

**TENDENCIES IN THE HISTORY OF
BANTU EDUCATION IN
SOUTH AFRICA**

by

E. P. LEKHELA



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TENDENCIES IN THE HISTORY OF BANTU EDUCATION
IN SOUTH AFRICA

Inaugural lecture delivered on accepting the chair of History
of Education in the University of the North
on 15th September 1972

by

E.P. Lekhela, B.A., D.Ed. (S.A.), A.T.S.C. (London), U.E.D.

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OPSOMMING

Historiese Opvoedkunde is gemoeid nie slegs met die optekening van opvoedkundige gebeure nie, maar ook met die verklaring en waardering van die mens se pogings deur die eeue heen om onder wisselende omstandighede die onvolwasse persoon tot volwassenheid te lei. Beoefenaars van hierdie wetenskap glo dat hulle arbeid waardevolle lesse en helderder insigte verskaf tot hulp van die mens in die bepaling van sy teenswoordige en toekomstige onderwysstelsel tot die grootste voordeel van die individu en sy gemeenskap.

'n Studie van die algemene patroon van onderwys-ontwikkeling vir die Bantoe in Suid-Afrika toon 'n duidelike siklus. In werking binne die groter verband van lewensomstandighede in die Republiek van Suid-Afrika, blyk dit dat Bantoe-onderwys voortgestu het deur ses volledige siklusse, elk met die vier stadiums van ontstaan, groei, verbrokkeling en ontbinding.

Die beskouing van die Hollandse grensboere, soos die van vroeëre Portugese het gelei tot wat omskryf kan word as 'n disassosiatiewe verhouding met die AmaXhosa van die Oos-Kaap. Dit het tot openlike vyandigheid gelei wat uiteindelik uitgebars het in twee bloedige oorloë tussen 1770 en 1799. Gevolglik het die Hollandse Boere geneig tot isolasie van die AmaXhosa t.o.v. onderwysvoordele.

Die beginjare van die negentiende eeu het gesien die koms van die Britse en Europese sendelinge na Suid-Afrika. Hulle sou die Bantoe evangeliseer, opvoed, beskaaf en hom insluit by die volk van Godsgelowiges en hom selfs integreer by die Suid-Afrikaanse gemeenskap as gelyke van die witman. Omstandighede het spoedig gelei tot die verval en gedeeltelike vervreemding van hierdie idee.

Met die totstandkoming van die vier afsonderlike koloniale regerings in Suid-Afrika gedurende die tweede helfte van die

negentiende eeu het ten minste twee uiteenlopende houdings t.o.v. Bantoe-onderwys sig gemanifesteer. In die algemeen het Kaap-Provinsie en Natal 'n gelykwaardige en liberale houding ingeneem terwyl Transvaal en die Oranje-Vrystaat segregerend en onderdrukkend was. Selfs met uniewording het die provinsiale administrasies hulle onderwysstelsels behou en vir 'n lang tydperk tot die laat twintigerjare is hulle tradisionele houdings t.o.v. Bantoe-onderwys behou. Maar ook dit het met die tyd verander.

Die Naturelle Ekonomiese Kommissie van 1930-1932, gevolg deur die Interdepartementele Komitee vir Bantoe-onderwys van 1935-36, het Bantoe-onderwys in 'n nuwe rigting gestuur. 'n Rigting wat gelei het tot die uiteindelijke sentralisasie, vereniging en nasionalisasie van Bantoe-onderwys. Dit was inderdaad die Bantoe-onderwys Wet nr. 47 van 1953 wat tot gevolg gehad het 'n verenigde, gesentraliseerde, nasionale stelsel van Bantoe-onderwys.

Pas na hierdie onderwysstelsel in werking getree het is die voortbestaan daarvan bedreig. In 1963 ingevolge die Wet van 1963 op die Transkeise Konstitusie het daar ontstaan die eerste van die tuisland-regerings met sy eie Departement van Onderwys en Kultuur. Die verbrokkeling van die verenigde stelsel van Bantoe-onderwys is hierdeur beïnvloed en tans is ons in 'n mate terug waar ons jare gelede begin het.

Waar toegegee word dat daar waarde in verandering en aanpassing is, is daar egter besorgdheid dat dié veranderings nie altyd geregverdig was nie en dat dit beslis te spoedig gekom het; dat dit in die reël ingestel is om die gevestigde belange van die Nie-Bantoesprekende persone en groepe te beskerm; en dat in die toepassing daarvan die Bantoe 'n onbeduidende rol gespeel het, dikwels omdat hy óf nie daarby betrokke was nie óf omdat hy akademies te swak ingelig was om enige noemenswaardige bydrae te kon lewer. Dit is en sal steeds bly die plig van hierdie dosent om Bantoe manne en vroue op te lei in die Historiese Opvoedkunde sodat hulle instaat sal wees, inter alia, om intelligent en met kundigheid deel te neem aan die ordening van elke aspek van hulle onderwysstelsel.

