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BRIAN ROSE

In 1865 the Cape Garrison team of English soldiers played a town team at rugby: thus initiating a third national concern in South Africa, if one allows religion and politics as the other two. But thanks to a melancholy emanating largely from Grahamstown of recent years, members of the present politically impotent English-speaking community often find it difficult to look at the rest of their achievement over the past 150 years with any sense of worthiness to mellow the frustration. And yet the contribution of the English-speaking South African is both considerable and continuing.

The 1820 Settlers and their concern for education

It is easy to create the myth that the few thousand settlers brought into the Eastern Cape in the post-Napoleonic era were a fairly rough lot of crofter farmers and artisans. But while such people did join the Settler parties, there was a number of educated people as well; and as C T Campbell has established, (**British South Africa,** 1897) several teachers came out to practise their profession in their new country. Ministers of religion who emigrated were educated men and were usually concerned with education; many played the part of both minister and teacher, as did William Boardman who officiated at Bathurst and later at Grahamstown, where he also kept school. **The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel** early announced its willingness to contribute assistance by a regular supply of ministers and schoolmasters. We know of many people who helped to establish the teaching profession in the Eastern Cape. There was a Miss Coyle who came out with the Irish party, intending to teach "female children" and Janet Brown who was to be Thomas Pringle's sister-in-law. She became a governess in Cape Town. Then there was James Hancock, a member of Sephton's party, who applied for an erf in Grahamstown to establish a school, where the Rev. Mr Shaw also had "a week-day school". W T Matthews opened a school at Salem. In the Cape the latest innovation (which fortunately was not to endure) was introduced when William Howard tried to persuade South Africans to accept the "Lancashire System" of school organisation: conveyor-belt machine production at best. Even this brief indication suggests that the Settlers were very conscious of the need to provide education.

C T Campbell remarks:

"The majority of the British settlers were educated men and women. The professions to which the heads of the parties and many others belonged — officers of the Royal Navy, the army, medical men and other callings necessarily implying a fair education — establish this."

Mr Thomas Pullen claimed that seven out of the 13 children he brought out "were fairly educated before leaving England" (Campbell, 87). In Cape Town, to be the scene of so much stormy settler history, as far as the Pringle party was concerned, William Elliott, a member of the party, was given permission to open a "Classical and Commercial" school (a peculiar hybrid from today's thinking) and of course Thomas Pringle himself opened an "Academy" with John Fairbairn, which had wide success until its boycott was ordered by Lord Charles Somerset as a retaliatory measure against the young Scots idealist.

Nor did the English-speaking South African's concern with education cease with the arrival of teachers in Settler parties. James Rose Innes, later to be the first head of the newly-established Cape Education Department, arrived with several teachers in 1822. Innes, after a spell of school-mastering was one of the original professors at SACS, the forerunner of Cape Town University, the prototype of South African universities.

19th century liberalism and the growth of South African missions

In the post-Napoleonic era English reaction to the excesses of the French Revolution had mellowed, even though William Wordsworth never returned to his youthful Jacobinism. Peace was accompanied by the usual post-war inflation and the social unrest that so easily attends it. Various liberal groups in Britain were concerning themselves with industrial poverty, class distinctions, lack of universal education; and on the international front there was growing concern with slavery and with the seeming impermeability of aboriginal cultures in Africa to Christian enlightenment. It was this concern that led to a number of missions being sent to South Africa, and while their prime intention was to evangelise, secondary benefits in terms of education and industry certainly attended their efforts.

Dr John Philip who arrived in South Africa to act as superintendent of the LMS missions in South Africa was by no means the first to come. As far as the LMS is concerned, their work was probably initiated by van der Kemp, who came out in 1779 and worked among Gaika's people. But there were many others to follow, including Francis Owen, a witness to the death, though not the actual killing, of Piet Retief, Robert Moffat, later to be the father-in-law of David Livingstone, and then briefly in South Africa, Livingstone himself.

