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Race, Gender and Imperialism: A Century of Black Girls' Education in South Africa

by

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Introduction

It is striking how relatively absent women are from John MacKenzie's recent discussion of popular imperialism, that late nineteenth century cluster of 'monarchism, militarism and Social Darwinism' infusing and propagated by every organ of British life. The relative dearth of research on women and empire partly reflects, of course, what masculine activities war and conquest have been, but it is still surprising that, after pointing to female emigration schemes, he has only two other - admirable - pieces of work to refer to: Brian Harrison's on the imperial enthusiasm of the Girls' Friendly Society and Anna Davin's portrayal of the concern for a healthy race of imperial sons which informed much schooling for motherhood and social projects for women at the turn of the century. (1)

British socio-educational research, however, has been underlining how for both boys and girls very gender-specific emphases have been stressed in education, with some relevance for empire. Male public school 'athleticism' aimed to foster 'manliness' of character, embracing 'antithetical values - success, aggression and ruthlessness, yet victory within the rules, courtesy in triumph, compassion for the defeated.' As athleticism fused in the late Victorian period with imperial Darwinism, it prepared boys for military and administrative service to empire. (2) By contrast, girls' education of the same period was still, after a generation of pioneering expansion, a preparation for 'women's mission' - femininity and domesticity. (3) While the empire wanted boys to be manly, girls must be womanly. This applied no less to the British colonies in South Africa, hence Natal Prime Minister Sir John Robinson exhorted schools in 1895 to turn out 'the good old-fashioned, true English type of woman who had made England what it was.' (4)

A further important twist operated in the case of African girls in South Africa. Unlike the situation in much of rest of Africa, female pupils often outnumbered male in time, especially in the pre-teenage years; but while gender assumptions that a woman's place is in the home applied to them too, race and class discrimination meant that they were frequently propelled into domestic service in white settler homes. Indeed, within the wider restrictions of a colonial economy, western and African stereotypes of women's role combined to limit many educated girls either to paid employment as maids, primary school teachers and, in this century, nurses, or to unpaid labour as housewives and mothers within marriage.

Within this volume's broad focus on imperialism, this chapter explores three questions: the ideology of the educators; the experiences of girl pupils; and official attitudes and assumptions. First of all, to what extent did the women sent out from Britain to teach and convert African girls see themselves as part of an imperial as much as a missionary movement? How much of a contrast emerges with American and continental European missionaries or were shared assumptions about racial, technical and religious superiority more important than different national loyalties? Secondly, how much was loyalty to the British empire and familiarity with all things British a prominent part of African girls' education? Finally, imperial social engineers from Sir George Grey to Lord Milner attempted to shape African education in ways that, for women, led to a stress on 'industrial education' of a domestic sort: sewing, laundry work, cookery. In a racially stratified colonial society, which South Africa had already become by the time Britain assumed control during the Napoleonic wars, these skills were seen not simply as enabling black girls to become good Christian wives but also as rendering them useful potential employees in white settler homes. Missionaries varied in their commitment to such training, and the debate around African girls' education should help throw light on the role of gender-differentiated schooling in extending and maintaining imperial control.

Two main periods will be looked at in the century of mission-controlled African education prior to the assumption of total government direction under the Afrikaner Nationalists' Bantu Education Act of 1953. The first, the hey-day of imperial certainty and influence, lasted broadly until the end of the First World War, by which time the devoted imperialists among the small African educated elite had lost their first love. The second, the remaining three decades under mission leadership from the 1920s, saw diminished African loyalty to empire, despite the persistence of royal ceremonial in black schools and teacher-led youth movements.

This exploratory piece will draw its major examples from two of the country's four provinces, the Cape and the Transvaal. The shift in dominance and importance between them in a sense encapsulates the declining resonance of imperial ideology, for its most ardent supporters among Africans had always been the Cape-educated aspirant petty bourgeoisie, many from the Mfengu people who had, as rootless underdogs in Xhosa society, responded most positively to the triple package of Christianity , commerce and civilisation. The overwhelming dominance of Cape education in 1920, at the end of our first period, is striking. A third of the African population lived in the Cape at that time, but it had some 60 per cent of the schools, teachers and pupils, plus three-quarters of the funding. Transvaal education was worst off - one-sixth of pupils and teachers nationally in an area with nearly a third of the total African population. Natal lagged behind slightly less badly, while the Orange Free State fared well proportionately: it had just under 10 per cent of the African population and between 7.5 and 10 per cent of schools, teachers and enrolment. By 1953, with the Free State's position remarkably unchanged - still about one-tenth of total numbers on all counts - Natal had caught up almost entirely, representing one-fifth both of the population and educational provision. Cape enrolment had nearly trebled, but its overall share of pupils and

funds was almost halved. Meanwhile, Transvaal pupil numbers had increased some tenfold and its share of expenditure had trebled.

