500, the Beit Trustees £2 000 and Sir Thomas Cullinan - who served St John's College so well - a further £500.[108]

The sad position of Bishops after the First World War has already been described. The school's 'phoenix-like rise from what had seemed her ashes' was in no small measure due to the munificence of Sir Abe Bailey, J.W. Jagger and other big businessmen, as well as the Rhodes Trust.[109]

The assistance of the Chamber of Mines to Michaelhouse (and other private schools) during the Depression of the 1930's has been mentioned already. The school also benefited from the Bailey and Rhodes Trusts, and from gifts by wealthy Natal families like the Tathams and the Jameses.[110] In the 1950's Harry Oppenheimer contributed the total cost of £7 600 for a new Sixth Form Block.[111] The Anglo-American connection was particularly valuable for Michaelhouse, with W.D. Wilson (an Old Boy, member of the Board, and a director of Anglo-American) taking a leading role in the establishment of the Michaelhouse Trust in the late 1950's.[112] Such trusts are significant not only in providing capital but also for greater cohesion. An aim of the Michaelhouse Trust was 'to link parents, Old Boys, well-wishers and the school itself in a recognisable Michaelhouse Community'.[113]

W.D. Wilson was to have a wider significance in the whole private school system, since he was involved in the Standing Committee of Associated Church Schools (the precursor of the Association of Private Schools), the HMC, and was the initiator of the Industrial Fund. This aspect will be considered in Chapter 10. (He was also to play an important role in initiatives in black education, through SACHED (South African Committee for Higher Education) and the Turret Trust).

Several schools used professional fund-raisers, particularly the Wells Organisation, to raise funds for the establishment of trusts. Durban Girls' College, for example, raised nearly £50 000 in this way during 1958-60.[114] Highbury also engaged a professional fund-raiser for its development appeal in 1969, which aimed at R150 000. The amount actually raised, however, was less than half of the target; it included R15 000 from the Anglo-American Chairman's Fund.[115] Like many other Natal private schools, Highbury decided to accept a grant-in-aid from the Natal Provincial Council.

Other prep. schools have also benefited from the mining industry. The Sir Ernest Oppenheimer Trust donated R30 000 (as against R16 000 from 'parents', well-wishers and Old Boys') for a trust to purchase Waterkloof House from the MacRobert family and run it as a non-profit body from 1965;[116] it also donated a hall to Auckland Park Prep. School in 1962. In the same year Kearnsey College opened the Oppenheimer Building with its science laboratories while in 1978 'this gracious lady', Mrs Bridget Oppenheimer, was asked to open the new primary school of St Mary's DSG, Kloof, as a gesture of appreciation.[117]

Another new school to benefit was St Andrew's, Welkom, an Anglican school founded in 1963 'to meet the need that was felt for an Anglican Church School

on the Free State Goldfields'.[118] The 'great generosity of the Mining Houses must not be forgotten[119] in its continued existence, especially Union Corporation, which donated eleven hectares of land, and the Anglo-American Corporation, which helped to finance the buildings. Appropriately enough, the school invited as its guest speaker in 1977 D.B. Hoffe (educated at Bishops and the University of the Witwatersrand, a director of Anglo-American and other companies, a member of the Syndic of the Council of Education, Witwatersrand, and chairman of the council of St Barnabas College, Hoffe is a good example of the various interlinkages of the private school system).

It is not only the Anglican, Methodist and non-denominational schools (for example, Hilton and Durban Girls' College) that receive support (since they are is the majority in the non-Catholic private sector, the Anglican schools receive the lion's share). The Baptist foundation at Mooi River, Treverton, was helped by the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company on a rand-for-rand basis to build its administration block,[120] while other new buildings were financed by the Industrial Fund, the Anglo-American Chairman's Fund and a grant-in-aid from the provincial administration.[121] The school's fixed assets grew from R100 000 in 1966 to R800 000 in 1979.

While the only science regarded as fit for girls in 1930 was a little botany, by the 1960's the Industrial Fund, whose structure and operation will be considered later, was vigorously promoting science facilities in girls' schools, having already played a major part in improving them in many private boys' schools. Much of the stimulus for this came from Sr Joan, principal of St Mary's DSG in Pretoria, who so impressed the Assessment Committee of the Industrial Fund that it recommended help to girls'

schools. St Mary's itself received R10 000 towards the building of a science block and another R5 000 for equipment.[122] Several other girls' schools benefited in a similar manner.

The role of capital on the Witwatersrand in support of private schools, particularly through the Council of Education, has already been described (Chapter 7). This section has illustrated the way in which capital, in the form of grants, donations, expertise and manpower, increasingly came to support the English private school system throughout the country, making it in effect an adjunct of private enterprise. The umbilical cord can be traced back again and again to the great mining houses of the Rand.

A question of identity

i Governors. Preservation of the particular character of each private school is a matter of concern to the HMC schools. One pointer to their identity is provided by the boards of governors. The denominational schools will obviously have denominational representatives and the bulk of their governors will be members of the denomination in question. The non-denominational schools will seek to have a nice Protestant balance. At the same time the lists of governing bodies read like a who's who of the South African English business and professional Establishment. The names include prominent figures in commerce and industry, and in law and medicine, with occasionally a local professor of education tacked on. Regional particularities cause the schools on the Witwatersrand to draw many governors from the mining industry, in Natal from the sugar industry, and in the Eastern Cape from the wool industry ('the wool farmer claims, not altogether without [illegible], to have been the backbone of St Andrew's throughout its history. There is no better index of the prosperity of the school at each moment in history than the current price of wool'.[123]

Currey's words are less true now than they were in the 1950's, since the largesse of the Witwatersrand has, as we have seen, become more evenly distributed throughout the private school system).

