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A Destruction Coming In: Bantu Education as Response to Social Crisis

Jonathan Hyslop

The imposition of Bantu Education in the 1950s has often been portrayed as the destructive action of a Nationalist government intent, for purely ideological reasons, on uprooting a successful and largely benevolent mission education system: in this view the missions were, as Edgar Brookes put it, "butchered to make an ideologist's holiday."[1] But this approach to the issue fails to grasp the essential basis of educational restructuring in the 1950s. The educational policies of the state during this decade were above all an attempt to respond to the crisis of reproduction of the labour force, and especially its urban component, which had developed during the previous decade. I will suggest in this article that the state was particularly concerned to provide the necessary conditions of reproduction for that section of the labour force which was permanently urbanized and reliant upon a wage. As the urban population grew, social reproductive mechanisms which had operated in the 1920s and 1930s began to break down. In the 1940s the combined forces of collapsing homeland agriculture and expanding secondary industrialization, generated rapid urbanization. This placed the existing provision for urban social reproduction under enormous strain. Housing, transport, and wages were all inadequate to meet the needs of the growing urbanized working class. Squatter movements, bus boycotts and trade unionism spread rapidly, as popular initiatives which contested these arenas. In turn these fueled the emergence of a higher and more radical level of oppositional political activity, marked by the emergence of the Mandela - Tambo - Sobukwe generation of leadership in the ANC. Thus the dominant classes were faced on the one hand with levels of poverty which threatened the very physical production of their workforce, and on the other by new political threats. The National Party's policies of the 1950s were largely addressed to resolving this urban reproductive crisis.

Although the gradually emerging Verwoerdian vision postulated a future for urban blacks in the homelands, in our period this was not the Nationalist's practical priority. Urban conditions had to be stabilized before government would be in any position to impose Grand Apartheid. This involved on the one hand the provision of mass housing projects and a

concomitant reorganization of urban space; and on the other, campaigns to crush mass opposition. In the early 1960s both of these aims were to attain decisive, if temporary, success.[2]

The introduction of Bantu Education has to be understood in the context of this restructuring of urban reproductive conditions. I will argue in this paper that the conditions which prevailed in education during the 1940s constituted a major obstacle to social stability. The existing, provincially administered system of black education, in which mission schools predominated, was not extensive enough to reach the mass of black urban youth. This was seen by administrators and educationalists as a crucial reason for the uncontrollability of this youth, manifested in massive crime levels, and, they feared, in potential political mobilization. Moreover the urban workforce was not providing the numbers of workers with the education required for semi-skilled labour in the expanding factories. It was largely to provide the reproductive infrastructure for the solution of these problems of social control and labour need that Bantu Education policy was initially directed. The problems faced by the state in the educational arena were compounded by the internal crumbling of the existing missionary schools. Far from thriving this educational system was in fact in a state of near collapse. Not only was it too poor and too small to cope with popular demand for education, but it was increasingly riven with internal divisions between mission authorities, staff, students and black communities. The situation facing these schools cannot be understood purely in organizational terms though. It was also a crisis of hegemony. A powerful missionary educational tradition which had, through a long historical period, exerted a formative influence over the rising African educated elite, was for the first time experiencing substantial challenges from below to its claims to authority and knowledge. Verwoerd sought through Bantu Education not only to replace the missions with a more extensive and economically viable education system, but also to create a new form of hegemony capable of securing the support of popular sectors for the education system and the social relations it embodied. This article will seek to explore in detail the nature of the social control problems, labour needs and the institutional crisis in the mission schools which faced the Nationalist government. It will investigate how government sought to address these issues, and how Verwoerd, as Minister of Native Affairs responsible for black education, sought to create a new hegemonic order in the education sphere.

I will also suggest that conventional accounts of Bantu Education fail to deal with its astounding success in drawing black youth into a new education order. That is not to say that it attained much popular support at a political level. But it is to say that the facts of the doubling in size of the school system within ten years (1955-65) and the apparent failure of campaigns against Bantu Education from several quarters need to be explained. It was of course largely the coercive power of

the state which enabled it to ram through its educational changes. But this is not a total explanation: school intake vastly expanded despite the fact that education was not compulsory for blacks. I will therefore suggest that Bantu Education triumphed partly because it met some of the needs of subordinate classes for educational provision. In general the increased availability of educational provision was sufficiently attractive to township parents that it overcame their scruples about its ideological content and impoverished material character. Just as the building of vast townships in the 1950s was not only a defeat of battles by dwellers in inner city slums to hold on to their localities, but also an attempt to contain the pressures of mass squatter movements and attendant discontents, so Bantu Education was not only about the crushing of ideological diversity in the schools, but also part of an attempt to contain the potentially explosive needs of urban youth and the education aspirations of parents.

This argument derives from the view of Poulantzas that the state should not be understood purely as the instrument of the dominant classes, but rather as a field of relations within which struggle and conflict takes place.[3] This implies that the struggles of the subordinate classes should be seen as present within the state. This is particularly so in relation to issues of social reproduction. The form of reproductive institutions is not the simple result of a state actions which create structures unproblematically functional to capital, but the outcome of battles between an array of classes and class fractions.