Tremendous educational expansion in the 1930s and 40s in the Transvaal particularly had therefore begun to challenge Cape dominance: a quarter of all African schools were to be found in the northern province and a third of the pupils while the Cape figures were 43 and 36 per cent respectively. (5)

I. From Imperial Domination to African Disillusion (1850-1920)

A. The Imperialism of Mission Educators

For progressive educational researchers in South Africa today, there is little doubt that African Christian schooling was part of a process of conquest and dispossession. 'The colonised peoples of Southern Africa', writes Kallaway, 'were not simply conquered in a military sense; did not lose only their political independence; were not simply divorced from an independent economic base; were not just drawn into new systems of social and economic life as urban dwellers or wage labour .... colonisation ... also entailed cultural and ideological transformation, in which the schools were major agents.' (6)

Yet one can easily accumulate evidence of the contrary convictions of the nineteenth-century mission pioneers of the beneficent connection between mission and empire. John Philip, generally seen by white settlers as, if anything, too biased in favour of the indigenous population, was already articulating this view in the 1820s: 'While our missionaries, beyond the borders of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope, are everywhere scattering the seeds of civilization, social order and happiness,' he wrote, 'they are, by the most unexceptionable means, extending British interest, British influence, and the British empire.'(7) The Christian Express, the journal of the outstanding Scottish mission settlement at Lovedale in the eastern Cape was even more chauvinistic in the 1880s. While confirming the imperial citizenship of the African population in, for example, an article on 'Her Majesty's Subjects: Black and White', it also voiced its conviction of the 'undoubted superiority' of the British who, as a race, had not only had what Africans had not, 'the priceless possession of Christianity and civilisation', but had also been 'wonderful colonizers', dealing with subjugated races with a degree of 'mildness, compassion and pity' lacking in the Iberian powers for instance. (8)

Both consciously and by personal example, as is well known, missionaries frequently recreated with their converts, patterns of community life from the imperial heartland. As the early Lovedale settlement imitated the missionaries 'in their building, gardening, dress and manners', for instance, the missionary Thomson reported in 1827 that 'If you except the black faces, a stranger would almost think he had dropped into a little Scotch village.' (9) Government particularly encouraged them to foster plough agriculture, industrial habits, the wearing of clothes and

using of money in order that, as Sir George Grey (Cape Governor, 1854-61) put it, Africans might become part of colonial society with a common faith and common interests, 'useful servants, consumers of our goods, contributors to our revenue'. (10) The colonial state then came to expect accountability from its aided mission schools on such goals, even though very varied responses resulted. The Natal Inspector of Native Education (appointed in 1885), for example, detailed 'the means taken to encourage conformity with European habits', which ranged 'from such profound measures as "constant reflection upon the infallible truth that Europe, though the smallest of the four quarters of the globe, is the greatest in spiritual, scientific, and military power" (St John's School, Ladysmith) to such matter-of-fact methods as "a daily bath and a weekly washing of clothes," (Adams' Training College, Amanzimtoti).' (11)

Despite Grey's references to a common society, it was clear by the 1890s that Cape government thinking was anti-assimilationist. An 1892 education commission report pointed to the debate on 'the real aims of an education intended for an intellectually inferior and socially distinct race such as the South African Aborigenes'. (12) Indeed, Hunt Davis points to a crucial change in the late Victorian age as mission (and general European) convictions of racial superiority ousted a belief in cultural and religious superiority. Thus instead of wanting to 'civilise' Africans by contact with superior Christian culture, missionaries began to see it as more important to 'improve' Africans, make them 'useful' because they could never, on account of race, become 'equal'. (13)

The important religious and educational contribution of missionaries outside the British imperial network - the Swiss Protestants among the Tsonga of the northern Transvaal, German Lutherans in the Transvaal and Scandinavian Lutherans in Natal and Zululand, the American Board Congregationalists in Natal and later Johannesburg meant that while western superiority might be and frequently was stressed, there was no specific patriotic brief held for Britain, its monarchy and empire in such areas. Curiously, though, the prestige of English literature might still be upheld - so Sol Plaatje, who translated some of Shakespeare's plays into Tswana, was apparently first introduced to the Bard by his German missionary teacher at Pniel, Elizabeth Westphal. (14) But while members of the Wesleyan Methodist settlements at Driefontein and Edendale in Natal fought on the British side in the Anglo-Zulu war and some even against the Bambatha rebels in 1906, this was noticeably not true of American Board converts on either occasion. Indeed, the Governor of Natal in 1906 said suspiciously that the American pastors 'could not be expected to advocate the principle of honouring the King as much as that of fearing God.' (15)

All this notwithstanding, Natal evidence suggests that local conditions determined missionary methods despite denominational differences. Etherington claims that the American missionaries, like the frustrated and formerly anti-imperialist Norwegian and

Hermannsburg societies, all became imperialists by the late nineteenth century in the sense of supporting the extension of British rule, because they hoped it would overcome African opposition to their message. (16)

Surprisingly little overt discussion of imperialism emerges from the late-nineteenth century reports of female missionary associations of either the Free Church of Scotland (which worked at Lovedale) or the Anglican United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), although assumptions of cultural and class superiority are more numerous. Jane Waterston's letters - she founded the Girls' School at Lovedale in 1868 - testify to her enthusiastic interest in the career of General Gordon and her passionate support of Milner's imperial ideal in South Africa, but by that high point of strident imperialism she had been gone from Lovedale over a decade. The male secretary of the Free Church's Ladies' Society wrote unusually reflectively to one of their women missionaries in Natal in the 1890s about the ever 'larger and heavier' burden of empire; and of Rhodes and his ilk, he feared 'there is too good ground for the allegation that they have simply one object in view - namely, gold, & that to gain it they are very unscrupulous...This Imperialism, which has become so popular, seems just to mean grabbing as much of the world's surface as possible.' (17)