TENDENCIES IN THE HISTORY OF BANTU EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

I

It is a well-established custom that on assuming a chair, the new – in my case not so new, and certainly not so young – professor, should be subjected to the ordeal of delivering a public Inaugural Lecture. This exercise, more often than not, affords his colleagues an opportunity to witness his discomfiture and frantic efforts to have it over and done with. Further, it facilitates their putting him, as it were, on the balance, to weigh him, and perhaps to find him wanting, if not in his discipline then certainly in one aspect or another of this exacting oratorical exercise. Of course, they are also keen to know WHAT, HOW and WHY he thinks.

It was nearly twelve years ago, on the 6th October 1961, that the first-ever Bantu professor of Education at the University of the North, Prof. W.M. Kgware, delivered his Inaugural Lecture. It is my privilege to do so tonight, which brings the total to two. Incidentally, both are in the Faculty of Education. Progress in this respect has been slow, the rhythmic pattern shapeless if not altogether non-existent.

Without going into any details at the very outset of this lecture, I must set you at ease, and in this preliminary statement say that WHAT I have been thinking about, and mean to elucidate later, is the progress of education of the Bantu in South Africa throughout the period of a little over 170 years to date. HOW I have been thinking about it, is briefly, yet clearly explained by the phrase "in the perspective of History". WHY I have thought about it, is simply because this development has appeared to me to be rather unorthodox, quite irregular and diversified, backward, to the left, to the right, and back to the centre, nevertheless tending inexorably forward in a more or less clearly definable pattern.

The title of my lecture namely: "Tendencies in the History of Bantu Education in South Africa", therefore seeks to indicate in a concise and precise manner that I am going to try to identify, describe and evaluate in the "court of History" as Jan Romein¹⁾ puts it, some of the different directions in which education for the Bantu has tended. Owing to limitations of the time at my disposal, I shall concern myself with only some of the directions in which the theoretical bases of the education of the Bantu have gone during the period under discussion²⁾. Before I do that, however, allow me just a word on the nature and scope of Historical Pedagogics.

II

Time was, during the last century, when there was really no independent science of Pedagogy because during that time Pedagogy derived from and leaned heavily upon certain philosophical and psychological systems. However, in the 20th century scholars such as M.J. Langeveld,³⁾ C.K. Oberholzer,⁴⁾ C.F.G. Gunter,⁵⁾ and quite recently, F.J. Potgieter and C.B. Swanepoel,⁶⁾ have pushed it forward and given it a *locus standi* among the sciences, having its own scope, content, methods of research, and practitioners.

The history of Education or, more correctly, Historical Pedagogics, is one of the part-disciplines of this science of Pedagogics. The other part-disciplines are Philosophical Pedagogics, Comparative Pedagogics, Empirical Pedagogics, Orthopedagogics and Didactics. Together with Philosophical Pedagogics, Historical Pedagogics often constitutes the course styled Fundamental Pedagogics in some universities.

Reference has been made to the fact that the science of education (Pedagogics) has a point of departure. What is that point of departure? one might well ask. The point of departure for the science of Pedagogy, as also for its part-discipline Historical Pedagogics, is the very phenomenon of education, which is in itself an experience peculiar to human beings only. It is a fact that man, in contrast to the animals, is "a being who has

educated through the centuries and who still educates today, who has been educated and is still being educated, who has offered himself for education and still offers himself, and who has been dependent on education and still is,"⁷⁾ as Prof. I.S.J. Venter puts it. The phenomenological method in Pedagogics and also in Historical Pedagogy is of the essence of this new approach whereby the unity of educational theory and practice is assured (a circumstance that was lacking in the older approach), and the act of education is performed in a pedagogical situation where mature adult and immature child interact one to the other.

It is necessary for me to point out here and now that to me, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Members of Council and Advisory Council, Deans of Faculty, my colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, Historical Pedagogics has a really wide and deep connotation. It is not merely a chronological arrangement of educational happenings, it is not an accumulation of knowledge gathered throughout the ages, not a looking back to so many years but, as Dr. F.J. Potgieter puts it:⁸⁾

„Die historiese pedagogiek is 'n beligting, 'n verheldering, 'n interpretasie en 'n evaluering van die pedagogiese beoëiinge van die mens in die verlede, omdat daaruit meer vrugbare toekomstige pedagogiese handelinge kan voorspruit”.