As Poulantzas later work implies, the establishment of Bantu Education thus cannot be explained purely by repression or purely by ideology. Poulantzas argues that in order to attain popular acquiescence in the existing order, the state has to provide a 'material substratum' for this state of affairs. In Poulantzas' view even the most repressive regime needs to secure itself by adopting material measures which are of 'positive' significance for the popular masses.[4] It has to provide material changes in the social infrastructure in response to the pressures of the popular classes, even though the state will often attempt to shape these into a form congruent with dominant class needs. The success of the state in stabilizing Bantu Education in the 1960s thus required both the successful use of force against popular movements and a struggle (only fragmentarily successful) to impose a new educational ideology. But it was underpinned by the establishment of a new school system which provided a decisive material element in consolidating popular acquiescence. This also implies a re-consideration of the educational campaigns against Bantu Education. They failed to gain their professed objectives. But they also increased the pressure on the state to attempt to contain educational aspirations through further school provision. All of this is not to minimise the drastically racist, discriminatory, and materially impoverished character of

Bantu Education; it is merely to state that it represented the outcome of a struggle over educational restructuring in which the popular classes were not passive bystanders. That outcome was a defeat for democratic forces: but the battle had only taken place because the activity of workers and the urban poor had made education and the situation of youth an important terrain of conflict for the first time.

The Urban Crisis of the 1940s & 1950s and its Educational Implications

By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the education system was proving quite incapable of providing schooling for the growing numbers of urban youth. In 1952 school inspectors estimated that of African children of school going age on the Rand, 58,138 were in school while 116,276 were not.[5] At this time the majority of schools were mission institutions with a limited state subsidy: the state thus lacked the educational apparatus to deal with a growing urban youth population. This situation created a sharp awareness, on the part of a wide range of opinion within the dominant classes, that control over urban youth was fast eroding. This was understood as constituting a major danger, firstly insofar as it implied the spread of crime and socially disruptive behaviour, and secondly insofar as it constituted a potential political threat. Such concerns were first highlighted by liberal intellectuals. In his 1946 Presidential address to the South African Institute of Race Relations, Senator Edgar Brookes called for compulsory education as a 'preventative against delinquency and crime'.[6] He expressed concern that:

> In our towns thousands of children are growing up juvenile delinquents, and a State which is prepared to maintain a police force and reformatories is apparently not prepared to increase the expenditure necessary to keep them off the streets during their formative years.[7]

By the end of the Smuts government's tenure of office, such ideas had penetrated the thinking of significant sectors of government and administration. In its 1948 report, the Smuts-appointed De Villiers Commission noted that the Secretary of Social Welfare favoured compulsory education as a solution to the 'scolly' problem.[8] It also recorded that:

> A number of witnesses, including responsible municipal officials contended... that juvenile delinquency amongst Natives was assuming alarming proportions, especially on the Rand, and that compelling all Native children of school age to attend school would reduce the incidence of delinquency.[9]

On coming to power the Nationalists faced the same urgent problems of social control. The 1952 Van Schalkwijk Committee wrote of:

> an appreciable increase in the juvenile population of the urban areas during the last decade... [who] fall an easy prey to the vice of the towns.[10]

and opined that:

> ...absence of compulsory education in towns... results in greater freedom from supervision of non-European juveniles.[11]

Such thinking could combine with a fear that the disaffection of youth would manifest itself politically. The Afrikaner educationist, and head of Diepkloof reformatory, W. Kieser, noted in 1952 black youth's resentment of discrimination and bitterness and envy towards white economic privilege, attributing this to 'agitation and ideas with a strong Communistic influence.'[12]

In a situation where such fears of crime and political activity were at the forefront of policy makers concerns, the inability of the existing educational system to reach large number of youth became a major concern for the Nationalist Party government. In laying down the blueprint for Bantu Education, the 1951 Eiselen Commission identified the 'relatively small proportion' of youth reached by the mission schools as one of the major problems of the existing educational dispensation.[13] Thus although the Nationalist Party never fully embraced compulsory education, the idea that youth were a central focus of the urban crisis, and that this issue could be addressed by the introduction of mass schooling was one prevalent in both United Party and National Party circles. As we shall see, the thrust of the National Party's urban education policy in the second half of the 1950s and the early 1960s, was directed to containing the problem of social control of urban youth in the way advocated by the supporters or mass schooling in the previous decade.

That the missions lacked the resources to address their educational tasks was an important reality that has commonly been neglected by historians. The 5,000 or so mission schools which constituted the large majority of schools available to black students in the mid 1950s,[14] were in a disastrous economic situation. The missions were subsidised by the state only insofar as teachers salaries were concerned: buildings, supplies, administration, the salaries of non-teaching employees and medical services were all costs which had to be borne by the missions themselves.[15] War-time inflation had exacerbated the missions financial problems, and the limited economic means of black parents placed limits on the missions ability to meet these problems through fee increases.[16] The position of the

missions was characterised by Brookes as 'hand to mouth'[17] and by the De Villiers Commission as one of 'financial starvation'.[18] These circumstances inevitably impacted adversely on the standard of tuition of the mission schools; on the one hand the schools were under-funded: on the other hand popular demand for education was pushing them into accepting greater numbers of students than they could effectively teach.[19] The luminous educational achievements of a few renowned mission high schools like St. Peters, should not obscure the fact that most mission schools were poor primary schools with large drop out rates.[20] The Eiselen Commission was not inaccurate when it stated of schools in this era that:

> ...the rate of elimination at an early stage is very high... the standards of achievement in the schools as measured by examinations and achievement tests is low.[21]

By the 1940s there was no significant sector of dominant class opinion which did not favour greater state intervention in black education. This included the missionaries themselves. At a 1947 meeting of the heads of missionary schools in Port Elizabeth, a statement was issued to the effect that the institutions could not bear their financial burden without greater assistance from the government.[22]

The coming of Bantu Education was also partly a response to the strong pressures from industry for an education system which could meet its need for growing numbers of semi-skilled machine operators. The industrial growth of the 1940s generated a vast number of new jobs of this kind in industry, two-thirds of them filled by blacks, of which 50% were Africans.[23] The UP's De Villiers Commission drew out the educational implications of industry's demands for such labour when it urged educational expansion so that

> we could profitably use so many efficient Native man-hours.[24]

and a more direct linking of education and industry:

> for their present stage of development [Africans] profit much more from practical subjects than from academic subjects.[25]

The Nationalist government, during the 1950s was to prove more receptive to such industrial labour needs than their formal commitment to preventing the establishment of a permanently urbanized black working class might lead one to expect. Once it had come to power the Nationalist Party showed a clear recognition that in the short term it could not attempt to uproot urban workers: rather the aim was to gain effective control over the process of reproduction of the urban working

class in order to utilize its labour and control its political and social life. By the early 1950s government was able to reassure industry that it was quite willing to support the introduction of black semi-skilled workers into industry, providing that this was accompanied by a move of white workers from unskilled to semi-skilled, and semi-skilled to skilled posts. The 'floating colour bar' temporarily resolved potential conflict between industry and government. The unwillingness of the Nationalists to accept urban artisan level training for blacks was not an important source of friction between industry and government: neither the UP nor the industrialists showed a strong practical interest in training blacks in the trades, even though a shortage of artisans was beginning to make itself felt.[26] Thus the Nationalists were, during the 1950s, receptive to industry's main immediate labour need: semi-skilled labour. As we will see this had its impact on the Nationalists attempt at resolution of the educational crisis.

A further important feature of the crisis within the education system was the breakdown of the hegemony which white mission authorities had exercised over black students and teachers in the years preceding the Second World War. The subsequent decade and a half saw growing conflict within the education system. The mission system was becoming unviable not just economically but also in terms of its claims to authority over students and guidance over teachers. The gradualist integration of the leading missionary ideologies was unacceptable to a rising generation pulled along by the tides of social crisis and radical nationalism. As we shall see Bantu Education was to try to address this collapse of the existing order's outer ideological ramparts by attempting to construct a new hegemonic discourse in education.

The change in teachers' relation with the authorities had varied origins. The economic pressures of Great Depression wage freezes and war time inflation had led to the emergence of a militant wages campaign amongst Transvaal teachers in the early 1940s.[27] Secondly, the political ferment at Fort Hare University during the 1940s injected a wave of young radicals into the teaching profession. The University's graduates during the decade included the most important of the rising African nationalist leaders.[28] The lack of professional opportunities for blacks ensured that a large proportion of this generation would enter the teaching profession: in 1946 there were nearly 14,000 African teachers as opposed to less than half that number of other salaried or professional blacks.[29]

These trends expressed themselves in a number of ways. There was a tendency for young teachers to become active within the newly emerging Africanist radicalism: in the Transvaal especially through the African National Congress Youth League. Within the Transvaal African Teachers Association (TATA) a new, radical leadership took control in 1949. A split ensued in which conservative rural teachers broke away, leaving TATA as a stronghold of politically aware urban teachers.[30] In the Cape

on the other hand, the Cape African Teachers Association (CATA) in 1948 came under the sway of the smaller black nationalist current, the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), and its affiliate, the All African Convention (ACC).[31] The new, activist, leadership of CATA emphasized the need to link teacher's concerns to those of political liberation:

> Our slogan 'Equal Pay for Equal Work' therefore implies that our struggle is the general political struggle for the emancipation of the African.[32]

CATA's new approach had remarkable short-term success in mobilising teacher support: whereas in 1949 it organised only about one in ten Cape African teachers, by 1952 about half of all the African teachers in the Province were members.[33] It was hardly surprising that mission authorities found black teachers increasingly disaffected. The attitude of black teachers at Lovedale in 1946 was described as one of 'passive resistance' by the Inquiry held there.[34] In another comment in 1945, Lovedale's head, R H W Shepherd noted that:

> African teachers, particularly graduates, are claiming exactly the same treatment and to have the same customs as Europeans who are their fellow teachers... African teachers feel that their salaries, as compared with the European teachers doing the same work are too low and this leads them to think that there can be little or no claim on extra services.[35]