The female monarch could be an important touchstone for British women mobilising others to support female education abroad. Sometimes, inclusive imperial citizenship was emphasised, as when a penny booklet of the 1880s referred to the pitiable condition of 'millions of heathen women in our own Queen's dominions...Those women of India are our fellow-subjects. Two hundred and fifty of them pass into eternity every hour.' (18) The most sustained paeon of praise for Victoria came, not surprisingly, in her diamond jubilee year: 'the most wonderful year in the history of the great British Empire', said the SPG. It attributed the growth of the Women's Missionary Association to the example of the Queen, who, 'by uniting true womanliness with a high sense of duty, religious, political, and social, has enabled women to attain a position, undreamt of before her reign.' (19)

B. How the African Elite viewed Imperialism

Much innovative recent South African historical research has documented the growth of a prosperous, largely Christian, African peasantry responsive to market opportunities in the Cape and Natal, working towards full inclusion in colonial society and, with the urban growth sparked off by the gold and diamond discoveries of the 1860s and 1880s, building up aspirant petty bourgeois communities in Kimberley and later Johannesburg. (20) This African intelligentsia was, as Shula Marks has pointed out, 'both the most ardent believers in the new colonial order and its most vociferous critics', (21) although in fact much of the criticism became overt only from the 1920s.

It is important to emphasise gender difference in the African relationship with imperialism. The educative, 'civilising' and Christianising effect of the missionary's own home was a widespread article of faith for Victorian evangelisers. Especially in the rural Cape (by contrast with increasingly tightly segregated urban twentieth-century South Africa), a small group of black women learned their Christianity and then lived or studied in Britain through being attached to mission households.

Lovedale's first African ordinand illustrates this: Mpambani Mzimba's mother had come under Christian influence and learned to read and write while in domestic service in Somerset East; after marriage, she converted her husband and shared her literacy. Their son's bride, Martha Kwatsha, and her bridesmaid, Tause Soga, were among the first girls educated at the Girls' School at Lovedale and both went with the missionary Mrs Thomson to Glasgow in 1874-6 to complete their education. (22) Two other Lovedale graduates went to Scotland for extended periods with the principal's wife, Mrs Stewart: Sana Mzimba as nurse to the growing family (1872-5), and Letty Ncheni from 1876-9, after she had already been in service with the Stewarts from 1868-73, simultaneously attending evening classes at the Institution. Such girls went on to marry male members of the new elite. (23) But personal contact with the imperial heartland came in very different ways for the young men. For the young women, the setting and purpose of their long journey was basically domestic, underlining yet again that women's sphere was that of the home and home training was the most desirable.

For African men, although some like Tiyo Soga went in order to study, trips to England could be much more explicitly political. A vital series of - ultimately fruitless - journeys were undertaken in the early twentieth century to try to get the imperial government to intervene on behalf of Africans in South Africa. These trips were predicated partly on the fact that male Africans in the Cape who fulfilled certain property, income and educational qualifications had a right until 1936 to vote alongside whites for the same Cape members of parliament. Such men could be seen as having more of a 'claim' on the imperial power than did their wives and daughters, although the whole family was caught up to some extent in their aspirations to a common citizenship with white settlers.

Sol Plaatje's biographer has described very sympathetically the small, mission-educated African community in Kimberley in the 1890s, admiring both the Cape franchise and equality before the law, and earnestly improving their command of English. Their optimistic vision of a society in which merit and hard work, not race, would determine Africans' place was frequently expressed in symbolic terms, 'above all through expression of loyalty to the figure of Queen Victoria; her name, and the image of the great white queen, were inextricably associated with notions of justice, progress, and opportunities for education and advancement.' (24) Particularly in a context of repressive local colonial interests, imperial control was believed to be an

essential protection for non-racialism. (25)

Another ANC notable, the Rev. John Dube of Natal, had already seized on an alternative - and, for many, vital - model for African 'belonging' and aspiration: the black American. Educated at American Board schools in Natal, Dube accompanied a missionary back to the USA in 1887, worked his way through Oberlin College and later raised funds in America for his Zulu industrial school, Ohlange, opened in 1901 and following the example of Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee in Alabama. (26)

Among the Africans who also took advantage of the religious and educational networks of the black South were two outstanding women, a generation apart and reflecting in their different involvements much about the pre- and post-1920 contrast which this paper is structured around. Charlotte Maxeke went from Cape schools to the USA graduating from Wilberforce University, Ohio, round the turn of the century under the auspices of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, for whom she then did pioneering educational work back in South Africa. Active in a female adjunct of the ANC, the Bantu Women's League from 1918, she participated in inter-racial joint councils and conferences in the 1920s, speaking from her experience as an urban social worker. Sibusisiwe Violet Makanya from Natal, by contrast, went to the USA in the late 1920s under the aegis of the educationalist Loram and the Phelps-Stokes fund, returning to do more rural community upliftment work, focusing on women in order to build up African home life. American female social activism and contact with white American missionaries in South Africa remained important to both women and others like them, providing strong alternative ties and models to those of the British imperial network.

