



# Knowledge for the people: Understanding the complex heritage of colonial education in South Africa

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*“Educating the culturally different (whether difference is conceived of in terms of social class or cultural background) must not involve an attack on their culture. To organise such an education and yet not simultaneously further disadvantage the children we are trying to help is the major issue for education today”<sup>1</sup>*

## Abstract

The decolonisation of education seems to require a clear understanding of the colonial education heritage in South Africa and an understanding of the emergent global trends that shaped policy and practice from the 19th century. This paper explores the origins of educational discourses and practices that emerged in England and formed the basis of colonial practices. It focuses on emergent policies aimed at educating the working classes in the industrial heartland, which came to influence the literate or scientific culture in the Cape during that time. It explores the hitherto neglected issue of the ideas and resources deployed in both contexts, with particular reference to printed materials that shaped that culture in the process of framing a secular and scientific culture in schools and popular culture of literacy amongst working-class people in the metropolis and African subject/citizens in the colonial context. It also traces gradual attempts to introduce a culture of

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<sup>1</sup>D Layton, *Science for the people: the origins of the school science curriculum in England* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1973), p. 187, citing DM Shipman, “The unbridgeable gap”, *The Times educational supplement* 30 June 1972.

literacy which embraced the African language and culture. These educational developments related to children's schooling and the popular education of adults helped shape the state-controlled mass education system that emerged during the 20th century. This paper aims to begin an exploration of the complex dynamics of that process and open the way for further research on these neglected issues.

## The issue

Ever since the 1980s, South Africans have talked about Peoples' education and enjoyed a kind of educational romance with the idea of promoting an 'indigenous' mode of education that would finally restore dignity to learning and schooling for the majority of South Africans in the wake of the colonial and apartheid historical experiences. All these innovations need to be understood as part of a multitude of progressive initiatives aimed at extending the remit of education to include the previously poor and the disadvantaged or the 'culturally excluded'. Yet after the heroic efforts to identify the concept of alternative education and to forge new practices in the heyday of the worker education movement associated with the FOSATU labour federation,<sup>2</sup> the ANC's initiatives regarding 'education in exile'<sup>3</sup> and the United Democratic Front (UDF) linked People's Education movement,<sup>4</sup> the idea of an alternative or radical education appropriate to the general knowledge of the "common man" in a modern democracy, which reaches beyond the boundaries of the traditional state curriculum, has fallen into neglect.<sup>5</sup> The current call for the 'Decolonisation of the Curriculum' in Universities, and schools, associated with the #FeesmustFall Movement, reminds us of the need to attend to these issues, if only to clarify what we mean by such demands. My suggestion is that a close examination of the history of colonial education might provide insights into these complex educational policy issues.

In search of answers to these questions, I have undertaken a preliminary enquiry into the history of 'radical education'. If such an enquiry is to be analytically useful, it needs to be set against the background of a wide literature which embraces more than a century of debate related to the emergence of popular literacy and education internationally. Those

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2 L Seftel, "Worker education in the 70s", *African Perspective*, 24, 1984, pp. 86–98. Linda Cooper, *Workers education in the global south* (Leiden, Neth., Kroninklijke Brill, 2020).

3 S Morrow, B Maaba & L Pulumani, *Education in exile: SOMAFCO and the ANC school in Tanzania, 1878–1992* (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2004); R Govender, "The contestation, ambiguities and dilemmas of curriculum development at the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, 1978 to 1992". (PhD dissertation, UWC, 2011).

4 G Kruss, *People's education: an examination of the concept* (Cape Town, CASE, UWC, 1988); *People's education for teachers*: Proceedings of a conference held at UWC, 1987 (Bellville, UWC, 1987); P Kallaway, "From Bantu education to people's education in South Africa", N Entwistle, *Handbook of educational ideas and practices* (London, Routledge, 1990), pp. 230–241.