The breakdown of mission hegemony was also reflected in the school authorities relations with students and parents. Student discontent manifested itself in the 1940s by frequent riots over student grievances such as discipline and food.[36] Between 1945 and 1947 there were at least 20 disturbances in mission institutions.[37] In part this was due to the poor facilities which the missions were providing as a result of their financial crisis, and war-time shortages. But it also represented a growing political distrust of mission authorities. The inquiry into the 1946 Lovedale riot noted that whereas before the war the school had been free of disciplinary problems, now the students identified 'the European staff in the institution as part of the government machinery.'[38]

The slipping of the missionaries grip on the consciousness of the educated black elite was also apparent well beyond the walls of their institutions. Brookes noted in his 1946 address that during the riots:

> ...large sections of responsible Bantu opinion seems to have condemned the authorities and the missionary bodies without condemning the indiscipline and licence...[39]

An integral part of the crisis in education then was that the mission authorities were losing their ability to win the respect of the educated black elite. The crucial role that the missions had thus played in promoting a relatively gradualist outlook amongst the black intellegensia and political leadership was thus falling away. With black political aspirations now going well beyond the limited horizons of the 1930s, there was a pressing need on the part of the dominant classes for a new hegemonic vision. As we shall see, a vital feature of Bantu Education was to be its attempt to address the breakdown of the hegemony of missionary educational discourse within the black intellegensia, and beyond its ranks.

In what ways then, can Bantu Education be considered to have addressed the crises of urban reproduction and hegemony, in the educational sphere?

In terms of the ability of the state to provide an education system capable of exerting control over black youth, the implementation of Bantu Education was a turning point. Its inception marked the establishment of a mass education system embracing the bulk of working class youth. For the first time the state was able to draw the majority of black urban youth into its education system, and that system was able to maintain their attendance for a longer period of time than schools had before. 1955 marked the first year of the implementation of the measures provided for in the Bantu Education Act of 1953. In the decade from 1955 to 1965, the numbers of African students in school doubled from about 1 million, to about 2 million.[40]

The ruthless reorganisation of the school system also increased its capacity to 'hold' the students it had: the primary school drop out rate fell noticeably.[41] The 1950s saw this educational restructuring focused on the urban areas: for example schools in the urban southern Transvaal grew faster in the 1957-62 period than those in mainly rural Northern Transvaal.[42] Thus the late 1950s marked a dramatic adaptation in the education system to the task of containing and controlling urban youth.

The financial burden of this expansion was largely transferred by the state on to the shoulders of black communities, thus enabling government to institute educational reorganisation at a particularly low cost to itself: beyond a fixed annual state expenditure of R13 million, all monies spent on black education had to come from black taxation, of which four-fifths would be devoted to this purpose.[43] This policy took a grim toll of educational standards. There were sharp declines in per capita expenditure on each pupil (1953 R17.08; 1960 R12.46);[44] deteriorating student teacher ratios (1946 42,31:1; 1960 54,7:1)[45] and widespread use of teachers to take two shifts of pupils.[46] The state whittled away services such as school feeding schemes.[47] These brutal methods did however have the effect of creating mechanisms that could finance a school system large enough to draw most of the child population into primary education for the first time.

The grossly racist and inegalitarian character of the new system should not obscure that it was the first time that a mass education system efffectively including the black working class had been put in place in South Africa. Important parallels can be drawn between the imposition of Bantu Education and the establishment of mass schooling in industrialising societies elsewhere. If one examines the growth of mass schooling in late 19th century Europe and North America for example one sees noteworthy similarities to the South African situation: there too schooling was seen by dominant social groups as a response to the need for social control over working class youth, as a way of producing appropriately trained labour, and as a means of political socialisation of youth.[48] Bantu Education was unique in the form of its racial ideology; but it was far from unique in its role in providing an educational structure appropriate to monopoly industrialisation.

Bantu Education also provided a new kind of articulation between the reproduction of new forms of skilled labour in schools, and industry. To say this is not to adopt a functionalist conception in which capital simply has its labour needs met by the state. There is almost always, in educational policy formation, a battle between different dominant class interests, bureaucratic interests and mass pressures from below, which all go into deciding the outcomes. However as suggested earlier, in the 1950s the state was not yet attempting to uproot the industrial working class (as it was to try to do in the 1960s) and was willing to accommodate industries' immediate need for urban semi-skilled labour. By semi-skilled labour I mean that in monopoly industry, automation increasingly eliminates the split characteristic of small, competitive, early industry between unskilled hands and artisans. As the skills of the artisan are increasingly replaced by machinery, the high grade technician capable of repairing and setting up factory machines comes into his own. On the other hand the machine operator emerges as a new kind of labourer: the semi-skilled worker who requires skills of literacy and numeracy and an internalised work discipline.[49] The generation of such semi-skilled labour was an important part of the new education system's early aims. It was widely believed by state officials that four years of schooling was sufficient to provide basic literacy and some knowledge of English and Afrikaans, and a basis for further education.[50] Thus these first four years were seen (whether realistically or not) as capable of providing a level of education appropriate to semi-skilled work. The initial thrust of Bantu Education was thus toward the expansion of these first four years of schooling. J. Dugard, a Regional Director of Bantu Education writes of this period that:

> Our first aim was to promote literacy by making it possible for as many children as possible to complete the first four years of school.[51]