What are the implications of this stand for the practitioner of Historical Pedagogics? Briefly stated, it means that:⁹⁾

- i. the researcher must expose the past to find a basis for understanding it;
- ii. he must interpret the pedagogical thinking of the past so as to obtain a clearer view of the present and future;
- iii. he must seek to unravel the complexities of past educational systems in order to reveal the possibilities for good or evil that might be found;
- iv. he must seek to secure balance and stability by a synchronization of what is worthy from the past with the

possibilities of renewal which the present offers always, of course, weighed against future requirements; and finally,

- v. he must be able to make abstractions from the past and from these he should be able to sift that which appears worthwhile, study it in depth, and make the lessons available to humanity.

It is not my purpose in this address to give a detailed account of the part played by Historical Pedagogics in the different part disciplines of Pedagogics referred to above. Suffice it to mention that Historical Pedagogics is to a greater or lesser extent basic to all of them, is all-embracing, and ramifies into and among their various aspects, giving them depth and relevance. Any thought of eliminating or minimising its importance in the science of Pedagogy can only elicit grave doubts in the minds of academic historical pedagogicians.

Without belabouring this point, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, I feel it is necessary that I should, even if only in the baldest statement, indicate the value of the study of Historical Pedagogics:

- i. Historical Pedagogics offers a body of knowledge which helps toward the understanding of the present educational scene. It is especially useful in comprehending current educational problems, since all have their roots in the past. Although no claim can be made that Historical Pedagogics can solve these problems, there is no doubt that the scholarly knowledge of the content of Historical Pedagogics and of the methods of historical research has been instrumental in supplying a basis for their solution.
- ii. The role of the various forces in the development of our schools and educational ideas is brought to light in Historical Pedagogics.
- iii. The student gains a multi-dimensional view of educa-

- tion – past and present, national and international.
- iv. Professional consciousness and professional continuity in time are fostered by the study of Historical Pedagogics.
- v. We learn to appreciate the role of teachers, including the great teachers of the past and of our time, in the shaping of the school and society.
- vi. Historical Pedagogics is not only a professional course, it is also a cultural course – one of the few – in the professional curriculum.
- vii. Historical Pedagogy will help to satisfy the curiosity of how we came to be what we are today.
- viii. Historical Pedagogics is of undoubted value to teachers, supervisors, administrators, school psychologists, school nurses, guidance counsellors, deans of students and others or interested in education. It is also of value to prospective specialists in the social sciences who desire depth of knowledge in the field of education.

According to Prof. R. Szeter of the University of Birmingham¹⁰⁾ Philosophy, Psychology and Historical Pedagogy constituted the time-hallowed trinity in "Education" courses and syllabuses. In recent years, however, Sociology has come in to give this trinity a fourth component.¹¹⁾ In the final analysis this is a good acquisition even though there was the fear initially, that it would oust Historical Pedagogics.

The fact is that in our day, the practitioners of Historical Pedagogics and Sociology make use of both socio-pedagogical and historico-social material. This is especially the case in respect of the macro-sociologists of education who in their concern for social structure and change cannot but use historical materials, and many of them have been trained in History. One calls to mind scholars like B. Bailyn, with his excellent books entitled *Education in the Forming of American Society*¹²⁾ and

*Trends in Education*¹³⁾ B. Simon in his book, *The Study of Education*¹⁴⁾, J. Floud in "Educational Sociology",¹⁵⁾ P.W. Musgrave in *Society and Education in England since 1800*,¹⁶⁾ W. Waller in *The Sociology of Teaching, 1918-1944*,¹⁷⁾ O. Banks in *The Sociology of Education*,¹⁸⁾ D.F. Swift, *The Sociology of Education*,¹⁹⁾ etc. etc. Coming nearer home, one would perforce mention that a "marriage" between Sociology and Education is being consolidated in the University of South Africa and in recent times particular sections of papers in Sociology have an educational bias.

As a final point in my exposition of the scope of Historical Pedagogy, I wish to indicate that there is also the tendency to make it, like general history, more comprehensive. In England today there is a lot of thought, talk and action on the new approach to matters educational. Slogans like "the new history" echo and re-echo in the corridors and lecture halls of secondary schools, colleges and universities. I shall refer to only three of the innovations that have come to the fore as regards the content of history, whether general or educational.