An exception to this pattern is provided by some schools, particularly prep. schools, such as Auckland Park Prep., where the governing body consists of all the parents. Even here, however, the real power of control lies with an elected executive - since the whole parent body would be too unwieldy - and in the nature of things such an executive tends to acquire something of the lock of other school councils, with business and professional men predominating.

The usual pattern can be illustrated by the Board of Directors of Roedean, which in its first 57 years had seven men as chairmen. Before 1920 the school was a private concern owned by its founders. Since 1920 these chairmen have been accountants and bankers, a president of the Chamber of Mines, a chairman of the Council of Education, leaders from bodies like Union Corporation and the Johannesburg Board of Executors, and members of other school governing bodies. The present chairman is on the board of the Ridge Prep. and is a trustee of Michaelhouse, while his predecessor was also a member of St John's College Council.[124] The inter-linkages and overlaps thus become fairly complex. At times private schools have drawn on the state sector to fill vacancies on the governing bodies. For example, Miss Mary McLarty, the headmistress of Jeppe Girls', was voted on to the Council of Kingsmead, and 'her educational experience and wisdom have been of incalculable value to the school'.[125]

ii Old Boys. Another pointer to 'identity' is provided by Old Boys and Old Girls. The first thing to note here is that apathy seems to be a widespread feature, and the

question inevitably rises: why, if the schools mean as much to their pupils as they claim, is there so much evidence of a lack of continuing interest once they leave?[126] The claims seem sometimes to be exaggerated. McIntyre writes, for example, of 'something spiritual, something of individual dedication' in the Old Boys' devotion to Bishops,[127] and goes so far as to imply that receiving the school magazine during the Second World War helped Old Boys to be better soldiers: 'so they thanked God for Bishops, and girded up their loins'.[128]

The constant refrain in communications to Old Boys suggests a different reality: 'the problem of keeping up the interest and enthusiasm is fairly general';[129] 'the turn out could have been better';[130] 'Old Boys should not sit back and bask in the reflected glory of a school';[131] 'the very poor attendance emphasised the apathy of the general membership'.[132] Clearly, however, there is a small minority of past pupils who serve with energy and dedication, and over whom their old schools continue to exert the kind of hold described in Chapter 4. They work untiringly for their clubs, arrange get-togethers and other functions, compile lists of Old Boys, see that Old Boy news is published in the school magazines, and sometimes become members of the governing body.

Occasionally an Old Boy group makes it clear that self-interest is the major motive ('the Transvaal Branch is basically for social and possible business contact between men who have had the priviledge (sic' of attending Kearsney College').[133] Often, however, the primary function is seen as service to the alma mater ('passing on the good name of Michaelhouse is one of the most tangible things Old Boys can do for the school');[134] even of actively recruiting new boys (Michaelhouse Old Boys in Durban canvassed their social contacts 'and persuaded them which was the right school').[135]

The risk of inbreeding is clear. At the first Michaelhouse Board elections after the Second World War all four vacancies were filled by Old Boys, wich three more being elected in 1948 (in 1939 there had been only two on the Board). As Barrett says, there could be a danger in having a preponderance of men on the Board whose 'personal recollections' might tempt them 'to intrude on the Rector's precincts'.[136] When the principal himself is an Old Boy, which has occurred frequently (Currey of St Andrew's, Jimmy Hopkins of Kearsney, for example), interesting possibilities suggest themselves.

iii Private School incest. The private schools have become something at a self-perpetuating system, particularly since the 1930's, by which time most had well-established societies of past pupils, past pupils were returning to teach and even to head them and to join the governing bodies, and in many cases attendance at a particular school - or particular type of school - had become a strong family tradition.

In a broad sense, one can distinguish patterns of influence from 'parent' schools: the Methodist school, Kearsney, had in its first two heads, R.H. Matterson and S.G. Osler, men with strong associations with Kingswood, the first Methodist foundation in South Africa, while the influential teacher J.F. Reece, whose role has already been described, was a boy at the original Kingswood College in England. (The third Kearsney head, J. Hopkins, was an Old Boy). Not only Reece, but his colleague, J.M. Oram, who became vice-principal, married women members of the staff (which totalled seven at the time). Staff marriages were a common feature at several schools.[137] The marriages do not always remain in the immediate family, as it were: the headmaster of a Johannesburg prep. school married the daughter of the head of a Cape Town prep.

while the headmaster of a boys' private school in Natal married a former head girl of a girls' private school. And so on.