But for the ordinary female pupils of Scottish and Anglican mission schools in the Cape and Natal, schooling at the turn of the century had a very 'English' flavour. Take the senior boys' and girls' curriculum at Lovedale, for example. For English it included Gray's Odes and Elegies, and Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield, while History comprised Green's Short History of the English People and Smith's Greece. Others were reading Scott's Ivanhoe, Julius Caesar and Tom Brown's School Days in English and Meiklejohn's British Empire in Geography.

Some signs of female absorption of the message of imperial loyalty are worth highlighting briefly. The symbolic power of Queen Victoria was reaching even isolated rural areas. Thus Maria, wife of a Natal catechist in the 1880s, prayed for 'the great Inkosikase (female chief) of us all, who takes care of us - bless her greatly, O Lord.' (28) Britain's wars evoked sacrificial giving and compassion from African schoolgirls. At St Matthew's Keiskamahoek, during the Boer War, for example, many gave up sugar for Lent to send the proceeds to wounded soldiers or knitted and sewed for Belgian refugees 'eagerly' during the First World War. (29)

C. Domesticity or Domestic Service for Girls?

In the two historical chapters of her outstanding study of domestic service in contemporary South Africa, Jacklyn Cock argues for a connection between black female employment and education patterns in the eastern Cape up to 1880. She documents the very early entry of African women into the colonial labour market and their growing domination of domestic service. Because she is able to chronicle the founding of several missionary training institutions in that same region which taught domestic skills - cooking, sewing, laundrywork - to girls in industrial departments like those at Lovedale, Blythswood, Healdtown and St Matthew's, and couple this with examples of missionary eagerness to place African pupils as servants, she concludes that mission education for girls was 'vocational, domestic and subservient', suited 'to Africans, to women and to subordinate classes'. (30) The relevance of this to imperialism concerns the role which mission educators saw African women playing in settler society. Cock underplays the extent to which missionaries were aiming at a transformation of African domestic life in order that the Gospel might take root in expanding Christian villages of square cottages (round African huts, Jane Waterston delcared, 'utterly' prevented 'the growth of refinement without which you can never have an educated woman' (31)). Missionaries did not just see African girls as potentially useful to white settlers, servants of imperial conquerors. The two aims - creating Christian wives and training domestic servants - were frequently held together or seen as mutually compatible (a girl might earn some money in service and then marry), or seen as applicable to intellectually different levels of ability: the brightest girls were wanted for more advanced academic schooling to train them as teachers and equip them to marry teachers and preachers from the male elite.

The early Christian concern with homemaking merits some illustration. As regards Lovedale, the original aim of the Free Church Ladies Society was certainly to find a 'highly qualified Christian lady' to train the most promising girls from the elementary station schools: 'Some of these will in due time become the best teachers of their countrywomen; and others will do service of perhaps equal importance when they come to be settled in homes of their own as educated wives and mothers'. (32) Domestic service was not even mentioned. Jane Waterston as first Head there repeatedly emphasised that homes were what were needed, and hence she set much store by creating a 'home character' for the school that she might turn out not schoolgirls but women able to make homes because they had understood and seen what a home was. Her correspondence fascinatingly confirms her personal concern to encourage Christian marriages characterised by a new companionship and partnership. To retain the confidence of their most gifted young male converts by recognising their manhoood, she helped pair off her star pupils with them and followed the fluctuating fortunes of these relationships with close interest. (33) She was frank about not wanting a totally vocational schooling for the brightest girls: the 'Work Department' established in 1871 'to meet the demand for servants

and thoroughly taught workers among the native girls', was not what she would encourage a 'clever, capable scholar' to enter. (34) But she did expect the housework of the Girls' school to be done by the girls themselves as far as possible - an educative experience.

A common early missionary ideal was the establishment of a boarding school in order to separate the children from what were seen as corrupting or distracting home and community influences. Yet such a school, especially in the case of girls, was often called a 'home', because it was very much a rival domestic establishment giving intimate daily contact with alternative 'maternal' figures and western cultural norms. Home life (rather than, say, team games) was character-forming for girls, (35) so, for instance by 1878, Anglican women missionaries established St Margaret's Home for Native Girls in Pietermaritzburg, with the familiar two-pronged aim: 'receiving a certain number of young native girls into the house to be trained up either for useful servants or wives for native Christians'. A decade on, this had split into two, with younger girls receiving at St Margaret's a Christian education plus industrial training for marriage, while a companion Home, St Agnes', provided a hostel 'sheltering' some twenty domestic servants (by 1893) who also received some domestic instruction. (36)

The Anglicans of this era seem to have been more servant-minded than Scottish or Methodist missionaries, perhaps because of their social background. As Miss Lucas of the Industrial School at St Matthew's wrote at the beginning of the 1880s, having taught girls between six and twenty years of age there for four years: 'On the whole I find these girls amiable, obedient, intelligent, and quick to learn, for after some months' training the most ignorant, taken from the wild heathen state, soon fall into the cleanly habits and daily routine of industry followed by the regular inmates of the Mission, such as washing and ironing, baking, household work, sewing, &c., &c. Some of the girls turn out really excellent laundresses, and a few of those who attend to my rooms are quite equal to many English ladies' maids, so thoroughly clean and neat - mending, and even making my underlinen, and keeping everything in the greatest order. They also make good parlour-maids, Mrs Taberer having them in her house as such when occasion requires. It is our object to render them good useful servants, and therefore we insist upon work of every description being done, from hoeing in the mealie fields to attending upon me personally.' (37)