5 On a slightly different note, the more recent call of the National Research Foundation (NRF) for research on Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) has largely gone unheeded! See South Africa: Department of Science and Technology, *Indigenous knowledge systems* (Pretoria, DST, 2015); CO Hoppers, *Culture, indigenous knowledge and development* (Braamfontein, South Africa: Centre for Educational Policy Development, 2005).

contests over the form, shape and means of education relevant to various geographical and historical contexts can be traced to the struggles for working-class education during the industrial revolution in 19th-century Britain, the Progressive Education era in the USA from the late 19th century to the 1960s, and a variety of educational proposals associated with the post-colonial context in the Third World. Limits of space make it difficult to extend the consideration to those radical education experiments of the post-war era in Latin America (particularly Cuba) and the impact of Paulo Freire's work<sup>6</sup> or the advent of African independence as reflected in *Education for Self-Reliance* in Julius Nyerere's Tanzania, or Patrick van Rensburg's *Education with Production* in Botswana and Zimbabwe, but these initiatives all provide part of the framework for this enquiry.<sup>7</sup>

In relation to South Africa, these strands fed into struggles against racially segregated education for a century before the advent of apartheid but were particularly central to the anti-apartheid movement in the years after the 1976 SOWETO uprising. To what extent has that rich legacy of educational ferment shaped the post-1994 dispensation in South Africa's educational policy? How can we engage with this legacy in the current crisis over the call for the decolonisation of education in South Africa?

In a preliminary attempt to engage with these issues, I explore the nature of the educational experience for those who went to school or acquired access to modern forms of education from the 1830s to the 1940s. The enquiry refers to England and the Cape Colony/Cape Province, with further brief references beyond that period up to apartheid education (to the 1950s) in relation to the history of black education in South Africa. In very broad terms, such an investigation raises questions about the aims of formal education in the context of the modern global capitalist order. Has schooling for the masses in that context been about social control, surveillance and conformity,<sup>8</sup> or has it been motivated

6P Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972); R Mackie (ed.), *Literacy and revolution: the pedagogy of Paulo Freire* (London, Pluto Press, 1980); CA Torres, *The politics of non-formal education in Latin America* (New York, Praeger, 1990); T & P Noguera (eds.), *Social justice for teachers. Paulo Freire and education as a possible dream* (The Hague, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers, 2009).

7J Nyerere, *Education for Self-Reliance* (Dar es Salaam, Government Printer, 1967); P van Rensburg, *Report from Swaneng Hill* (Stockholm, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 1974); J McLaughlin, *Education with production in Zimbabwe: the story of ZIMFEP* (Harare, ZIMFEP, 2002); K Shillington, *Patrick van Rensburg; rebel, visionary, and radical educationalist* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2020); K Shillington, *Patrick van Rensburg: rebel, visionary and radical Educationist: a biography* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2020).

8M Carnoy, *Education as cultural imperialism* (New York, David McKay, 1974); M Foucault, *The essential Foucault: selected works from 1954–1984* (ed. by P Rabinow & N Rose (New York, 2003); P Bourdieu, *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (London, SAGE, 1977/1990); S Bowles, *Schooling in capitalist America; educational reforms and the contradiction of economic life* (London, RKP, 1976).

by humanitarian or democratic currents in modern society aimed at empowering citizens to engage with the political, economic and cultural challenges of the modern world? Or a (seemingly contradictory) combination/mixture of these? To put it another way, it seems crucial to ask whether the form, shape, and intention of education on the part of various communities of educational provision was similar or different in the imperial heartland to that experienced in the colonial context. *In essence, what were the linkages and ambiguities of modern educational practices at 'home' and in the colonial context during the period under review, and how did they change in different contexts over time?*

I assume that the history of the modern school and the classroom experience, which is often very difficult to research, can be, to some extent, illuminated by looking at the materials available for teachers and students, inside and outside the classroom, at particular times and in various circumstances. Equally important, though given less emphasis here, is the question of the relationship between educational theory or philosophy of education, and the dynamics of society and school community, in shaping that culture of the classroom or forums for adult education.