Namaqualand can call a short but distinguished missionary roll. There was the first Wesleyan, Barnabas Shaw, to whom must be added such names as John Campbell and George Thom, later to accept a call in the Dutch Reformed Church. Many of these men, though not all, were concerned at least with the rudimentary education of their converts, basically because the Protestant faith demanded that a professing Christian should have enough reading skill to give him direct access to the Bible. Thus we find, for instance, growing up round the Presbyterian missionary concern in South Africa a Christian community at Lovedale in which a highly diversified educational enterprise flourished. With a reputation for pragmatism and scholarship that was widely respected, it included for many years a multiracial school that was happily attended by Black and White alike. Similarly, Adams College in Natal owed its establishment to the American Mission Board in 1835.

The point of this thin survey is that we owe, principally though not entirely, to English-speaking missionaries of many denominations, the provision of education for Black South Africans for almost 150 years. If at times, as the Eiselen Commission of 1948 was to point out, these missionary enterprises were internecine and sectarian, they were able to be more generous in their educational aspirations than the system that succeeded them, at least during the Verwoerd era. The fact that the Bantu Education Department had to build on amateur missionary school foundations and in many cases to incorporate former missionary school staff went a long way to ameliorating the more unyielding intentions of Verwoerdian ideology, and even though much of the department's policy is today still contentious, especially among more educated Africans, its educational achievements have been considerable and its capacity for modification is encouraging. Three and a half million African children were in school in 1974. Eight homelands run their own departments of education. It is interesting to note that almost without exception as soon as Africans move into control, they make English the major second language in the curriculum. This is partly an emotional reaction to Afrikaner political dominance, but partly due to the language overload in the African schools. More positively, this favouring of English is in recognition of a language that carries Africans into the world of international learning and exchange.

The movement from the missionary amateur to the present-day professional stance in our African education is a growing and a changing one. But its foundations go back to men like Philip, and to Govan at Lovedale, and that long line of 19th century missionaries.

The English-speaking South African and the private school

The very basis of democratic life is that there should always be room to consider alternatives. The Parliamentary system must at least be capable of carrying on under an alternative government (even if the electorate fails to provide one). So, too, with school systems. The domination of the educational systems

of the Western world by the state is generally accepted — chiefly because of the astronomical cost of this special branch of the civil service (for it is certainly not an autonomous profession comparable to medicine). But the day we legally outlaw the private school, or throttle it by legislation, will be similar to the day we form a one-party state in politics: most unwise, because, deprived of alternatives, the only outlet to discontent is explosion instead of adaptation.

Private schools have flourished in South Africa as a demonstration of cultural alternatives among the White population. Initially, of course, the Cape had little else but state-aided private schools — usually owing their existence to the initiative of a local minister of religion, be he Anglican, Dutch Reformed or Wesleyean. The Anglican Church, under the crusading Bishop Gray, established a number of private schools. "Bishops" at first part of the household at Protea, and later moved to Woodlands, was an example. (Thelma Gutsche, 1970.) The smaller Grammar School attached to the Cathedral in Cape Town, and like Bishops, still thriving, developed originally as a choir school, was another private institution. Pringle's short-lived Academy was another. Pringle returned to Britain; though John Fairbairn, who remained, was a powerful forced in Cape education for many years. Grahamstown and Natal have many private schools, most of which were of church origin, though Hilton was a lay foundation. In the Transvaal, stimulated by anti-English measures during the pre-Boer War period, a number of private schools came into being, sponsored by the Witwatersrand Council for Education. Almost every English-speaking South African church is currently represented in the provision of private education: the Anglicans in St Johns College, St Peter's; the Methodists in St Stithians; Roman Catholics in Marist Brothers and a number of Convent schools that struggle against adversity in the form of shrinking staff and finances.