First, a far more sophisticated version of *local history* that has cast off the shackles of antiquarianism, that searches into the past centuries of the locality not only for continuities but also for discontinuities, that advances new interpretations of old history, and that studies history at the grass-roots of the locality, has manifested itself. Second, there is the attention given to *comparative history* in which distinctive similarities and dissimilarities among societies are focussed upon and analysed in the hope of finding the same explanatory results. Third, there is the new *social history*, also referred to as "history from below". In this case, use is made of concepts derived from Sociology, Anthropology and Psychology. Its particular value lies in the fact that it directs attention to people whose names never appeared in history. In this way it creates a greater sense of understanding along with a recovery of immediacy. "It quickens

the curiosity of the historian and leads him into the examination of related patterns of 'work' and leisure participation and 'apathy',²⁰⁾ as Asa Briggs points out.

That briefly stated, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, is to my mind, the nature and scope of Historical Pedagogics. It is ever lengthening as we penetrate deeper into the past and edge our way into the future, and ever widening as greater insights into events of the past are gained through research, and more aspects of the life of man are brought into its ambit. The field of vision expands longitudinally from the origin of time to the future, and latitudinally as new and refined methods and further knowledge are acquired, as Prof. P.A. van Jaarsveld also indicates.²¹⁾ The general tendency in history - all history - is to increase both quantitatively and qualitatively.

III

The future is dark, the present is burdensome; only the past, dead and finished, bears contemplation. Those who look upon it have survived it, they are the product, and its victors. No wonder, therefore, that men concern themselves with history.

With this thought Prof. G.R. Elton of Clare College, Cambridge University, England, opens his discussion on the 'Purpose of History'. Although this remark referred to General History, it also has relevance for Historical Pedagogics. Time is past, present and future - yesterday, to-day, tomorrow - three separate aspects of a dimension which are often seen as running into one another. We have, therefore, epigrammatic sayings such as: "Today is yesterday's tomorrow, and tomorrow's yesterday"; and also: "We live not so much in the present as in the future", to mention only two.

Indeed it is only that which as actually happened that is history. The German word *Geschichte*, I believe, comes nearest

to giving an accurate description of this concept. It is this past that can be looked into with a maximum of detachment and objectivity, and a minimum of subjectivity which only blurs the picture. We are involved in the present and all manner of immanent circumstances make it well-nigh impossible for us to contemplate it dispassionately. The future, at any juncture of time, we do not really know. Both the past and the present are involved in the future and we can only conjecture what it may be like: it is dark!

To a very significant extent this interrelatedness of past, present and future has set the minds of certain historians on a course to discover the purpose of world history. As a result of this exercise two main conceptions of history have emerged,²²⁾ namely, the linear and the cyclic. The linear (eschatological) view supposes that world history as a whole moves in a straight line of progress. Lapses, back-trackings and movements to left and right might interrupt the main line of advance yet the main line of advance can be plotted. On the other hand the cyclic explanation of the progress of world history postulates the theory that societies develop and decay, to be replaced by others which follow much the same pattern. Prof. A.J. Toynbee is today's best-known exponent of the cyclic conception of world history. To him the primary rhythm of civilization can be represented by a circle – a big wheel – with its component parts of genesis, growth, breakdown and disintegration. Within this primary rhythm there are three secondary rhythms – three small wheels – namely, "challenge and response", which is important in the birth of civilizations; "withdrawal and return", which is important in the growth of civilizations; and "rout and rally", which is important in the breakdown and disintegration of civilizations.²³⁾ Visualized as a whole, Toynbee sees the movement of history as the movement of "wheels within wheels" much the same as the wheels, from the big one to the fly-wheel in a clock, move and react to the levers and pulleys in it.

I want to suggest, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, that there is discernable in the history of education for the Bantu in South Africa, viewed as a whole, from its inception up to the recent past, a tendency, a movement, a progression which is somewhat cyclic. Without stretching the imagination too far one can see the primary rhythm with its variations of birth, development, decline and disappearance in the system as a whole. It is also possible to identify secondary rhythms operating within the ambit of the big wheel of the primary rhythm – little wheels within the big wheel – which mutually accelerate or retard each other's speed as well as that of the big wheel.

IV

Having regard to the limited time at my disposal Mr. Vice-Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, I shall, as pointed out above, confine my discussion to the theoretical bases of the history of education for the Bantu in South Africa. It is the various natures and purposes, goals, aims of the education of the Bantu, viewed historically against the social background in South Africa on which I shall focus attention.

As far as I am aware almost the entire historiography on the formal education of the Bantu in South Africa, whether published or unpublished, witnesses to the fact that its beginnings, its genesis birth was due to the missionaries. It must be conceded, however, that the Bantu's informal education by the European took place during their fleeting contacts in the fifteenth century before the permanent settlement of the Cape by the Dutch in the seventeenth century and, of course, before the advent of the Moravian missionaries in the early eighteenth century and Van der Kemp in 1799.