The initial focus of this historical exploration will be on the nature of educational changes in the imperial heartland. Who went to school? What did children learn in schools? How did the curriculum change for working-class children in England over the 19th century due to the industrial revolution, wide-scale urbanisation, and the emergence of radical working-class politics of various kinds? I am particularly interested in tracking how school knowledge comes to be constructed in contexts where state education is weak and notions of curriculum and school literature/textbooks are much more flexible than they were to become in a later age of close government planning and control of mass state education.

One avenue for understanding what was occurring in colonial mission schools in the Cape during the 19th century seems to be to examine what was occurring in relation to the growth of literacy and popular education in England at the same time—what educational ideas were about, what the controls were on the provision of popular education, what the links were between the religious and secular curriculum, what pedagogy was used, what materials were available, who the teachers were and how were they trained/educated, and how various aspects of policy shifted over time. An essential index of these changes seems to be investigating the textbooks or primers used in public schools. Who produced them, under what circumstances, how were they selected and funded, and how did curricula change from a religious to a secular focus by the end of the century in the context of state education promoted by the English Education Reform Act of 1870?

While it is impossible to assume any direct correspondence between the climate of educational opinion in England during the 19th century and what was occurring in the British colonies in South Africa, some comparison provides a sense of the context in which South African state and mission educators operated. Just as there had been a dominant influence of the church in popular education in early 19th-century England, in the colonial context, African education was managed by the Missions (mainly Anglican and Nonconformist) throughout the colonial period. However, that influence had to a degree, been adapted to the requirements of government policy from as far back as 1839 when the state Department of Public Education was established in the Cape.

Where the focus in the first section of this article is on the gradual shift from exclusively religious education for working-class children in early 19th-century England to a secular and science-based curriculum by the end of the period, my focus in the second section is to extend this agenda to include the development of a print culture in the Cape which also included the dominant indigenous language, isiXhosa, for school and adult readership.<sup>9</sup> In both cases, there was a move away from an exclusively Christian subject matter towards the production of secular literature aimed at an expanding readership and one which began to embrace the idea of educating citizens/subjects/workers rather than focussing exclusively on issues of proselytisation or moral behaviour. In the case of early 19th-century England (as distinct from the United Kingdom in general), the subjects of educational reform were the citizens/subjects of the modern state/capitalist economy with a single home language. In the Cape, they were the colonised subjects of a colonial state who spoke diverse languages and embraced diverse cultures and histories.

I will conclude by briefly referring to other educational experiments, such as the Adult Night Schools Movement in Cape Town and Johannesburg during the 1930s to 1940s which promoted radical traditions of worker education that had their origins in English and European trade union and socialist education. These endeavours were continued in the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) Night Schools in working-class areas during the 1950s and 1960s, where they sought to serve the educational needs of the newly urbanised black working class until they were closed by government decree in the early apartheid years. Such initiatives raise questions about the potential significance of these radical education legacies for the post-1994 educational settlement.

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<sup>9</sup>A significant issue in the Cape was the use of two “settler languages” in schools, English and Dutch (Afrikaans). This is not an issue that can be taken up here. see EG Malherbe, *History of education in South Africa* Vol I & II (Cape Town, Juta, 1924/1977).

## The changing nature of popular education in England during the 19th century

Any study of school knowledge in South Africa needs to be based on an understanding of the emergence of a mass education system in Britain, Europe and the USA during the 19th century, as educational thinking in the colonial context of the Cape and Natal was necessarily based on the ideas, practices and policies emerging in the colonial heartland.