In the urban areas a determined thrust was made toward furthering this objective: white local authorities were allowed by the state to finance the whole cost of lower primary schools, whereas schools catering for higher grades were only to be established in cities in cases where black communities bore half the costs.[52]

Bantu Education sought to construct a new hegemony, which could secure the allegiance of large sections of blacks to the new educational arrangements and thus to the Verwoerdian social order. In this sense contemporary Marxist analyses which see the system as purely about the creation of black labour power at low levels of skill fall short of the mark.[53] Verwoerd was a sufficiently shrewd political actor to understand that he could not rely exclusively on force to dominate a subject population with any chance of success. Nor was he sufficiently foolish to believe that it would be possible to maintain black subordination while holding the barriers to career advancement at 'certain forms of labour'. The point of Verwoerds rightly notorious, but widely misinterpreted orations on Black Education in 1953-54, is precisely that while he intended to impose strict limits on black educational and career advancement in white areas, he held out on the other hand a new hegemonic vision to co-optable sections of blacks on the other.[54] The homelands would provide an arena within which black economic and political advancement would unfold. Verwoerd was essentially proposing homeland structures as the key part of the 'material substratum' which would secure black acquiescence. Discussions of Bantu Education often treat Verwoerd's strictures on black career advancement as if they were new features of political discourse. But of course they were not: 'civilized labour' had a long and broadly based history in white politics. What <u>was</u> new was his aim toward opening a new structures of black 'advancement' and incorporation through the homelands.

This meant a sustained attempt organisationally and ideologically to reincorporate black communities into the education system. Important mechanisms which aimed in this direction were the school boards and committees. Each school would have a school committee: a proportion of the members were elected by parents. A group of schools was to be controlled by school boards, appointee based bodies: however the state allowed local 'traditional' authorities a role in the appointments.[55] Thus Verwoerd's administrative system sought to provide a means of drawing black parents into participation in the school system, as well as to provide tractable 'leaders' with a source of patronage. In practice this system faced severe disadvantages: its undemocratic structure undermined its potential following, the ANC and the Unity Movement vigorously disrupted attempts to set up committees, and the boards arbitrary behaviour often antagonised teachers.[56] Nevertheless the establishment of the boards went forward with a degree of success for government, especially in the less politically volatile rural areas: by 1956 4,000 committees and 300 boards

had been established.[57] Certainly, this did not constitute a particularly effective social base for Bantu Education: but it did demonstrate that there were substantial social groupings whom Verwoerd could rally around the new system.

Some of the most notable of these could be found amongst teachers. A major strategy of the Native Affairs Department was to encourage the development of conservative teachers organisations. This was a shrewd move, as the leftward surge of CATA and TATA in the early 1950s had left many less radical teachers searching for a home. The emergence of the Conservative Cape African Teachers Union (CATU) in 1952 and Transvaal African Teachers Union (TATU) in 1950 appear to have enjoyed the sponsorship of the authorities and these became the officially recognised negotiating bodies of the teaching profession.[58] At the founding of CATU, Dr E.G. Schnell of the Cape Education Department expressed the authorities view that there was a need for a 'responsible body of African teachers to advise the Department on Native Education'.[59] In addition the new system offered the inducement of new prospects of black promotion to the inspectorate to which some teachers responded warmly.[60]

These official attempts met with a mixed response. In the Cape, CATU remained a fairly small and ineffective organisation throughout the rest of the decade. In Transvaal, teacher conservatism was manifested more directly. After the crushing by the authorities of TATA's vigorous campaigning activity the level of teacher activism dropped off, and the reunification of Transvaal teachers in the Transvaal United African Teachers Association in 1957 took place under the aegis of a cautious leadership. Both school board structures and conservative teachers organisations failed to achieve their hegemonic goals however. Even black conservatives tended to remain sceptical of Bantu Education. Yet these initiatives did attract a degree of support and help the state to counterbalance militant opposition in education.

If we are not to interpret the coming of Bantu Education in a functionalist manner, that is as a neat solution to structural problems imposed by the dominant social classes, we must consider how popular initiatives in the education arena shaped outcomes. I will argue that in the absence of the possibility that oppositional movements could provide a plausible institutional alternative in the educational sphere, the Bantu Education system was able to gain a certain popular acquiescence through its ability to create an expanded level of material provision in education.

If one observed teacher organisation in the early 1950s, the level of militancy might have led one to conclude that teacher movements could be a powerful obstacle to state educational restructuring. In reality, despite a high level of activism and dedication on the part of teachers, this proved not to be the case. The combination of harsh repression by the educational authorities, and division amongst radical teachers,

proved fatal to teacher opposition to the new education order. The Transvaal African Teachers Association, under the leadership of among others, Eskia Mphahlele and Zeph Mothopeng, did wage a strong propaganda campaign against the initial proposals of the Eiselen report in the early 1950s. When the leadership group was dismissed from their posts at Orlando High School in 1952, they mobilized a significant student boycott at the school, and drew wide support from the local community and other teachers. But the boycott eventually crumbled. A split emerged in TATA as to whether the organisation should seek to re-unite with TATU. In this debate the more conservative elements gained the upper hand, and Transvaal teachers subsided into a political quiescence that was to last two decades.[61] In the Cape the radicalization of CATA gave an important impetus to oppositional activity in education and beyond that sphere. In the rural areas, the NEUM used its influence amongst teachers to stir up opposition not only to Bantu Education, but also to state policies on the restructuring of local government and agriculture. Meetings convened by chiefs and educational officials were disrupted. CATA also strongly encouraged attempts to break up school committees and to boycott school committee elections. But once the real implementation of Bantu Education began in 1955, CATA proved unable to resist it effectively. The NEUM's ideological differences with the ANC made it impossible for it to co-operate with the ANC's 1955 school boycotts. CATA officials and members were the victims of widespread sackings, which both political activity and litigation by the association proved powerless to halt. Finally in 1958, a political division over agrarian policy split the Unity Movement into two, and this effectively finished CATA as a coherent political force.[62]