These early trade-inspired contacts resulted in the development of attitudes that were originally determined by the historical circumstances which might be characterized as mutually inimical, if not hostile; no wonder no attempt was made by the Portuguese,

as far as I know, to embark upon a programme of formal education for the Bantu.

The attitudes of the Dutch frontiersmen were more or less the same as those of the Portuguese, when they first made contact with the Bantu on the banks of the Fish River in 1770. The first noticeable tendency resulting from trading excursions, therefore, was to *exclude* the Bantu from their institutions of education and culture. The pendulum started off from a position farthest removed from a position of amity and goodwill. The first tendency was to isolate the Bantu.

But the tendency on the part of Europeans to ward off and isolate so-called primitive peoples was not peculiar to the Cape Dutch. It was, in fact, a world-wide phenomenon which arose out of the primary rhythm of history which set in motion the voyages of exploration and discovery of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The histories of America, Africa and Asia, about this time, are replete with instances of this nature. Paradoxical as it may sound, according to G.D. Scholtz, the Christian religion also was indirectly responsible for the rejection of the heathen by some Christians.²⁴⁾ On the whole about this time the attitude of the Christian Dutch frontiersmen was that they should not have their lives contaminated by an intimate contact with the indigenous heathen Bantu. On the other hand the Bantu themselves were openly hostile towards the competing frontiersmen who disputed their grazing rights in the eastern Cape. Questions of economic differences led to two bloody wars between 1770 and 1799, which practically precluded the preaching of the Gospel and the introduction of the arts of civilized life among the AmaXhosa.

V.

The second tendency in the development of education for the Bantu was inspired by the eighteenth century evangelical revival in England and the subsequent advent of Dr. van der Kemp of the London Missionary Society at the Cape in 1799. It swung the

pendulum in the direction of involvement of the *Christian missionaries* in the evangelization of the Bantu, the AmaXhosa in particular. One of the subsidiary factors that had been responsible for the isolation of the heathen AmaXhosa up to 1799, namely, christianity, now easily dominated the history of the education of the Bantu for practically half a century until 1854, during which time altogether nine missionary societies established mission stations all over the Cape Colony.

The nature of the education that the missionaries offered was predominantly religious, calculated to win the Bantu for God, and rid them of their heathen beliefs and customs. So keen were the missionaries to use education as an instrument of exorcism that they took no note of the deep-seated religious feelings of the Bantu: if anything they condemned their beliefs openly. Dr. P.A.W. Cook in his book dealing with the education of the Mbovana tribe in the district of Elliot pointed out how strenuously sections of the tribe resisted the attempts of missionaries to change their beliefs and customs. In derision they called those who were converted "Amaqoboka" (those who had cracked up) and generally opposed education and all attempts at civilizing them.

Despite the opposition referred to, christianity gained a foothold among the AmaXhosa and gradually the missionaries succeeded in making the Bantu look down upon their ancient customs and beliefs. Whilst we appreciate the work done by the missionaries, it must be admitted that they failed to make possible the preservation of Bantu culture and the development of the Bantu personality.²⁵⁾

Whereas the contact of the Bantu with the European in the first instance had tended towards *dissociative interaction*, now however, he was made a stranger to many of his own beliefs and customs. In the short eighty years during which European civilization and education had been introduced among the Bantu, the pendulum had swung from the one extreme to the other, from

dissociative interaction to a state resembling religious integration.

VI.

The third noticeable tendency in the history of education for the Bantu manifested itself when the various colonial governments took some part in the control of education of the Bantu. Thus in the Cape Province under the guidance of Governor Sir George Grey the nature of education was changed from a religious-sectarian to secular humanistic one. It was the civilizing and training of the Bantu that was the first concern of Governor Grey. To achieve this he was ready to subsidize those institutions "that would undertake to train Bantu youth in industrial occupations and fit them to act as interpreters, evangelists and school masters among their own people".²⁶⁾

Just about this time, in 1858, a select committee of the Natal Colonial Government also expressed itself in favour of humanistic education for the Bantu, the idea being that if they (the Bantu) were trained in industrial occupations they would be more readily amenable to civilization even as their counterparts in the Cape Colony were.²⁷⁾

As the Orange Free State and the Transvaal Voortrekkers were still very busily engaged in the conquest and subjugation of the tribes they had met in the areas north of the Vaal River during the early fifties of the nineteenth century, their attitudes towards the Bantu were reminiscent of those of their initial contacts with the AmaXhosa in the eighteenth century. On the whole *dissociative interaction* between Boer and Bantu was all that was allowed in these areas at that time.

Educational development in the four Colonies, the Cape, Transvaal, Natal and Orange Free State, tended to be uneven right up to 1910 when Union was achieved. Generally, the Cape made more rapid progress in the education of the Bantu, followed by Natal, then the Transvaal and, lastly, the Orange Free State.