The study of the emergence of the English education system from the 18th century, and the eventual emergence of a mass education system (for elementary education in 1870 and secondary education by the 1940s), attracted a great deal of attention in the post-War years. This interest has been linked to the need to understand the multiple aspects and origins of that system in terms of the contestation over policies followed, the chosen curriculum's content, and the pedagogy associated with these. The debates about the nature of knowledge to be promoted in schools provided a focus for philosophers and historians since the Enlightenment. Still, these debates have not always attended to the context in which these practices evolved or to the influence of the social and political environment on schools and communities. European philosophical enquiries focussed on what education was appropriate to the Enlightenment world. Influential participants in those debates included Comenius (1592–1670), Herbart (1776–1841), JJ Rousseau (1712–1778), Pestalozzi (1746–1827), Montessori (1870–1952), and many others. Durkheim gives us a unique set of insights into how education was dealt with in the context of late 18th-century revolutionary France, perhaps marking the first time that such issues had been posed concerning immediate issues of radical political change.<sup>10</sup>

In England, the Industrial Revolution and the rise of popular resistance from the 1830s, particularly the movements associated with Chartism, led to a ferment in educational theory and practice. This provided fertile soil for the work of social reformers like Jeremy Bentham, Robert Owen, James Mill, Joseph Hume, William Wilberforce, Joseph Lancaster, Arthur Roebuck and Henry Brougham.<sup>11</sup> In keeping with the best Enlightenment traditions, “it was believed that, as individuals could have their characters formed for them by society, so society itself could be improved and even perfected by a well-designed education system

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<sup>10</sup>E Durkheim, *The evolution of educational thought: lectures on the formation and development of secondary education in France* (translated by Peter Collins) (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977). I am grateful to Michael Young for pointing me to this source.

<sup>11</sup> See WAC Stewart, *Progressives and radicals in English education 1750–1970* (London, Macmillan, 1972).

shaping its citizens “.<sup>12</sup> The work of Harold Silver, Brian Simon, JM Goldstrom, Michael Sanderson, Jonathan Rose, Richard Johnson, David Layton, and many others relating to 19th-century England provides rich literature on these developments, which will be very briefly referred to below.<sup>13</sup>

Whig reformers were initially active in establishing the Infant School Movement in London under Henry Brougham’s mentorship and subsequently concerning the Lancastrian Movement and the Mechanics Institute Movement. They increasingly pressed the cause of state intervention in the education of the lower orders, and their influence through the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK)<sup>14</sup> and many other organisations contributed to the great surveys of state education in 1816, 1818, 1834 and 1861.<sup>15</sup> By 1861 there were over 2,5 million children in Public Elementary Schools, with 80% formal literacy rates for boys by 1871.<sup>16</sup> Government expenditure on elementary

12 M Sanderson, *Education, economic change and society 1780–1870* (London, Macmillan, 1983), pp. 49.

13 There is a very large and impressive body of literature on the topic : see in particular : H Silver, *The concept of popular education* (London, Methuen, 1965); H Silver, *Education as history* (London: Methuen, 1983); P & H Silver, *The education of the poor: The history of the national school 1824-1974* (London, 1974); P McCann (ed.), *Popular education and socialisation in the nineteenth century* (London, Methuen, 1977); B Simon, *The two nations and educational structure, 1780–1870* (London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1974); JM Goldstrom, *Education: elementary education 1780–1900* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1972); *The social context of education 1808–1870* (Totowa, NJ., Rowman & Littlefield, 1972); RK Webb, *The British working class reader 1790–1848* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1955); Sanderson (1983); D Layton, (1973); J Rose, *The intellectual life of the British working class* (New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 2001).

14 It is worth noting that the provenance of these terms and the notion of a “society for useful knowledge” which focused on the promotion of scientific information can be traced back to the sixteenth and seventeenth century Enlightenment and the works of Francis Bacon and others. It also had a long history in the context of Benjamin Franklin’s advancement of the Enlightenment in colonial North America. According to Lyons these endeavours provided the basis for the foundation of “the great land grant universities created under the Morrill Act of 1862 to provide training in agriculture and the mechanical arts “to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life”. This “useful knowledge prized expediency, utilitarian value, common sense and human experience over formalised book learning”. See J Lyons, *The society for useful knowledge* (London, Bloomsbury Press, 2014), pp 95–110; 142; 170–71; D Vincent, “The Modern History of Literacy”, J Rury & EH Tamura, *The Oxford handbook of history of education* (Oxford, OUP, 2019)

15 BPP: 2318 (1816–18) : *Report of the commission on the education of the lower orders in the metropolis and beyond (Brougham Report)* ; BPP (572)(1834) : *Report of the parliamentary committee on the state of education* ; BPP VII, (1838) : *Report of the Committee on the best means of providing useful education for the poorer classes*; J Kay-Shuttleworth, *Recent measure for the promotion of education in England* (London: Ridgeway, 1839); BPP (177)(1839) *Creation of the committee of council for education*; PP XXI (5)(1861) *Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the state of popular education in England* (Newcastle Commission).