Despite the fascination and importance of this material on acquiring domestic skills in the 1880s, there is a danger of applying it ahistorically. In a sense, as far as women were concerned, this was a time of pioneer instruction in Christian homemaking which subsequent indigenous cultural transmission made less centrally a female mission task. And as regards the mission production of servants for settlers, explicit courses in domestic skills, when looked at over a century-long perspective, had a miniscule impact. It would be wrong to overstate the utility to

imperial settlement and rule of black female education. Indeed, at a formal level, it is easy to discount female industrial training pre-1953 as making any significant contribution to African women's employment patterns. First of all the actual numbers involved are so small. By the 1950s they still did not exceed a couple of thousand in toto: 2,239 African boys and girls were receiving vocational training in 1955 of the over one million pupils then at school. In 1914, 606 boys and 394 girls attended the Cape's industrial departments and schools; for the country as a whole in 1936, the figures were only 543 male and 621 female students. By 1946, the total had not quite doubled, to 2,015, of whom 542 in the Cape and 213 in Natal were female, the other two provinces providing no gender breakdown. (38)

Africans attending mission boarding institutions were always a minority within the Christian minority. The vast majority of African scholars attended much more rudimentary, often one-teacher, day schools, clustering largely in the first three or four years of instruction. Although Victorian Christian aspirations as well as the emerging African converts' conceptions of the natural and proper roles for men and women must have shaped this elementary schooling, the actual sex-specific slant of the curriculum was minimal. The only subject taught to all girls, exclusively, was sewing. Needlework and the role of clothing in conversion and 'Christian civilisation' generally, constitute one of the great unresearched subjects of South African women's history! It was for sewing teachers that governments were ready, from the 1860s and 1870s, in line with current practice in Britain, to give (very small) grants. Sewing continued to be so central to primary school inspection and funding that into the 1920s in Transvaal schools, for example, white women missionaries might spend a considerable part of their time in its proper supervision.

Once sewing machines and commercial clothes retailing spread, sewing became less clearly domestic: it might lead to an independent dressmaking income rather than either domestic service or the care of a family home. More specific housewifery training was long confined to the upper school standards which the mass of pupils never reached. As the educationalist Loram, an ethusiast for industrial and adapted education, commented years ago, 'the number of pupils in Standards IV and higher is so small that less than 1 per cent of the pupils in Native schools are receiving anything like adequate industrial training'. (39) Even when, in the 1930s, domestic education in Standards V and VI was being extended to more and more mission schools, (40) as only 2.5 per cent of African pupils were in Std VI in 1935, the extent was still very small. (41)

Secondly, what little evidence we have of the results of such training shows the perennial gap between educational aims and actual achievements. The marvellously rich record of 538 pupils who attended Lovedale Girls' School in the twenty years after its opening in 1868 shows that by contrast with the industrial course, more girls took the academic course which was intended to

lead, if not to intelligent and companionate Christian marriage and motherhood, then to teaching rather than domestic service. Figures from the 1890s highlight the alternatives to service even more. (See Table I)

Table I

Occupation of Lovedale Girls' School Pupils

	1886	1896
Teachers	158	269
Domestic Servants	84	53
Married (excluding teachers)	79	232
At home or keeping house	71	165
At school elsewhere and miscellaneous	9	19

Note: The 1896 figures come from the South African Native Affairs Commission (1903-05) V, Annexure 8.

Source: R. Hunt Davis, 'Nineteenth Century African Education in the Cape Colony: A Historical Analysis', Ph.D., University of Wisconsin, 1969, p.107.

Cock finds (as do I) 85 rather than 53 who had had some experience of service by 1887. (42) But these bald statistics fail to draw out far more significant aspects of these unique personal records. If we distinguish between the fate of those in the academic 'classes' and those in the Industrial Department (started in 1871), it emerges that more girls went into service *from the supposedly purely scholarly education than from the* vocational training: 53 of the 85 pupils who worked as servants for any period after leaving Lovedale were girls who had only attended the 'classes'. Rather than confirm Cock's reasoning about the overriding slant of girls' education, this underlines the narrow occupational options open to black women in the British settler heartland of a colonial economy. 159 girls are recorded as having spent some time in the Industrial Department, several of them after anything from six months to four years in the classes; 22 were still there. Only some 45 of the 137 who had left the Institution had actually completed the intended three-year indenture period, and only one-fifth of that small group had been in service, five out of those nine at Lovedale. In fact, full industrial training seems to have ensured more responsible, 'elite' status - two-thirds, 30 out of the 45 who had done the full course, were or had been teaching. Of course, in some - perhaps most - cases, they were employed as the statutory sewing mistress, but this still needs to be distinguished from working as a maid in a white home. When one goes on to discover that less than a quarter of Industrial Department trainees had actually been in service, the shortcomings of such education as a means of supplying settler household labour needs are confirmed. (43) It is also vital to appreciate that many a biography will combine short periods of at

least two of the four 'occupations': service, teaching, time at home, and marriage. Simple tabulation fails to capture this variety and mobility. But domestic service seemed to be a short-term occupation for such girls if indeed it featured at all. Lovedale transformed the course in 1922, raising the educational qualifications and increasingly framing the course 'to fit girls to make comfortable homes' which meant learning to make use of slender resources instead of learning skills more appropriate to a more prosperous settler setting. (44)