On the whole the attitude of the European Governments towards the education of the Bantu was liberal in the Cape and Natal and repressive in the Transvaal and Orange Free State.

VII.

The year 1910 is significant not only in the history of education of the Europeans but also in the history of education of the Bantu in South Africa. It marks the end of an epoch – the end of phase of birth – and the beginning of the period of growth or development in the history of education in South Africa as a whole. It also introduced the fourth tendency in education of the Bantu, the *nationalization* of education.

That there was need to reconcile the divergent policies of the four Colonies that constituted the Union of South Africa in 1910, in so far as these affected, *inter alia*, the education of the Bantu, was the concensus of opinion at the time. In its wisdom the National Convention that had to grapple with the problem, among others, decided that for a period of five years and thereafter till Parliament otherwise provided, a federal system of educational control in the Union should be adopted. The implication was that education was unfortunately divorced from general policy, though the two were indeed largely interwoven one with the other.

But education has a role to play in determining in which direction a society will develop. Many, therefore, felt that in the compromise settlement agreed to by the Convention an opportunity had been allowed to slip by which would have made it possible to embark upon a meaningful system of education for the Bantu. There were, therefore, bitter complaints over this lack of resolution. However, within twenty years the lack of a goal-directed system of education for the Bantu – a system which would help to solve, among other things, the economic problems of the country – was so keenly felt that it was necessary for the Government to appoint the Native Economic Commission of 1930-1932.

The significance of the recommendations of this Commission

was to be found in its stressing of the need for the industrial training of the Bantu, and the introduction of an education that would make them *socially useful* and *nationally proud*. Many had felt that for a long time the education of the Bantu was wrongly orientated. It was too literary, and had little relevance to his life in the South African Bantu community. They pointed out that it was about time that the Bantu stood on his own legs, and be less of a burden to the European.

Social usefulness, national pride and economic independence were the concepts bandied about for the next four years in discussions on the education of the Bantu. Many believed that education was now tending, even in this transition period, in the correct direction. The climate of thought in the country was healthy and hopes were high. It is noteworthy that we had returned to the suggestions first made in the mid-nineteenth century.

Alas! nothing worthwhile was done to implement the aims of education suggested by the Commission. However, in 1935 it became urgently necessary to do something about setting the education of the Bantu on a national footing. An Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education was appointed in 1935. In 1936 they reported back to the Minister and pointed out that because of *social changes* the Bantu as a whole were in a dilemma about the nature and purpose of their education. They did not know whether they should look forward to absorption into the white community with its western culture, or preserve their own culture at all costs. A third alternative was whether they should seek to effect a blending of the Bantu and European elements of culture in trying to find a solution.

It was thus clear to the Committee that two opposing views and one compromise suggestion about the purposes and aims of the education of the Bantu were to be found in South Africa. These views were representative of "European Equalists" like Dr. Edgar Brookes, and others who believed that there was no need to enumerate aims of the education of the Bantu child which

were different from those of the European child. In the final analysis they were similar. On the other hand there were the "Segregationists" who were convinced that Bantu culture was inferior, but contained possibilities which, if developed, would make it possible for the Bantu to cope with modern conditions in South Africa and the world. It was, therefore, necessary to provide an education different in purpose and content from that of the European.

That purpose was set out in the careful phraseology of Dr. H. Jowitt, a European educationist of some experience in the education of the Bantu, namely:²⁹⁾

The effective organization of the African's experiences so that his tendencies and powers may develop in a manner satisfactory to himself and the community in which he lives, by the growth of socially desirable knowledge, attitudes and skills.

This careful formulation of the aim of education of the Bantu took note of the fact that it was likely to be accepted by the three main schools of thought only if there were a compromise. It was therefore tentative and adjustable to the changing circumstances of a developing country and the restless, ambitious Bantu people themselves. It allowed of individual self-actualization but did not exclude social efficiency and, finally, it would provide for the development of the mind, body and soul. For the next thirteen years the education of the Bantu was steered along the course set out by the Welsh Committee in the above formulation.

VIII.

Development in South Africa towards nationhood had meanwhile been going on apace. Behind the back were milestones in the constitutional development of South Africa like the Statue of Westminster of 1931³⁰⁾ and its amendment through the Status

Act of 1934.³¹⁾ Thus it was that every effort of the Government in and after the thirties was geared towards the building and consolidation of the Afrikaner sovereign state. Sovereign independence with all the implications was the goal.