16 M Sanderson, *Education, economic change and society 1780–1870*, p.17; Goldstrom, (1972), pp. 193–4.

education increased from £193 000 in 1850 to £834 000 in 1861.<sup>17</sup>

The changes and reforms did not emerge naturally from the existing social order – they were the outcomes of extensive struggles at various levels of society. Even if these debates were generally informed by broader philosophical enquiries, the critical developments in educational policy did not result solely from educational theorising and intellectual debate but from the hurly-burly of political contestation in this period of radical change. In broad outline, Richard Johnson argues that the foundations of a system of state-controlled secular education had been laid by the 1840s and that from that time until the passing of the Education Act of 1870, when the state took on the responsibility for mass elementary education, there was essentially a process of extending the quantity and quality of the provision.<sup>18</sup>

In summary, a key aspect of the debates around these issues has been the division between those who wish to explain the provision of education as part of an attempt to ward off radical change by the increasingly organised working class in the urban industrial areas and those who saw the social reforms through education as a means to extending democratic rights and human dignity in a society increasingly divided by class divisions. It is important to note that similar parallels can be observed in consideration of the debates about colonial education at a later time where there were a variety of protagonists—some of whom wished to see schooling as a mechanism of control over colonised peoples and others who conceived of education as part of the inevitable process of modernisation which provided access to useful skills or the rudiments of literacy and numeracy which would enable students to engage effectively in modern forms of life and work. Whatever perspective was adopted, there was little support from colonial officials or missionaries for forms of education which might tend towards social levelling and radical political demands until the late 1930s.<sup>19</sup> Those issues are as relevant to the practices of education in the Cape as they are to an understanding of English education, even if the issue of race dominates the former. At the same time, class is the essential analysis tool in the latter. Yet to miss the intersection of race and class is to miss the essence of the story!

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<sup>17</sup> Goldstrom (1972): 155.

<sup>18</sup> R Johnson, “Notes on the schooling of the English working class: 1780–1850”, R Dale (ed.) *Schooling and capitalism* (London, Open University Press, 1976).

<sup>19</sup> A major contribution to this debate was M Carnoy (1974); For a more nuanced view see K King, *Pan-Africanism and education* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1971). Also see P Kallaway & R Swartz (eds.), *Empire and education: the shaping of a comparative perspective* (New York, Peter Lang, 2016); Kallaway, *The changing face of colonial education in Africa* (Routledge/Taylor & Francis, 2020/Stellenbosch, African Sun Media, 2021).

It is therefore important to see the educational reforms being pursued by some Whig politicians in England during the 1830s, in particular, the role played by Henry Brougham, the chairman of the 1818 Report,<sup>20</sup> in the wider political context of his role as a reformer alongside William Wilberforce, in the campaign for the abolition of slavery in the 1830s. This campaign had significant relevance to social policy and education in the Cape. Brougham supported John Philip, the London Missionary Society (LMS), and the Aborigines Protection Society (APS) in the campaign for the emancipation of slaves and the defence of the rights of Khoi inhabitants of the Cape Colony.<sup>21</sup> In this regard, it is worth noting that issues raised in the context of the politics of empire sometimes impacted English domestic politics.<sup>22</sup>

The history of educational reform in 19th-century England is exceedingly complex. Still, I intend to trace the story by following what I see as one significant thread concerning Goldstrom's book on *The Social Content of Education: A Study of the Working Class School Readers in England and Ireland*,<sup>23</sup> where he argues that the history of the classroom can best be understood by looking at the material available for teachers and students at specific times. Building on his insights into the English situation, I will investigate the nature of school experience in Cape schools, particularly mission schools for Africans, from the mid-19th century.