In 1979, St Mary's DSG, Pretoria, had no less than nine Old Girls on the teaching staff, out of a total of about 35.[138] At St Andrew's School, fully a quarter of the girls are the daughters of Old Girls, while five of the ten prefects at Durban Girls' College in 1975 were daughters of Old Girls[139]

Some families have long and close associations with particular schools. The Mullins family weaves in and out of the histories of the Grahamstown schools. Three generations of McMillins have run Highbury Prep. The Hathorn family has been involved with Girls' Collegiate since its foundation - as pupils, as Old Girls who married into the family, and as members of the School Committee.[140] Like St Andrew's College in Grahamstown, Girls' Collegiate has also proved something of a nursery for school principals, who carry 'the traditions of Collegiate into schools throughout South Africa and far beyond': St Anne's DSG, St John's DSG (twice), several state schools in Natal, and even Christ's Hospital one of the oldest girls' public schools in England, have been the recipients of Collegiate Old Girls.[141]

The symbiotic relationship between prep. and senior schools was mentioned in Chapter 6. This is part of the overall pattern of private school perpetuation, and has become well-established. Within a decade of its foundation, for example, Waterkloof House Prep. in Pretoria was sending its boys to senior private schools throughout the country. In 1935, of 38 leavers, 6 went on to St Andrew's in Grahamstown, five to Michaelhouse in Natal, four to St John's College in Johannesburg, two to Bishops in Cape Town and one to Kingswood in

Grahamstown. Just under half thus went on to HMC schools. Of the remainder, nine went to Catholic schools and eleven to state schools and training institutions. The indications are that the proportion of pupils proceeding from private prep. schools to private senior schools has increased since then. In 1977-78, only about ten per cent of the leavers from the Ridge Prep. and Auckland Park Prep. went to state schools, while all the rest went on to private HMC schools.[142]

iv 'The essential heritage'. All these patterns have worked towards homogeneity within the schools, which also, of course, have recruited from outside their immediate ranks. Where this has occurred on a large enough scale to threaten the identity of a school, tensions have developed.

The identity to be preserved takes various forms. During the economic slump of the middle 1970's, when many private schools were struggling to keep their numbers up, there were lively debates at the Parents' AGMs of Auckland Park Prep. School on the possibility of admitting boys. This was over-ruled by the majority of parents on the grounds that it would destroy the essential character of the school as a girls' school .[143]

At another level the denominational nature of a school has been the major consideration. Both Bishops and St Andrew's College feared a dilution of their Anglican identity during the period when they accommodated university classes, prior to the establishment of the universities of Cape Town and Rhodes respectively. At St Andrew's the 1894 Council was 'watchfully determined not to get involved in any proposals which would mean the surrender of any part of the essential heritage .[144] The particular proposal to arouse such caution was that other religious bodies should be represented in an extended Council.

In 1945-46, there was 'lengthy discussion' on the question of admitting non-Anglicans to the Board of Michaelhouse. The outcome was agreement that two members could be non-Anglican, which, although a minor concession (there were 15 members altogether), was 'significant of the very great changes which had overtaken religious attitudes since 1900, when it was assumed that an Anglican foundation could be protected only by Anglicans on the Board and an Anglican clergyman as Rector'.[145]

One rationale for denominational schools is that they allow parents to educate their children according to their own faith. This has been explicitly expressed many times: 'St John's embodies the religious ideal of those who desire their children to be brought up in the ways of the English Church'.[146] This has been recognised by liberal Afrikaners like J.H. Hofmeyr, who spoke of religion as 'an atmosphere pervading the life' of a school like St John's.[147] Tensions can arise because of a school's natural inclination, particularly in times of financial difficulty, to accept pupils from other creeds. From its early days St John's 'for reasons of economy rather than from choice',[148] accepted boys from any faith, and a form of service was even drawn up for Jewish boys. But non-Anglicans have to attend Chapel services and religious instruction, and parents may not object if their sons wish to be confirmed into the Church of the Province of South Africa.[149]

Even schools that are not narrowly denominational have taken care that their 'essential heritage' does not become too diluted. Thus an inter-denominational Protestant school like Durban Girls' College resolved in 1957 to limit its intake of non-christian children to seven per cent,[150] while the non-denominational Roedean makes it clear that its 'general background

is that of the Church of the Province to which the majority of pupils belong', [151] and it retains close links with the Anglican parish of St George in Parktown, whose Rector is the school's chaplain.

The other dimension in this matter of identity is the essentially exclusive nature of these schools, which have historically served primarily a wealthy, white, English-speaking clientele (Roedean 'opened as an educational institution of distinction for daughters of the mining executives on the Reef', [152] while the boys' schools, as we have repeatedly seen, were intended for the 'sons of gentlemen').

Two major issues have implications for the attempt to preserve the 'essential heritage' of the private schools, composed as this was of the various components - social, racial, cultural and religious - discussed above. Both of them relate to the fact that the English-speaking community served by these schools is a cultural and ethnic minority. The first was the threat of 'Afrikanerisation' which arose seriously for the first time since Union in the Transvaal during the Second World War and in the country more generally after the advent of the National Party in 1948, and the traces of which were to linger on into the 1970's. The second was the question of the admission of black children, particularly to the schools associated with churches that officially rejected all forms of racial discrimination and segregation. This issue was particularly pertinent in the 1970's and has by no means been resolved. These issues will be considered in the next chapter.