The educational systems of necessity also came into the picture. Indeed, it is a fact that the relation between society and education constitutes a two-way street. Says Boilyn, "Education not only reflects and adjusts society; (but) once formed it turns back upon it and acts upon it".³²⁾

The *ad hoc* and tentative character of the aims of the education of the Bantu even during this transition stage in the development towards a national system of education, satisfied neither the Bantu themselves nor the Government for any length of time. Serious debates on the more or less permanent placement of the Bantu in South African politics, economics and society were engaged in not only in Parliament but also in various conferences held all over the country in the periods between 1936 and 1938 and 1946 and 1948.

There was also the Second World War of 1939-1945 and the subsequent period of reconstruction with its inevitable upsurge of feeling that the educational system needed to be reformed. The idea was, *inter alia*, to enable all bright young men and women, not only those returning from the war, but also those from the lower socio-economic groups, to go as far through the educational system as their ability would carry them.³³⁾

Three years after the end of hostilities, in fact in 1948, the National Party won a parliamentary general election on the platform of *apartheid* or the political separation of the white and the black races in South Africa. One of the first projects attended to by the new National Government was the education of the Bantu. With this in view the Commission on Native Education, under the chairmanship of Dr. W.W.M. Eiselen, was appointed. *inter alia*, to concern itself with:³⁴⁾

The formulation of the principles and aims of education for Natives as an independent race, in which their past and present, their inherent racial qualities, their distinctive characteristics and aptitudes are taken into consideration.

A careful discussion of the general principles of education, which included a reference to the education of the Bantu, was first undertaken by the Commission. As a result of this the Commission gave as its considered opinion the following formulation of the aims of education of the Bantu, set forth in two parts:³⁵⁾

- (a) From the point of view of the whole society the aim of Bantu education is the development of a modern, progressive culture with social institutions which will be in harmony with one another, with the evolving conditions of life to be met in South Africa, and with the schools which must serve as effective agents in this process of development.
- (b) From the point of view of the individual the aims of education are the development of character and intellect, and the equipping of the child for his future work and surroundings.

With a view to ensuring that a national system of education would be realized as expeditiously as possible, the Commission recommended that the vernacular of the pupils be used as medium of instruction in their primary schools. In Parliament the debates on the Bill to introduce the system of Bantu Education were long and often quite acrimonious. However, the National Government won through and in 1953 the Bantu Education Act, No. 47 of 1953, was placed on the statute book, and a national Bantu system of Education under the Minister of Native Affairs, came into being. Such aims and purposes as were suggested by the Eiselen Commission were basic to every aspect of this system of Bantu education.

In many quarters it was felt that the slip-up of the 1909 National Convention had been corrected and that the final goal of the

education of the Bantu had been reached. It had been a long and hard pull, but it was worth the effort because *nationalization* was an accomplished fact. And when in 1958 a separate department of state, designated the Department of Bantu Education, was established, there was every assurance that this system of education had come to stay.

IX.

In the political sphere the programme for the implementation of the policy of apartheid, although running behind that of education was making steady progress. The AmaXhosa of the Transkei were the first Bantu nation under a homeland territorial authority to be granted partial self-government in terms of the Transkei Constitution Act of 1963. In subsequent years this partial self-government was extended to the other territorial authorities so that by 1971 all but the Swazis of the Republic had been granted self-government.

As a result of these developments in the political sphere another tendency in the history of education for the Bantu, namely, the fragmentation of Bantu education manifests itself and we are back to a position very much resembling that of the provincial system of control. Education is one of the services entrusted to these new administrations, and is vested in a Department of Education, Culture and Sport, the political head of which is a Bantu Minister.

The Central Department of Bantu Education still exists. Its main functions are (1) to direct and control the education of the Bantu who are resident in the European urban areas; and (2) to be responsible for the professional control and coordination of the functions of the homeland departments of education, culture and sport.

X.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, ladies and gentlemen, in the foregoing presentation an attempt was made, as I promised, to indicate

WHAT I have been thinking about. As to HOW I have thought about it, I am certain you have, at this stage, made up your mind. It remains for me, only very briefly, in these concluding remarks to show WHY I have been thinking about WHAT I have described in the way (i.e. HOW) I have thought about it.

I mean to give only three reasons. The first is that I have been impressed by the *lack of consistency* in the aims and purposes of the education of the Bantu particularly during the first century and a half of its existence, i.e. 1800-1953. Of course, it was to be expected in a developing country, itself seeking out a way into the future and beset with problems arising not only from the differences in the world view of the two dominant white races in South Africa, but also out of the necessity to deal justly with the masses of Bantu in the country. However, it is the *rapidity* with which the changes took place that has been impressive. Altogether *six* different outlooks on the education of the Bantu alternated with each other during these 150 years – an average of one different set of aims and purposes of education for the Bantu every generation of ± 25 years. It meant six different beginnings, indeed very wasteful in terms of human effort!