The most substantial resistance to the Bantu Education Act came from the ANC. In April 1955 school boycott movements were launched on the Rand and in the Eastern Cape. The ANC supported African Education Movement (AEM) organised 'Cultural Clubs' - effectively, alternative schools for the pupils who were out on boycott. The AEM provided a rigorous programme of training for group leaders and produced syllabi and study materials.[63] However the initiative faced some strong limiting factors. Youth were far from being highly politicised in the 1950s: the African National Congress Youth League struggled without great success to gain the allegiance of township youth.[64] (Paradoxically, it was to be the creation of a mass education system that eventually gave youth a sufficient sense of common identity to rebel politically). The campaign had strong material limitations too: the AEM struggled to provide teachers and equipment for the 6,000 odd children participating in the boycott:[65] but this number, impressive as it was, was a drop in the ocean compared with the one million students regularly attending school. The Cultural Clubs were extensively intimidated by the authorities. Most importantly the ANC itself was uncertain about the aims of the boycott. Sometimes the

boycott was presented (realistically) as a short-term protest including alternative education activities; at other times (quite unrealistically) as an alternative education system which would continue until the collapse of the Nationalist government.[66] Through 1956 the impracticality of trying to sustain the Cultural Clubs indefinitely became apparent and the ANC called off the boycott. Thus by the latter 1950s, popular resistance to Bantu Education had been effectively checked.

Controversially though, I want to propose that the defeat of resistance was not the only reason for the secure establishment of Bantu Education. The restructuring of education enabled the schools to draw in vast numbers of new pupils: the schools of Bantu Education thus provided part of a 'material sub-stratum', which could secure the acquiescence of the urban working class in the new social order which was to prevail from the early 1960s to the mid-1970s. This was precisely acquiescence and not allegiance: but the absence of widespread resistance in education from late 1956 to mid 1976 surely cannot be satisfactorily accounted for in terms purely of coercion or brain washing. The Verwoerdian educational outlook failed to hegemonize significant urban social forces. But the material reorganization of the education system in the period did help to defuse potential opposition.

The urban working class parent desperately needed the schools: not just for their role in education but also for their role of taking care of the child. As Z.K. Matthews put it in explaining the failure of the school boycott, schools kept pupils 'safe from accidents and juvenile delinquency' while their parents were at work.[67] Alternative schools did not have the material capacity to replace regular schools in this role. In addition, the tremendous numerical expansion of schooling - a doubling in student numbers from 1 million in 1955 to 2 million in 1965[68] undoubtedly generated some supportive reactions from parents who had not previously been able to keep their children in school. While politically conscious people and most teachers rejected Bantu Education, others welcomed it. A teacher who was working at the time comments:

> Now most of the parents were illiterate, they felt that now anyone can get education... Those who realised the set up reacted with more support to the missionary schools...[69]

The same teacher found that parents often did not grasp the reasons why teachers were resigning in protest against Bantu Education. He believes that the expansion of the numbers of students made a favourable impression upon communities and that it was only those aware of education issues who grasped the meaning of the new school system:

> It appeared that the changes meant that you could pursue any type of education you desired... It is only those who knew education, and what it must consist of, who knew that it was a destruction coming in.[70]

Another teacher comments in similar terms:

> It was mainly activists who reacted. Black communities just didn't know about [the] differences... [between mission and Bantu education].[71]

The expanded material provision of schooling clearly underpinned the attitude of those sections of black communities who were prepared to live with the new system. A veteran teacher, now in his seventies, says of his community's response to the educational expansion of the late 1950s and early 1960s:

> ...I think they liked it - because the state built attractive schools. That's what I think - better than the mission schools. They had in mind that these are good for us.[72]

The remark of a woman teacher suggests how the Verwoerdian attempt to mobilise ethnicity in the new education policy met with a degree of success:

> [The community] thought that it was a good thing, that the use of Bantu language would make it easier to cope.[73]

She also found that initial student reaction against Bantu Education was not widespread:

> I think they didn't know it then, that this Bantu Education was killing them.[74]

A fifth Soweto teacher interviewed felt that with the exodus of politically conscious teachers from 1955, the teaching profession itself became increasingly reconciled to the new system:

> Most of the teachers are children of Bantu Education. So I don't know what you think about your mother.[75]

The power of the schools to attract parents support despite the social inequalities which they embodied is borne out by the events surrounding the 1955-56 boycotts. The numbers of students in schools nationally <u>increased</u> during the schools boycott by about 85,000.[76] Even in the ranks of the ANC itself, members were suspended in about 25 Cape branches for sending their children to school.[77] Ultimately the question came down to this: the state could provide expanded capacity for education and child care, albeit on a grossly inegalitarian and racist basis.