Footnotes - Chapter 8

1. Barrett makes this point about the Anglican schools as late as 1920; A.M. Barrett: Michaelhouse 1896-1968, Michaelhouse Old Boys' Club, Pietermaritzburg, 1969, p.82.
2. Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy: The Public School Phenomenon, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1979, p.135.
3. Barrett, op. cit., p.178
4. Neville Nuttall: Lift up your hearts - Hilton College 1872-1972, The Hiltonian Society, Pietermaritzburg, 1971, chapter 6.
5. Ibid, p.141.
6. M. Tait: Collegiate, Pietermaritzburg, 1978, p.56.
7. Programme of Diamond Jubilee Celebration, Durban Girls' College, 5 November 1937.
8. Programme of Elizabethan Cavalcade, 1969, Durban Girls' College.
9. Centenary Service Programme, Durban Girls' College, 4 September 1977.
10. Centenary Brochure, Durban Girls' College, 1977.
11. Talkabout, magazine of Somerset House, 1977.
12. Prospectus of Somerset House, Somerset West, 1978.
13. Information from an Old Boy who was present. The same Housemaster, incidentally, later served the South African government in several capacities, including becoming the vice-chairman of the SABC.
14. Barrett, op. cit., pp.211-212.
15. These comments arise from a great many conversations and informal discussions during 1977-1980.
16. The Woodridgean, Woodridge School, 1977.
17. Nuttall: op. cit., p.152.
18. M.F. Neave: The History of St Andrew's School, Lorton Publications, Johannesburg, 1977, p.85.
19. Ibid, p.40.
20. For the purpose of this section the magazines (particularly editorial comment, principals' annual reports and Speech Day addresses) of all the South African HMC schools in 1977-8 were analysed

and all references to events and socio-political factors in the outside world noted.

21. Magazine of St Andrew's School, Welkom, 1977, p.11.
22. St Anne's magazine, 1977, p.5.
23. Kearsney Chronicle 1977, p.6.
24. Ibid, editorial.
25. The Hiltonian, March 1978, p.13.
26. Magazine of Roedean (SA), 1978, pp.8-9.
27. Magazine of Kingsmead School, 1978, p.20.
28. Foreward by a Form IV girl to the magazine of St Mary's School, Johannesburg, 1977.
29. Magazine of St John's DSG, Pietermaritzburg, 1977.
30. The Stygian, St Stithian's College Magazine, 1976, p.7.
31. The Glave, St Alban's College Magazine, 1977, pp.23-26.
32. Ibid, p.34.
33. Kingswood College Magazine, Grahamstown, 1977.
34. Durban Girls' College Magazine, 1927, p.5.
35. Barrett: op. cit., p.212.
36. Robert Hamilton: WHIPS - the story of a preparatory school, Pretoria, 1972, p.35.
37. Neave: op. cit., p.59.
38. R.F. Sutherland: 'St Andrew's College', in Peacock (ed.): Some Famous Schools in South Africa, Longman, Cape Town, 1972, p.230.
39. The details about Grey College are taken from E.G. Malherbe: Education in South Africa, Vol.1 (1652-1922), Juta, Cape Town, 1925, pp.354-357.
40. Transvaal Education Department Report, Annexures on Statistics, 1975, p.42.
41. Ibid, 1976.
42. Ibid, 1975, p.15.
43. Joyce Wrinch-Schultz: The Happy Ship: a history of Durban Girls' College 1877-1977, Durban, 1977, p.236.
44. Barrett: op. cit., p.97, p.141.

45. Neave: op. cit., p.93.
46. Barrett, p.145.
47. Ibid.
48. Cf. Ibid, p.106.
49. Gathorne-Hardy, op. cit., p.277.
50. Neave, op. cit., p.186.
51. Wrinch-Schultz: op. cit., p.201.
52. Barrett, op. cit., p.51.
53. Wrinch-Schultz: op. cit., p.257.
54. J.S.D. McMillan: Highbury, Durban, 1978, p.204.
55. Nuttall: op. cit., p.106.
56. Barrett: op. cit., p.168.
57. K.C. Lawson: Venture of Faith - the story of St John's College, Johannesburg, 1898-1968, Council of St John's College, Johannesburg, 1968, p.253.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. David Brindley, personal interview, 29 January 1980.
61. These comments arise from the writer's own experience at a church boarding school between 1947 and 1952, and extensive discussions with many past pupils of similar institutions.
62. Barrett: op. cit., pp.91-92.
63. Some of these details are taken from J.F. Reece: The Birth and Development of Kearsney College 1921-1975, The Zululand Times, Eshowe, 1976. Others are known personally by the writer.
64. Lawson: op. cit., p.251.
65. Ibid, p.309.
66. Neave: op. cit., p.124.
67. Wrinch-Schultz: op. cit., p.104.
68. A.P. Cartwright: Strenue - the story of King Edward VII School. Purnell, Cape Town, 1974, Foreword.
69. Tait: op. cit., p.63.
70. The Glave. St Alban's College, Pretoria, 1977.