The other vignette showing the mixed fate of industrial training comes from the post-Boer War Transvaal. The Anglican St Agnes' School in Johannesburg started off as an Industrial School where, again, African girls would board and serve three-year indentures as apprentices, afterwards being placed in domestic service. This was meant to tie in with Milner's imperial reconstruction plans for the Transvaal: trained black women would replace the African males who had hitherto, as so-called houseboys, performed household labour for whites and this would begin to free more male labour for the gold mines which faced a crisis of labour supply. Within a year or two of St Agnes' foundation in 1908-9, however, after a walk-out by mutinous older girls who thought they were being worked too hard doing laundry for white families, the ambiguous status of household training in the eyes of African adolescent girls and Christian families became clear. By 1913, a new headmistress was trying to stress the academic teaching more to attract the 'better-class' Africans who felt their wives could teach their daughters housework now, and a boarding school should offer different, more advanced schooling. By the early 1920s, St Agnes' pupils were making 'fitting wives for educated native men' rather than becoming servants, although others became nurses, teachers and even, in one case, a nun. By the 1930s, in response to the ever-rising levels of education and expectation among black middle-class Anglicans, St Agnes provided boarding accommodation for girls studying alongside the boys of the prestigious St Peter's School, although its small industrial department still prepared a few for a domestic training certificate which could lead to a job as a servant. By then its pupils could also try for the Junior Certificate examination in domestic science. (45)

This section has demonstrated that, while a 'home atmosphere' and encouragement of western domestic skills were particularly central to the first generation experience of African female education, this cannot be interpreted unambiguously as race and class differentiation of Africans to make them useful to white settlers. Following Victorian domestic norms and possessing at least basic education were also a desirable part of being a Christian matron from the prosperous African peasantry or aspirant petty bourgeoisie who demonstrated such loyalty to monarchy and empire. Increasing efforts were put into training African girls to teach these skills to others, a point further explored in the next section.

II. Imperialism Muted and Marginalised (1920-1953)

A. Developments in African Girls' Education

Although only a series of pointers rather than exhaustive analysis can be offered here, this section seeks to emphasise that Cock's characterisation of black girls' education as 'vocational, domestic and subservient' is decreasingly true to the twentieth-century reality. The 'higher' education of girls by the inter-war period contributed to a growing feminisation of especially primary school teaching, the implications of which still need working out in historical research and educational analysis in South Africa. Certainly, as regards imperialism, it seems likely it played a part in the decreasing resonance of imperial ideology, as Cape African male voters, it was argued above, rather than their spouses, had the greatest stake in imperial political and legal assumptions. Yet as the Cape still trained nearly two-thirds of all women student teachers in 1935, most female trainees continued to be exposed to the empire loyalty of the, by then somewhat attenuated, 'Cape liberal tradition'. But the growing political, social and economic exclusion of Africans from a common society by whites in these decades and the sharply diminished power and will of the British government to intervene were even more important curbs on imperial feeling than were female schoolteachers. Likewise, a growing separatist African nationalism, urban radicalism and embryonic socialism superseded imperial ties.

By 1935 female enrolment figures for Std VI in African schools in the Cape and Natal well outnumbered the boys, at 2,664 and 820 to 1,766 and 561 respectively (whereas Transvaal boys were slightly in the majority at 1,038 to 937), (46) suggesting girls' education was not just catching up but in some respects overtaking boys'. Std VI pupils represented the 'finished' product and survivors of the African primary school system; a pass in that year was the minimum requirement for teacher training colleges and increasingly for nursing. Cape domination was still striking: not only were over half of all Std VI pupils at Cape schools, (47) but the Cape was also training some 64 per cent of all African women student teachers in 1935. (48) By a decade later, this had altered markedly, with the Cape only responsible for some 45 per cent of female student teachers (but, by contrast downwards, 25 per cent of males in training) as Table II shows. It also shows that nearly three-fifths of those in training were girls.

Table II

African Teacher Training 1946

Province	Training Schools	Students		Total
		Male	Female	
Cape	14	545	1,345	2,190
Natal	5	388	438	826
Transvaal	9	756	610	1,366
OFS	4	520	326	846
	32	2,209	3,019	5,218

Source: P.A.W. Cook, 'Non-European Education' in E Hellmann (ed.), Handbook on Race Relations in South Africa (Cape Town, 1949), p.376

Initially, things were different: at St Matthew's Training School, male students well outnumbered female, by 99 to 55 in 1918 for example. But in 1932 the position was reversed for the first time and, because 'experience taught from year to year' that women tended to make better teachers than men for children in lower primary classes, men were then encouraged to follow the primary higher course; from 1945, the lower teacher's course there was restricted to women. (49) A numerical breakdown for the three dominant eastern Cape mission institutions at the time of government handover illustrates gender educational developments at a local level. It is noteworthy that at Healdtown twice as many girls as boys, at St Matthew's three times as many, were in teacher training. (Table III)

Table III

Enrolment at Three Key Cape Institutions, 1955*

	Healdtown		Lovedale		St Matthew's	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Training School	101	219	99	114	61	182
High School	226	205	182	112	84	54
Practising School	252	240	233	262	157	247

*Figures for St Matthew's 1949

Sources: L.A. Hewson, 'Healdtown: A Study of a Methodist Experiment in African Education', Ph.D. Rhodes University, 1959, p.297a; R.H.W. Shepherd, Lovedale 1824-1955 (Lovedale, 1971), p.144; St Matthew's College Report, 1949.