Drawing urban youth into a structured education system en masse; transforming the relations between labour market and education; pushing forward a new attempt to incorporate the subordinate classes: the Bantu Education system played a crucial role in the temporarily successful restructuring exercise through which the Nationalist government was able to, create a 'stable' apartheid system from the early 1960s until the mid 1970s. This whole educational project was however necessitated by the challenges to authority posed by workers, urban youth, black teachers and communities in the 1950s. The 'material substratum' of a newly expanded education system, supplementing political repression and ideological manipulation had a part in creating the popular acquiescence which marked the 1960s. But the education system never ceased to embody the conflicts of a deeply divided society - and these were in the subsequent decade to erupt with brutal violence.

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FOOTNOTES

1. E. Brookes A South African Pilgrimage (Johannesburg, 1977) p. 53, cited by T. Couzens The New African: A Study of the Life and Work of H.I.E. Dhlomo (Johannesburg, Ravan, 1985, p. 354).

2. My view of the period is strongly influenced by the work of Doug Hindson. See D. Hindson Pass Controls and the Urban African Proletariat in South Africa. (Johannesburg, Ravan, 1987).

3. N. Poulantzas State, Power, Socialism (London, Verso, 1980). It should be noted that Poulantzas later positions represent a sharp departure from his earlier writings on the state, which contain a definite instrumentalist tendency. It is the earlier writings of this author which were utilised by the South African 'fractionalist' authors, who consequently often fell into the trap of seeing government policy as direct expressions of the interest of dominant class fractions. Where Poulantzas later work can be criticized is in its tendency to see state structures as purely a 'condensation and materialization' of class relations. This does hold the danger of a class reductionism which could tend to ignore the independent dynamic of bureaucratic structures. I would wish to modify the Poulantzian viewpoint in a way which would take greater account of these realities. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this article Poulantzas' conceptions seem very useful to invoke, firstly, because they emphasize that class struggles are present within the state and secondly, because they suggest the inadequacy of explaining Bantu Education simply as the result of ideological trickery and/or armed force.

4. Poulantzas (1980), op.cit., pp. 30-31.

5. W.W.J. Kieser Bantoe jeugmisdaad aan die Rand en die behandeling daarvan deur die Diepkloof - verbeteringskool (M.Ed dissertation, Potchefstroom University, 1952), p. 42. Information supplied to Kieser by inspectors.

6. Cory Library, Rhodes University M.S. 16 453 (I/iv) E. Brookes Presidential Address on Education for the South African Institute of Race Relations 1947.

7. Idem.

8. U.G. 65/1948 Report of the Commission on Technical and Vocational Training (Chairman: Dr. F.J. De Villiers) (Pretoria, 1948), para 1824.

9. Idem.

10. U.G. 31/1952 Report of the Inter-Department Committee on the Abuse of Dagga (Chairman: L. van Schalkwijk) (Pretoria, 1952), para. II. 48.

11. Ibid, para. II. 53.

12. Kieser (1952) op.cit., pp. 81-83.

13. U.G. 53/1951 Report of the Commission on Native Education (Chairman: W.W.M. Eiselen) (Pretoria, 1951), para. 1047.

14. P. Christie and C. Collins 'Bantu Education: Apartheid Ideology and Labour Reproduction' in P. Kallaway (ed.) Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans (Johannesburg, Ravan, 1984), p. 171.

15. Cory Library, Rhodes University, M.S. 16 598/6 The Principal, Healdtown to the Secretary for Labour, Pretoria, 7 March 1945.

16. Cory Library, Rhodes University, M.S. 16 598/5 Association of Heads of Native Institutions minutes of meeting, East London, 14 October 1947.

17. Brookes (1947), op.cit.

18. De Villiers Commission (1948) op.cit., para. 1973.

19. Cory Library, Rhodes University, M.S. 16 453 Report of Inquiry into the Causes of the Disturbance at Lovedale on 7th August 1946, 30 November 1946.

20. Brookes (1947) op.cit.

21. Eiselen Commission (1947) op.cit., para. 1047.

22. Association of Heads of Native Institutions (1947) op.cit.

23. The Manufacturer, October 1950, cited in J. Lewis Industralization and Trade Union Organization in South Africa, 1924-55 (Cambridge, CUP, 1984), pp. 121-23.

24. De Villiers Commission (1948) op.cit., para. 1837.

25. Ibid, para. 1798.

26. D. Posel 'Interests, Conflict and Power: The Relationship between the State and Business in South Africa during the 1950s' (Association for Sociology in Southern Africa Conference Paper, Cape Town, 1985); J. Lewis (1984) op.cit., 121-23; Hindson (1987) op.cit.

27. E.M.J. Phago 'A Short History of the Teachers Association in the Transvaal', TUATA December 1966; R.L. Peteni Towards Tomorrow: The Story of the African Teachers Association of South Africa (Morges, Switzerland, World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, 1978), pp. 55-57.