71. Barrett, op. cit., p.132.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid, p.129.
75. Ibid, p.138
76. Ibid, p.179.
77. Ibid.
78. Hamilton: op. cit., pp.45-47.
79. Prospectus of Treverton, Mooi River, 1978.
80. This account is taken from D. McIntyre: A Century of Bishops, Juta, Cape Town, 1950, pp.51ff.
81. This account is taken from Nuttall, op. cit., chapter 4.
82. Barrett: op. cit., p.101.
83. Ibid, p.102.
84. Neave: op. cit., p.103.
85. Ibid, p.92.
86. The Woodridgean, 1877, prep. school headmaster's report, p.78.
87. Cordwalles magazine, 1977, headmaster's report.
88. St Andrew's magazine, Bloemfontein, Vol.19 No.4, 1977, p.3.
89. The Hiltonian, March, 1978, p.10.
90. The chairman of the South African Sugar Association, A. Lloyd, quoted in St Anne's DSG magazine, 1977, p.6.
91. Wrinch-Schultz: op. cit., p.188.
92. R. Hamilton: op. cit.
93. The South African Roedean Magazine No.93, 1978.
94. Nuttall: op. cit., p.70.
95. Ibid, p.161.
96. N.E. Nuttall, letter to the writer, 2/2/1980.
97. McMillan: op. cit., p.91.
98. Ibid, p.132.
99. Ibid.
100. Lawson: op. cit., p.250.
101. Wrinch-Schultz: op. cit., p.244.
102. Reece: op. cit., p.11.

103. Ibid, p.17.
104. Neave: op. cit., p.57.
105. Ibid, passim.
106. J. Raikes: Honneur Aulx Dignes: Roedean School (South Africa) 1903-78, Lorton Publications, Johannesburg, 1978, pp.110ff.
107. Rand Daily Mail, 8 May 1980.
108. Currey: op. cit., pp.95-96.
109. McIntyre: op. cit., p.57.
110. Barrett: op. cit., p.102.
111. Ibid, p.152.
112. Ibid, pp.161-162.
113. Ibid, p.162.
114. Wrinch-Schultz: op. cit., p.192.
115. McMillan: op. cit., p.190.
116. Hamilton: op. cit., p.64.
117. St Mary's Magazine, Kloof, August 1973.
118. St Andrew's School, Welkom, prospectus, 1978.
119. St Andrew's School, Welkom, newsletter, May 1978.
120. Treverton Times, Autumn 1977.
121. The Trevertonian, 1974.
122. Betty Addison: Daughters of the King - the story of St Mary's DSG, Pretoria, 1879-1979, Pretoria, 1979, p.142.
123. Currey: op. cit., p.130.
124. Raikes: op. cit., passim.
125. Doris V. Thompson: Kingsmead - the first twenty years, Johannesburg, c. 1958, p.30-31.
126. State schools frequently have Old Boys' clubs that seem to be at least as vigorous as those of private schools. Old Edwardians, Old Collegians and Old Parktonians are among the best known in the country.
127. McIntyre: op. cit., p.105.
128. Ibid, p.93.
129. The Andrean, St Andrew's College, Grahamstown, 1977, p.131.

130. The Woodridgean, Woodridge College, Port Elizabeth, 1977, p.109.
131. The Hiltonian, Hilton College, Pietermaritzburg, March 1978, p.85.
132. Kearsney College Old Boys' Club, Transvaal Branch Newsletter, December 1979.
133. I
134. St Michael's Chronicle, Michaelhouse, May 1978, p.56.
135. Ibid.
136. Barrett: op. cit., p.142.
137. See, for example, McMillan: op. cit., p.113.
138. Addison: op. cit., p.135.
139. Wrinch-Schultz: op. cit., p.234.
140. Tait: op. cit., pp.65-66.
141. Ibid, pp.70-71
142. Information from the principals.
143. The writer was present at several of these AGMs.
144. Currey: op. cit., p.88.
145. Barrett: op. cit., p.143.
146. Lawson: op. cit., pp.184-185.
147. Ibid, p.187.
148. Ibid, p.255.
149. Ibid.
150. Wrinch-Schultz: op. cit., p.187.
151. Roedean prospectus, 1978.
152. Roedean prospectus, 1978.

Chapter 9

Socio-Political Factors: 'Afrikanerisation' and 'Integration'

This chapter considers the major issues mentioned at the end of the previous chapter. First, the potential Afrikanerisation of the South African education system, and the implications of this for the private schools. Secondly, the question of the admission of black pupils and the move towards 'integration', particularly as it has affected the church schools. Both issues relate directly to the minority status of the white English-speaking community, and the HMC system should be seen in this context, with the evolution of the system at least partly a function of that status.

The threat of 'Afrikanerisation'

While the threat of Afrikanerisation - of a deliberate attempt to swamp English culture and the English language - may have sometimes been exaggerated as a useful device for promoting the private schools, it is clear that the fear has been genuine, especially in the two decades after the symbolic Great Trek of 1938, which greatly stimulated Afrikaner national feeling. Significantly enough, Malherbe found that the highest proportion of white children attending private schools was during 1936-56 (the 'halcyon period' referred to in a previous chapter), with a peak in the mid-1940's. [1]

There are considerable differences in attitude between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, and that these differences are reflected in their educational philosophies will be taken for granted here. (It is clear that 'attitudes' acquire real meaning only when considered as projections of group interest, viewed against a broader historical analysis, a task beyond the scope of this study). Davies has indicated significant differences in 'those shadowy areas of values and attitudes'. [2]