The dynamics of survival of the private school in South Africa appear to rest on the incompatibility of state education, with its bias towards a Dutch-Germanic philosophical orientation and to a vigorous Calvinism as set out in the **Beleid** of the ICNO, and the more liberal, less doctrinaire thinking of most English-speaking South Africans.

Ashley of Rhodes has shown that private schools in South Africa do not have nearly the same influence on the life of the South African community that public schools in Britain had — and probably continue to have. Nor do they, in general, show much tendency to experiment, to lead in new ideas. Most of them are carefully traditional and compare badly, on the whole, with the few state schools that are responding intelligently to the times. Members of a profession that attracts many more conservatives than progressives, the private schools seem to many observers to miss a wonderful opportunity to take the lead in the educational field. It is very doubtful whether in fact they offer a better education than is offered in any first-class state school: but at the same time they exist for what they avoid: the ideological and the doctrinaire; and since rigid formulas are always dangerous in a period of rapid change, this at least seems to please a considerable number of parents. The Afrikaner has had little involvement in private school education, and the few occasions were usually caused by similar circumstances, such as the rise of the CNO schools during the Milner regime, after the Anglo-Boer War, when they felt culturally threatened.

The English-speaking South African and the printing press and newspaper world

The printing press from the start has been intimately associated with the diffusion of education, as a study of the spread of education during the lifetime of Martin Luther in Germany will show. Religious books, which often keep the presses busy during initial stages, soon fail to do so, and school books become an important alternative. The demand for books of an educational nature in South Africa is considerable. As Afrikaans education moved away from Dutch, and as a similar but not identical process took place with English, school books became increasingly localised in design and content. Local publishing houses such as Maskew Miller and Juta, served a useful purpose in providing access for local writers to a local market.

The actual number of printing presses increased during the period following 1820.

Greig, the little London printer who brought his press with him and joined Thomas Pringle and John Fairbairn in the publication of **The South African Commercial Advertiser** (**The Pringles of the Valley,** 1957) helped to create the first independent newspaper to be available in South Africa. It was the "Advertiser" that evoked the first really outrageous example of censorship, too; for Lord Charles Somerset moved against it in 1824, the whole story being vividly recorded in Pringle's **Narrative of a Residence in South Africa.** Eventually Whitehall was prepared to upset the Governor's action and restore to the Cape the rights of a free press. The English press in South Africa owes far more to Thomas Pringle than many of its members know, and in fact it frequently amazes visitors in the 1970s that our press is able to comment on the political scene in particular as freely as it can. The press has for a long time assumed the function of a major parliamentary opposition in South Africa, which, with the gradual disappearance of an effective and formal one in parliament, is highly desirable if we are to preserve the reality of an open society with democratic alternatives. This sense of responsible independence has since spread from the English press to the Afrikaans press, which, particularly during the 1970s, has shown an increasingly spirited sense of direction.

To the Greigs and Godlontons of the printing presses, to the long line of editors and reporters who grew up in this country and served its press competently and advisedly, South Africa owes much. This accomplishment is largely in the tradition of the English-speaking South African.

The English-speaking South African and his bank balance

The English-speaking South African has been very largely a townsman, concerned with business and industry, rather than that equally important person, a farmer. So the business life of South Africa owes more to the English-speaking South African than to any other group. It is, as President Kruger realised all too well, the English-speaking South African who built the mining industries (with, indeed, few exceptions); it is the English-speaking South African generally who created the commercial life of the country. And it is from the needs and the funds that emanate from business and industry that adult education in terms of industrial training, mine training, management training and so forth are continued year after year at a cost running into hundreds of millions of rands a year. Increasingly and very properly, this will not remain an exclusively English-speaking South African commitment, particularly with the urbanisation of the Afrikaner now considerably advanced. But the fact remains that the economy of South Africa, on which specialised commercial and industrial education and training is founded, and upon which our general prosperity depends, owes much to members of the English-speaking community. Educational funds from such origins as the Rhodes Trust, the Sir Ernest Oppenheimer Fund, the Abe Bailey Fund — to name but three well-known examples — though far more limited in scope, have done much to stimulate South African education.