28. Z.K. Matthews and M. Wilson Freedom for my People: The Autobiography of Z.K. Matthews (Cape Town, David Philip, 1983), p. 131.

29. M. Horrell South Africa's Non-White Workers (Johannesburg, 1956) cited in G. Gerhart Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology (Berkley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1978), p.33.

30. Phago (1966) op.cit.; Peteni (1978) op.cit., pp. 57-58; N.C. Manganyi Exiles and Homecomings: A Biography of Eskia Mphahlele (Johannesburg, Ravan, 1983), p. 155.

31. On CATA and the AAC, see C. Bundy 'Resistance in the Reserves: the AAC and the Transkei' Africa Perspective no. 22, 1983, pp. 51-61; T.Lodge Black Politics in South Africa since 1945 (Johannesburg, Ravan, 1983), pp. 118-9.

32. The Teacher's Vision June 1951, quoted in The Torch 19 June 1951.

33. The Teacher's Vision September 1950; The Torch 1st July 1952.

34. Report of Inquiry (1946), op.cit.

35. Cory Library, Rhodes University; M.S 14 714, Shepherd to Rev D.W. Semple, Blythswood, 23 April 1945.

36. I have explored this in detail in J. Hyslop 'Food, Authority and Politics: Student Riots in South Africa 1945-1976' Africa Perspective, New Series Vol. 1, No. 3 and 4, June 1987, pp. 3-41.

37. South African Institute of Race Relations Race Relations Survey 1946-47 (Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1947), p. 27.

38. Report of Inquiry (1946), op.cit.39; Brookes (1947), op.cit.

40. Department of Education and Training Annual Report 1986 (Pretoria, 1987), p. 71.

41. J.Kane-Berman South Africa: The Method in the Madness (London, Pluto, 1979), p. 186.

42. Native Affairs Department. Bantu Education Bulletin 1957 (Pretoria 1957); Department of Bantu Education Annual Report for the Calendar Year 1962.

43. Eastern Province Herald 23 March 1964; Kane-Berman (1979) op.cit., p. 187; J. Dugard Fragments of my Fleece (Pietermaritzburg, Kendall and Strachan, 1985), pp. 87-9.

44. The Star 23 May 1966.

45. Christie and Collins (1984), op.cit., p. 179.

46. The Torch 4 February 1958.

47. Rand Daily Mail 22 September 1954.

48. See for example R. Dale and G. Esland Mass Schooling (Milton Keynes, The Open University Press, 1977).

49. H. Braverman Labor and Monopoly Capital (New York, Monthly Review Press, 1974).

50. For example, the Minister of Bantu Education, W.A. Maree quoted in Rand Daily Mail 3 June 1964.

51. Dugard (1985) op.cit., p. 91.

52. Ibid, p. 138.

53. e.g. E.N. Mathonsi Black Matriculation Results: A Mechanism of Social Control (Johannesburg, Skotaville, 1988).

54. See for example Hansard vol. 82-3 (1953); col. 3581.

55. M. Horrell A Decade of Bantu Education (Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1964) pp. 43-45.

56. Dugard (1985) op.cit., p. 101; The Torch 24 May 1955, 6 September 1955, 20 March 1956.

57. South African Institute of Race Relations A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa 1955-56, (Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1956).

58. For a summary of the organisational history of African teachers organisations see J. Hyslop 'Teachers and Trade Unions', South African Labour Bulletin vol. 11, no. 6, June-July 1986, pp. 90-97.

59. UNISA Archives (File CATU Conference I) 1st Annual Conference - Clarkesbury 29th June to 2nd July 1954.

60. The Torch 16 February 1954 gives an example of this.

61. I elaborate on this in Hyslop (1986), op.cit. On the Orlando boycott and its aftermath see Manganyi (1983), op.cit., pp. 98-101, and The Torch September 1952 - July 1953.

62. See Bundy (1983) op.cit.; Hyslop (1986) op.cit.

63. T. Lodge 'The Parents School Boycott Eastern Cape and East Rand Townships, 1955' in Kallaway (ed.) (1984), op.cit., pp. 265-95.

64. I substantiate this point in J. Hyslop 'Let Us Cry For Our Children: Lessons of the 1955-56 school boycotts' Transformation 4, 1987(b).

65. Number calculated from University of the Witwatersrand Archives AD 1137 Ca 3.4.1 Report of Cultural Club Activities (1956) in the Eastern Cape, and M. Berman 'Cultural Clubs: An Answer to Bantu Ecuation' Fighting Talk November 1955.

66. See Hyslop (1987) (b) op.cit., p.131.

67. Matthews and Wilson (1983) op.cit., p. 131.

68. Department of Education and Training (1987) op.cit., p. 71.

69. Interview (a), Soweto, 1986.

70. Ibid

71. Interview (b), Soweto, 1986.

72. Interview (c), Soweto, 1986.

73. Interview (d), Soweto, 1986.

74. Ibid.

75. Interview (e), Soweto, 1986.

76. Horrell (1964) op.cit., p. 41.

77. University of the Witwatersrand Archives, AD 1812 EA 3.2.4. T.E. KaTshunungwa The African National Congress Cape Provincial Secretariat Report: January - November 1955: 16th November 1955.