He found that English-speaking student teachers come from families of higher occupational status than Afrikaans student teachers; this may have a bearing on his finding that the English students were less idealistic about teaching than the Afrikaans students, who saw teaching as an 'avenue of service to God and country'. [3] The Afrikaners tended to come from larger families and from more rural areas, with parents whose levels of educational attainment were significantly lower than those of the English students. [4]

It is thus possible for Afrikaners to view teaching as an avenue of upward mobility to an extent not shared by English-speakers. A study carried out by the Potchefstroom College of Education supports this conclusion. It shows that there are significant differences between the attitudes of English and Afrikaans-speaking matriculants to teaching as a career, with the latter being generally much more favourably disposed to teaching. [5]

Nowlan found Afrikaans schools to be much less innovative than English schools and less open to new ideas, preferring to wait for an official beleid (policy) before attempting anything new. [6] In other words, English schools tend to be more pragmatic, and less inclined to wait on the approval of authority. Possibly the label of laissez faire, which Malherbe frequently attaches to English attitudes towards education, is a fair one. [7]

These cultural differences, and the reluctance of English matriculants to take up teaching (at least partly a result of the fact that, historically, educated English-speakers have had greater access to alternative, better-paid, occupations than their Afrikaner colleagues), inevitably arouse anxiety in

the minds of those committed to preserving the English cultural heritage in South Africa. The Transvaal Teachers' Association frequently deals with this theme:

> Young English-speaking men and women need to be made more aware of the need to preserve the great cultural heritage of which they are heirs. Without teachers of the necessary calibre in our English-medium schools the traditions and values which have been cherished through the centuries will not survive in South Africa. [8]

The Johannesburg College of Education identifies some of these values: 'students are encouraged to think for themselves, to use their imagination and initiative, and to keep their minds open and receptive to modern educational thought'. [9] The Transvaal Teachers' Association adds another value to these by pleading for co-ordinated teacher training 'regardless of provincial boundaries, language or ethnic barriers'. [10]

We need not concern ourselves here with the tension that arises between the enunciation of such ideals and their actual achievement within the English community itself. (We have seen, for example, the widespread distrust of educational theory and innovation in the private schools, which claim to be freer to experiment than state schools). What matters here is that these are the stated values of the educators of the English community, and that they are inevitably to some extent in conflict with the values of the Afrikaans community, based as these are on a 'Christlike en nasionale lewens- en wëreldbeskouing'with a 'tradisionele opvatting van gesag' and a view of the school as 'die draer en uitbouer van die tradisie en kultuur van die volk'. [11]

Divergent value systems will be one factor in the element of threat that each group poses for the other. The schools, seen as they are as prime instruments for the transmission of cultural values,

will obviously be central in the resulting conflict. (It is, of course, an over-simplification to see the school merely in terms of its role in cultural reproduction: this ignores the economic aspect. An examination of the function of the school in the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production in the South African political economy would be a fascinating exercise).

Chapter 7 described the reaction of English Uitlanders in the 1890's to the threat of Boer cultural domination, perceived particularly in the Transvaal Republic's policy on the medium of instruction in its schools. The most significant result was the creation of a system of English-medium schools under the control of the Council of Education. That period apart, the English community appears to have been generally somewhat complacent about its position vis-a-vis the threat of Afrikanerisation until the 1930's. We have noted the apathy, even the antipathy, towards Afrikaans in private schools even after its teaching became compulsory, and the way in which the English schools generally could exist in little isolated worlds of their own, secure in their loyalty to the British Empire. The picture was somewhat different in the dual-medium or parallel-medium state schools. Guy Butler has described the animosities: 'National and political tensions seeped into us from all directions... the Anglo-Boer War was refought on the playing fields'. [12] In his schooldays in the small town of Cradock Butler 'made acquaintance with all the complexities of South African society'. [13] This acquaintance was denied those whose education took place in secluded private schools, or even in state schools in predominantly English towns like Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Grahamstown and Johannesburg.

From about 1930 the position changed quite dramatically. Serfontein describes the two most important factors in the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism in the

20th century as being the language issue and South Africa's relationship with Britain and the Empire.[14] Obviously both of these factors had implications for English education in South Africa. Already in 1921 the Broederbond, the secret Afrikaner body committed to total Afrikaner control of the country, had 'decided to take up the sword on behalf of the question of Afrikaans-medium schools... propaganda for Afrikaans and for all Afrikaans ideals was to be made directly or indirectly'.[15] This began a process in which the Broederbond, the FAK (Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereenigings) and its Institute for Christian-National Education, the Dutch Reformed Church and the National Party worked for the domination of Afrikaner nationalist values.

The symbolic ox-wagon trek of 1938 played an important part in the awakening of Afrikaner nationalist fervour. By this time 75 per cent of all white teachers were Afrikaners[16] and many of them had become involved in the movement to further Afrikaner nationalism.[17] In 1939 and again in 1944 the FAK organised a Volkskongres on education and mother-tongue instruction. The aim of the Broederbond (the FAK was essentially one of its fronts) was frankly expressed by Dr P.J. Meyer: 'complete political nationalising and ultimate cultural Afrikanerisation of our English-speaking compatriots'.[18] He warned of the dangers of Afrikaans-English co-operation, which could lead to 'integration' and the Anglicising of Afrikaners. The English culture with its 'modern liberalistic stamp' and humanistic philosophy could not be integrated with the Afrikaner's philosophy of life. 'Afrikanerisation of the English-speakers', said Meyer, 'is in essence an educational task - it must start in the schools'.