B. Imperialism in Inter-War African Education: Some Examples

Having established the growing importance of female students at selected prominent institutions, the relevance to girls of

selected episodes of 'empire loyalty' in those schools can now be accepted. For by the 1930s and 40s, the impact of the British monarchy on the trio of long established eastern Cape schools on which this paper has particularly focused, was largely restricted to rare and special ceremonial celebrations. These events were clearly very meaningful for the expatriate principals; a more refracted message must inevitably have been received by pupils. Two such highlights were the coronation in 1937 and the Royal Visit of 1947.

The St Matthew's Warden recorded the full timetable of Coronation Day in his (semi-official) Journal. The previous evening, a staff service was held, following a form of prayer and dedication commended for general use by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. 12 May 1937 was a holiday and College uniform was worn. The day began with a college service of Holy Communion at 7 a.m. At 10.30 all the pupils assembled for a flagstaff ceremony. After singing Nkosi Sikeleli 'Afrika ('God Bless Africa', now the ANC anthem), the breaking of the Union Jack was followed by a hymn and prayers, then all joined in affirming 'God Save the King'. Refreshments for the schoolchildren were then provided at the Flag while staff and representative students planted 80 commemorative pine trees at the Sports Field, before receiving tea and buns respectively. Celebrations continued, after a special meat dinner, with dormitory and table matches, a Servants' Feast and Evensong at 6 as usual. The whole College listened to the Empire Radio Programme at 8 that night, although the planned Bonfire and Singsong were postponed because of rain. But such isolated moments of patriotic solidarity could not shield St Matthew's from serious disturbance, particularly in the Girls' Hostel. Through the early months of 1936, for instance, the Warden was attempting to cope with unhappy staff, complaining girls and suspected arson to a white staff member's room. (50)

Lovedale similarly had just been through a traumatic year when King George VI, Queen Elizabeth and the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret toured South Africa. In 1944-5 some twenty student riots took place at mission institutions (including St Matthew's); in August 1946 some 150 men students at Lovedale rioted, breaking 600 panes of glass. The school was closed for two months and half the convicted rioters were then debarred from returning. (51)

The royal family met a gathering of five thousand Africans on the Lovedale sports' field on 1 March 1947: staff and students of Lovedale, Healdtown and St Matthew's together with the nearby agricultural college, Fort Cox, and the University College of Fort Hare, plus several hundred pupils from day schools in the vicinity. It must indeed have been a stirring and historic occasion, one of the last symbolic flourishes of all that the old Cape liberal tradition meant, occurring in the midst of changes in the political outlook of educated Africans and only a year before the Afrikaner Nationalist victory which was to lead to the severing in 1961 of links with the British Commonwealth as South Africa became a republic. Most fittingly, Professor D.D.T Jabavu

of Fort Hare, son of the distinguished editor of the formative generation of African Cape liberals, John Tengo Jabavu, had trained a massed choir from the five institutions and led them in three African songs, including Nkosi Sikilel 'i. The royal family then left the dias and moved among the various sections for nearly an hour in 'one of the most informal occasions of the whole tour.' Shepherd, Lovedale Principal, wrote enthusiastically that 'Nothing could have been more delightful. The Royal Family left an indelible impression of graciousness, dignity and unfeigned interest.' Noting the extensive press coverage, he proudly recorded how Queen Elizabeth II later recalled this occasion to him at Balmoral Castle. (52) The St Matthew's Warden too described the event as a 'great occasion' which would 'long remain an outstanding memory in the minds of all who were privileged to share in it,' commenting that the students deserved 'special congratulation for their fine bearing and their exemplary behaviour.' (53)

For the Heads of these institutions, the British connection still had great resonance and they needed to acquit themselves worthily in the royal presence. The same applied to Africans of Jabavu's vintage and background. His energetic and meticulous preparation for this occasion would have helped impress on a much younger generation of black schoolchildren the elevated importance of the royal visitors. Yet albeit in a more muted and perhaps contested way, identification with British values had continued to characterise these three Cape schools in the inter-war years.

In Healdtown's Sunday morning parade of the 1930s, for instance, African nationalism, imperial patriotism and Christian zeal were suitably fused: the school band would march to fetch the girls from their hostel then all would muster in the large square made by the impressive school buildings, for The King, Nkosi Sikilel'i, and a prayer. Obviously such occasions were intended to build up pride in the school and general esprit de corps, even more than loyalty to the British monarch, but links with Britain were also maintained through continued staff recruitment from there and the provision of well built flats for visitors from all over the Commonwealth. (54) At Lovedale too the English ethos prevailed in the self-imposed rule of the students that English would be the language of the playground, while the superb library provided, in addition to every English-language South African newspaper, the airmail London Times, the Illustrated London News, The Tatler and Punch. (55) The St Matthew's Warden of 1923-34 consciously developed the house and prefect system, sports competitions (for girls too) and school reunions on an English public school model. (56)