And what of the prospect of permanence that came with the Bantu Education Act No. 47 of 1953? Well, that also, I believe, will be a thing of history in the not too distant future. In the various homelands new beginnings are being made as each ethnic group seeks to work out its own destiny within the South African community. This will by no means be the end. There will of necessity have to be adjustments to the changing circumstances in our dynamic world. The lessons of history are clear. Nation states that consisted of two or more divergent groups are born and grow, consolidate their unity, proceed to fragmentation regroup themselves and so repeat the performance. On their subsequent repeat performances they then have usually learnt the lessons of history and started off from a basis higher up on the spiral of progress which Giambattista Vico referred to.³⁶⁾ Very careful,

purposeful, educational planning is priority number one for the homeland governments if we are to avoid the mistakes of the past.

The second reason why I have thought along these lines is because we have witnessed how throughout all these years it was the *vested interest* of people, groups and communities outside of the Bantu community which, as far as it was humanly possible, determined the lines along which, as well as the degree to which, the Bantu should develop. More often than not these vested interests stemmed from the conviction that it was essential to preserve the relation pattern of superordination-subordination as between the European and Bantu races in South Africa.

One must concede the point that it is not an easy thing for a nation to deny itself and its children the advantages that it has acquired by the sweat of its brow. One has only to read the book of Du Preez van Zyl³⁷⁾ (to mention but one) to realize how, in the sphere of education and culture, the Afrikaner race struggled against vested interests during the period 1806 to 1915 to be able to register its first worthwhile educational achievement in the Cape Province. However, when one takes into consideration the fact that progress of the education of the Bantu was made the bone of contention in the segregation-integration controversies of the white political parties whilst the Bantu stood by helpless without being meaningfully involved in an issue as vital as this, then you will understand why I was moved to think in this way.

As things are today, Bantu education, in the main, need not always be dependent on the caprice of individuals outside and remote from it. The prospects in this regard are encouraging. Would that individual and sectional interests among the Bantu themselves are not allowed to retard the progress of their education at whatever level it is offered!

My third reason stems from the one given above. It is significant that this non-involvement of the Bantu in the determination of the nature and aims of his education arose from the fact that, more often than not, he was *not deeply concerned*. So much was

his attention focussed on bread and butter issues, the immanent present, the immediate future and the felt need that, on the whole, he was resigned to the circumstances of leaving these problems to people and instances outside of his community.

A much worse indictment is that very few even of the intellectuals among the Bantu were really academically interested in education and history as such. Perhaps as a result of background, ability and predilection, most studies at masters and doctoral levels were taken in Bantu languages and Anthropology, mainly. A close study of Education and History as well as academic training in historiography were neglected. It is not to be wondered that, except in a very small minority of cases, when evidence was laid before Government commissions of enquiry into the education of the Bantu, such evidence never really got down to the grassroots of the problems to be solved, the issues raised and principles to be adopted. It appears to me that it will be some time before we can hope to have available a sufficient number of academic historians and Historical Pedagogicians. Dr. T.S. van Rooyen is correct when he asserts in this connection that:³⁸⁾

Aangesien die opleiding van die Bantoe in die geskiedeniswetenskap nog reser is, is dit te wagte dat die oes aan historici in dié verband nog klein sal wees.

It was more than half a century ago, in 1916, that Fort Hare University was established. Since then two other university institutions for Bantu students exclusively have been brought to life. Between the three universities more than 3000 Bantu graduates have been produced. The statement of Dr. van Rooyen is not only a serious indictment of the past graduates of these universities, but also a challenge to the many more to come. Eight of seventeen masters and/or doctoral degrees in Education awarded to Bantu scholars by the University of South Africa, as far as I know, were presented by only five Bantu men. Prof. Dr. (the late) M.O.M. Seboni presented two other works. Viewed at in terms of the 3000 graduates referred to, not to mention the

18+ million Bantu in our land, it is a mere drop in the ocean. Too few people make a study of the education of the Bantu, and thus they cannot hope to make a worthwhile contribution to determine the direction in which it is best that it should develop. The challenge is clear! I have accepted it.

XI

Mr. Vice-Chancellor,
Members of Council and Advisory Council,
Colleagues,

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to every one of the authorities connected with this University for my nomination to the Chair in History of Education.

I will continue to devote myself, to the best of my ability, to the promotion of the study of Education, and in this way fulfil my duty to the University and the Bantu people.

With these words do I, honoured Mr. Vice-Chancellor, accept the Chair in History of Education in the University of the North.

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