The move to stop 'integration' was aimed specifically at those Afrikaners who sent their children to English-medium schools. In 1937 the Transvaal Provincial

Council appointed a commission to investigate and report on education in the province and to make recommendations on the medium of instruction in schools. Five of the nine members were in favour of keeping Afrikaans and English children at school together, and of using parallel or dual medium systems wherever possible. The other four members, including the chairman, Ds. W. Nicol, moderator of the DRC in the Transvaal and later to become the province's Administrator, favoured separate schools for each of the two main white groups.[19] This became official policy of the National Party and was systematically implemented after that party won the 1948 general election.

A Transvaal Ordinance of 1949 enshrined the principle of separate schools and mother tongue instruction.[20] The Transvaal Education Department threatened to prosecute private schools which admitted Afrikaans pupils. In 1951, 665 cases were referred to the Director of Education to establish officially the home language of the children involved. Since there were some 250 000 white children at schools in the Transvaal at the time, one must agree with Malherbe's view that this was elaborate machinery to deal with an exceedingly small percentage 'where the choice could very well have been left to the parents'. In subsequent years the numbers of referrals arose to a peak of 1 339 in 1953, but by 1955 had dropped to only 365.[21] By then the intention of the Ordinance might well have been achieved: to frighten off Afrikaner parents from sending their children to English schools where they might become exposed to a 'humanistic philosophy'. (It is beside the point here to debate the genuineness or otherwise of this 'humanism').

During the 1940's National Party spokesmen in both parliament and the Transvaal provincial council attacked the very concept of English private schools,[22]

stressing the need for bilingualism and South African, rather than British, teaching qualifications. The reaction of the private schools to this threatening situation will be dealt with in the next chapter.

A major part of Broederbond strategy was to ensure that all key posts wherever possible in each sector should be filled by Broeders. Serfontein makes it clear that no sector was - and is - more completely dominated by the Bond than education, since 'the history of the Afrikaner Broederbond has always been closely interwoven with the Afrikaner's fight to assert his control over education - first his own, then that of all other race and language groups'.[23] Malherbe points out that as the provincial education departments and the inspectorates became more and more Broederbond-dominated, so the prospects of English educators in the state sector became dimmer, and this was one of the factors in the steadily diminishing proportion of English-speaking teachers (less than one quarter of the total in 1976).[24] An analysis of the Bond's 1977 membership lists (obtained by Serfontein by clandestine means) reveals that educationists comprised the single largest group (2 424 or 20,36% out of 11 910).[25] These included not only people involved in Afrikaans institutions but also those of other groups (Bantu Education, Indian Education, Coloured Affairs, all the provincial education departments, under which English state schools fall, and the Department of National Education, which controls tertiary and technical education).

Nowlan gives examples which indicate the degree of Afrikaner dominance in the white state education sector in the Transvaal. Only half of the deputy principals in English-medium primary schools are English-speaking, while all the deputies in Afrikaans-medium primary schools are Afrikaans-speaking,[26] and only 17 per cent of all primary school teachers in the province are

English-speaking while 75 per cent belong to the Transvaalse Onderwysersunie.[27] The inevitable result is that many English pupils are taught by Afrikaners. One possible outcome of this is a greater willingness on the part of some English parents to face the costs of sending their children to private schools, thus ensuring that they are taught by English-speaking teachers.

By 1961, after South Africa had become a republic outside the British Commonwealth, and the ultimate political goal of the Broederbond had been achieved, the English could be disregarded as a political threat. A Broederbond circular of 1962 urged members to bring the English into the National Party fold, while being on their guard lest this result 'in the Afrikaner becoming anglicised in the way that the English-speaking person is being afrikanerised... we must assimilate them'.[28] The Bond's executive committee decided in 1965 to appoint a committee 'to investigate the possibility of afrikanerising English-speakers... Special note should be taken of the role that the teaching of history at schools can play'.[29]

It was only in the 1970's, with the exposés of the Broederbond, that this aim, and the means sought for its achievement, became clear to the general English-speaking public. By then the relative impotence of their position was firmly established. The Christian National foundation of all state education had been laid down in the National Education Policy Act of 1967, the culmination of the CNE blueprint published in 1948. The subject 'Youth Preparedness' had been added to the curriculum. In the Transvaal the Education Department had created a new, key post in its senior schools: Head of Department, Educational Guidance, with responsibility for religious education, youth preparedness, visits to veld schools and vocational

guidance (a Broederbond circular duly informed members that 'it is of the greatest importance that these positions... are filled by teachers with the correct attitude and motivation... Friends are asked to offer their services for these key positions'). [30] Interestingly enough, the Rand Afrikaans University has recently introduced a new degree course, B. Guidance Education. A striking example of the way in which the English community has fallen behind in the field of education is the fact that the English-medium universities (Cape Town, Natal, Rhodes and the Witwatersrand) produced only 6,5 per cent of the total number of Ph.D's in education in South Africa between 1970-1977. [31]

By the late 1970's bodies like the Transvaal Teachers' Association and the English Academy of Southern Africa were seriously concerned about the supply of English-speaking teachers and recruiting drives were launched, with limited success. The Academy pointed to the need that would arise as black school enrolment grew, pointing out that 'most black groups prefer English as a medium of instruction' and that, in the short term at least, white English-speaking teachers would have to help meet this need. [32]

Ironically enough, the latest indications are that the old bogey of anglicisation is rearing its head amongst Afrikaner nationalists again. There is evidence that inter-marriage between English and Afrikaners usually results in the family becoming English-speaking. [33] This could be one factor in the declining attendance at, and the resulting closure of, some Afrikaans-medium schools on the Witwatersrand. [34] Another factor may be general pessimism about the future of Afrikanerdom and a feeling that English will be a safer option. [35] This feeling may well have been reinforced by the clear rejection of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction amongst

black South Africans.