The English-speaking South African's philosophy of education

"Philosophy" in this context connotes a variety of attitudes, expectations and beliefs which express themselves in behaviour. The word is not used in the more restricted definition of academic discipline. Most English-speaking South Africans would find it difficult to define their philosophy of education, but it becomes more apparent when put side by side that of the Afrikaans-speaking South African. To a much greater extent, possibly as a group survival mechanism, the Afrikaans-speaking South African subordinates the individual to the group: church and state claim priority. On the whole, the English-speaking South African tends to resent group intrusion and to regard individual liberty of action as more desirable. One sees this working out in group festivals: Afrikaans-speaking South Africans congregate in their thousands to enjoy Volk festivals; the English-speaking South African avoids those peculiar to his tradition, preferring a quiet day on the golf course. Then one finds in the Afrikaans-speaking South African's attitude towards education the Calvinist acceptance of the child as a sinful being to be moulded through education to the patriot Christian: a form of

"idealism" very similar in effect to Jesuit concepts, and explicitly spelled out in the **Beleid.** The English-speaking South African generally thinks of a child as a human being capable of growth from expanding potential. Despite our multitude of mental and scholastic tests, much of any child's potential remains unpredictable, part of the unfolding developmental process that brings innate qualities into relationship with the environment.

The English-speaking South African is therefore reluctant to **mould** any child according to fixed formulas, simply because the formula, far from developing the child, may stultify potentials not yet apparent.

Almost implicit in the Afrikaans-speaking South African's approach is a strong stress on disciplined **content** in education. At a time when basic communication and numeracy skills are being eroded in schools throughout the world, there is considerable virtue in maintaining basic 3-R competency. But the problem faced by the Afrikaans-speaking South African is that there is little time left at school to develop higher mental skills such as problem-solving, reasoning, analysis, and that in a period of change many young adult Afrikaners may be ill-equipped to meet new situations, for which no previous formula, educational, social or political would serve. In early manhood the English-speaking South African may well be better-equipped here, though he often lacks the basic competencies that the Afrikaans-speaking South African so carefully preserves, and can be more flexible mentally, in the right learning environment.

Decision-taking through the making of choices is part of the English-speaking South African approach. In mathematics, for instance, whereas traditionally only one method of solving a problem was approved, nowadays any way that leads to the correct solution (lateral thinking of a limited sort) is satisfactory. We are suspicious of the hidebound, of the rigid, of the formalistic: and hence suspicious of closed thinking systems such as the phenomenological approach at the university level: we need as a people, room for debate, room for alternative action, openness of decision and the decision-taking process. The English-speaking South African philosophy at its best is **not,** as Afrikaans-speaking South African members sometimes argue, laissez-faire, leftish, liberalistic. Put into action properly, it is the application of basic democratic principles to education in the belief that if our schools are authoritarian and combat individual initiative, individual development and individual accountability, we shall never create in our community by the mere transition of youth to manhood, a democratic adult. And if the word "democracy" is now suspect because it is so jaded, let us then say that to solve and overcome the crises and to control the speed of cultural change before us we shall need nimbleess of mind, people with skills in problem solving at all levels. One wonders to what extent young people denied access to these processes and subjected to formulas would be able, overnight, to react with mobility and resource.

Schools serving the English-speaking South African may not be more **competent** in their approach, but many of them are sympathetic to contemporary needs and well aware of the challenge of on-rushing future — certainly a useful beginning.

Perhaps, implicit in the English-speaking South African's contribution to education and its influence on education, despite massive frustration, this nucleus of attitudes, this "philosophical approach" may yet prove to be the most valuable of all its contributions. For health, any national community needs viable alternatives. In doggedly insisting on this principle far beyond political debate, the English-speaking South African has done a considerable service to this country.