Despite some valuable recent personal accounts of African women's lives, virtually no black women's autobiographies of any historical depth or detail exist. Ellen Kuzwayo's Call Me Woman provides a fascinating exception. What she recalls of her education at mission schools in the 1920s and 1930s is enlightening: the highlights of her early schooling were 'action songs and physical exercises which I was good at and loved'. She

went to Methodist schools in the Free State, a Catholic college at Marianhill in Natal and the Americans' Adams College, and then on to Lovedale in the Cape, a very varied and perhaps unusually peripatetic training. But despite the variety of denominations and national origins of those in overall charge of these schools, she expresses a standard liberal pro-British and anti-Afrikaner stance. Also, while deploring the segregated education and its belittling of African custom, she asserts loyally that the churches 'have been a vehicle for progress, growth and development for all black women educated before the mid-1950s'. Her positive verdict is endorsed by the career path she followed, which was all that mission educators could have wanted: she became a teacher, trained as a social worker and gave long service to the Young Women's Christian Association among African girls, remaining a prominent Anglican. Yet it is worth underlining too that her role models were no longer mainly imported British teachers and missionary wives, as was the case with the girls around Jane Waterston and Mrs Stewart to a large extent. The outstanding teachers whom Ellen Kuzwayo remembers at each institution were black, a number of them female; student girl friends were also an important inspiration to greater educational endeavour, an important reminder that the ethos of inter-war African education in the big institutions was increasingly being shaped by black staff, as had long been the case in the small, purely African-taught primary schools scattered through the countryside and attached to dispersed urban congregations. (57) To a greater degree than in the late nineteenth century, Christianity and African identity outstripped imperialism and Britishness as dominant values in the socialisation and education of African schoolgirls, a point underlined in a brief consideration of the impact of an African adaptation of Girl Guides.

C. The Girl Wayfarers' Association

The Girl Guide movement started in South Africa only a year after its 1909 British launch and spread rapidly once the Governor-General's wife, Lady Buxton, agreed during the First World War to become President, with her daughter as Organising Commissioner. (58) But this was among white girls - the inclusion of African girls was discussed, but shelved in 1925 on the grounds that it was premature. Instead a mission-dominated, school-linked African version of Guides developed, the Girl Wayfarers' Association, which maintained its separate existence in the Transvaal on into the 1970s, although its branches in the other provinces were absorbed into the Guide movement from 1936. Its importance in the socialisation of African schoolgirls and the training of their teachers in extra-curricular leadership was considerable, although in line with other developments of the inter-war period, the value of this movement to empire was indirect and implicit, rather than as explicitly conceived as Baden-Powell's sister's first - apparently none too successful - efforts at British recruitment through a patriotic charter, How Girls can help Build up the Empire (59)

Christian youth movements were a far more significant part of learning outside school life for both female pupils and teachers than for their male counterparts. In 1937 in the Transvaal, for example, 63 percent of African women teachers in government-aided schools, helped with youth movements. (60) Wayfaring had some 30,000 members throughout southern Africa by 1935, double the number of its male equivalent, the Pathfinders. (61) Women missionaries hoped Wayfaring would 'help in the adjustment to civilised conditions of these girls, and be for their spiritual, moral and physical well-being': it 'would teach the right use of leisure, give wholesome discipline through teamwork and games, and inculcate loyalty to authority and the idea of sisterhood for service'. (62)

The GWA's aims, as set out in its 1926 handbook, stress deference, usefulness and domesticity, within the rubric of making African girls 'better Christians', rather than the 'good citizenship' stressed by Guiding. Wayfaring's Christian foundation and leadership was a distinguishing mark. (63) 'Upward' was its motto encouraging aspirations of self-improvement, but the 'really smart' GWA uniform and the enjoyable games and songs learnt had the deepest impact. (64)

At the start, some objected in the African press at the 'mock militarism' and public parading of girls. Wayfarer leaders insisted they too believed 'ardently that the place of Native womenfolk is in the home.' (65) Nevertheless, girls took part in regular big rallies which, with bands playing and flags and banners flying, inspired the Christian youth movements and held up imperial notables who came to inspect them, for particular respect. In 1932 it was the Chief Scout, and on another occasion the Governor General, Lord Clarendon. (66)

After the rest of the movement joined the Guides, where imperial as opposed to Christian loyalty would have been more central, the 'adapted' version in the Transvaal continued to boom, claiming over 22,000 members in 1939 and 500 officers, whereas for the whole Union there were only 5,460 Wayfarer Guides and 3,907 Sunbeam Brownies that year. (67) Yet both movements, while offering much that was positive and enriching for black girls, simultaneously shored up settler security by inculcating the many African schoolteacher leaders of Wayfarers with unquestioning values of loyalty to authority and cooperation with white Christians.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to show how the concept of imperialism lost some of its resonance for Africans in South Africa, in large part because of the political dominance of the white settler population. But the idea of equal access through education and Christianity to imperial citizenship rights was very influential, reaffirmed at sporadic ceremonial intervals in the schools and climaxing in the enthusiastic expression of loyalty to the monarch in 1947. For girls, predictably, their domestic role was

never far from the mind of educators and Christian socialisers. But a range of destinies for African schoolgirls were in mind at various times: domestic servant, peasant wife and mother, teacher, nurse, literate though racially inferior worker, as changing racial attitudes entwined with gender expectations to determine the place of black girls in colonial, imperial and then dominion-status South Africa.

Notes

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