The extent to which the private schools themselves have acted - and are acting - as agents of assimilation of Afrikaners, amongst others, into the English middle classes is beyond the scope of this study. Some slight indication of this may, however, be gained from an analysis of the names on the class lists of two Johannesburg private schools in February 1980.[36] Nearly three-quarters of the children involved (73 per cent) had indisputably 'English' names (Abernethy, Acutt, Aitken... Williams, Willoughy, Wyndham); and next largest group (ten per cent) had 'Afrikaans' surnames (de Jager, Joubert, van Rooyen, Willemse etc). Many of these probably came from English-speaking families, the result of the inter-marriages referred to earlier. Only a small proportion (about 4 per cent) had 'Afrikaans' surnames and first names (Petrus, rather than Peter; Susanna rather than Susan etc.) The remaining seventeen per cent had surnames indicating German, Italian, 'Jewish', Greek, Portuguese and Dutch origins. Chinese names applied to one per cent and Indian names to 0,5 per cent. (It is possible that some of the 'English' and other surnames belong to 'Coloured' pupils, although this would be in very few cases). A tentative conclusion thus would be that the typical HMC private school retains its overwhelmingly 'English' character, and that it provides an avenue of mobility into the English community for only a very limited number of genuinely Afrikaner families.

The private schools have probably safely weathered any danger of 'Afrikanerisation'. A new danger to their historical identity may now be looming in the form of black aspirations. Or perhaps this presents a potential for social and cultural re-invigoration rather than a danger. In the state schools, however,

the threat of Afrikanerisation and Broederbond domination continues to be seen as a very real one, as frequent comment in the educational and lay press testifies.[37]

The question of admitting blacks

There was a St George's Church School in Cape Town some years before Bishop Gray established St George's Cathedral Grammar School (see Chapter 5) The earlier establishment was apparently the first Anglican school to be founded in South Africa and it is interesting that of its 54 pupils in 1945, 43 were 'of European descent', while four were the children of 'apprenticed negroes' and seven of 'Hottentots and other persons of colour'.[38] Approximately twenty per cent of its pupils were thus not white. Chapter 5 also referred to the practice of admitting white children to mission schools for blacks, albeit in a privileged position. A tradition of multi-racialism thus goes back, at least to some limited extent, to the early period of English settlement in the Cape. The tradition was not, however, a strong one, and the English private schools rapidly became racially exclusive, with the occasional admission of Chinese pupils, as at St Andrew's Girls' School and at Michaelhouse. In the latter case, attention has already been drawn to the uproar occasioned in 1946 when the Rector accepted a Chinese boy.

The admission of black pupils did not become a major issue for the private schools, affecting particularly the Church schools, until the 1960's and 1970's. The opening rumbles came in 1958 and 1959 with the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Jooste de Blank, and cabinet ministers like Eric Louw and Dr T. Donges engaging in a running debate. The Archbishop attacked the government's apartheid policies as unchristian and the cabinet ministers accused the Anglican church of

hypocrisy in maintaining all-white church schools. The Archbishop replied by saying that the Group Areas Act and the Bantu Education Act made it illegal for the schools to admit children of other race groups and pledged that if the legal barriers were removed he would use his influence to have black children admitted. He also proposed the establishment of a new, multi-racial church school. The Cape Town Diocesan Synod of December 1958 supported this proposal and urged the church schools 'to make educational provision for children of other than white parents'.[39] At the 1959 Diocesan Synod the Archbishop reported that the governing bodies of 'four prominent Cape Town church schools' considered the 1958 resolution 'as praiseworthy but unrealistic in the light of government policy and current legislation'.[40] At the same time the schools indicated that they were taking steps to promote inter-racial contact, and that two of them were organising extra-curricular activities in which coloured children were invited to share. The Archbishop also reported that legal opinion was that it was illegal to open a multi-racial school.

In 1963 a group of students at the University of Cape Town, all former pupils of Anglican schools and calling themselves the Church Action Group, issued a 'Challenge to the Church Schools'. This document was sponsored by de Blank, several bishops and priests and a number of academics. It accused the schools of failing to live up to their calling as the educational arm of the church and condemned their racially exclusive nature as being disloyal to the church's principles. The compilers proposed that the schools should provide a sounder intellectual foundation for their faith, give more emphasis to the gospel's social implications, provide for greater inter-racial contact, and become integrated at staff and student level. The authors added that, having been to church schools themselves, they could not feel that these

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Name of thesis The English Private School system in South Africa 1980

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
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