Concerning the English school experience, Goldstrom maps out four phases of schoolbook production during the 19th century: a) the religious phase, b) the Irish phase, c) the secular phase, and d) the economic phase. Very briefly, this plots the movement from Bible-based instruction, under the influence of the churches, to the development of a secular curriculum under the aegis of state authority. The move is centrally explained in terms of the reaction of many working-class communities to religious education, coupled with the aridness of a curriculum based solely on Bible learning and moralising.

*In many cases, the indifference of the parents was compounded by the aversion of the children. Confined all day to a stuffy and over-crowded schoolroom, cowed by the indiscriminate use of physical punishment to enforce discipline, subjected to a*

20 See CW New, *The Life of Henry Brougham to 1830* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1961): Ch. XII "Schools for all".

21 T Keegan, *Dr Philip's empire: one man's struggle for justice in nineteenth century South Africa* (Cape Town, Zebra Press, 2016), pp. 91, 94–95, 114, 139.

22 See also R Swartz, "Industrial education in Natal: the British imperial context", Kallaway & Swartz, *Education and empire: children, race and humanitarianism in the British settler colonies, 1833–1880* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 53–80.

23 JM Goldstrom (Totowa, N.J., Rowman & Littlefield, 1972).

*curriculum based on the most mechanical type of rote learning of material which had no conceivable relevance to their life experience in the past or their life expectations in the future, bored by interminable moral lectures about the need for obedience to their superiors and for exclusive devotion to the peculiar tenets of one or other of the competing protestant faiths, it is hardly surprising that the children escaped as early and as often as possible from the schoolroom into the relative freedom and sanity of the world outside.*<sup>24</sup>

If children were to be kept in school for whatever reason, education needed to be reformed!

In this context, the SDUK, established in 1825 by Henry Brougham and Charles Knight, initiated a programme which sought to provide educational material appropriate to the “upliftment” of the working class. The early versions of these reforms can be traced to the *Readers* that moved away from religious knowledge towards a focus on secular knowledge and were based on the materials produced for the SDUK, which were first published in the *Penny Magazine* and the *Library of Useful Knowledge*. The SDUK was at the forefront of a campaign for secular education as a mechanism for reducing friction between Evangelicals and Anglicans. Although they were often opposed by religious societies, their campaign increasingly gained strength in the volatile political atmosphere of the 1830s. It was to gain considerable support from the 1835 Report of the Select Committee on Education in England and Wales.<sup>25</sup> The first edition of *Penny Magazine* boasted a circulation of 160 000 copies. It was, in due course, to be available in all parts of the country due to new printing technologies and modern modes of transport such as the steamship and the railway.

In seeking to get away from a scriptural approach to curriculum, the SDUK concentrated on lessons in political economy, namely “easy lessons on money matters for the use of young people”. These lesson books were based on the material first developed for Irish schools and widely used in English and Welsh schools in the 1830s.<sup>26</sup> Parallel to these trends were the beginnings of efforts to introduce the new world of scientific discovery and the scientific method into the classroom.

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<sup>24</sup>L Stone, “Literacy and education in England”, *Past and Present*, 42 (1969), pp. 177.

<sup>25</sup>PP. 1835 VII; see JM Goldstrom (1977), pp. 93–109.

<sup>26</sup>These textbook had their origin in Ireland where the need to secularise had been most acute since the clash between Roman Catholic and Anglican curriculums had required early attention. Also see P Walsh, “Education and the ‘universalist’ idiom of empire: Irish national school books in Ireland and Ontario”, *History of Education*, 37(5), September 2008, pp. 645–660.

The educational books produced from the 1850s took three forms: a) general readers, which were intended to impart the skill of literacy by conveying narratives both factual and fictional and about past and present, science and religion, men and women, aristocrats, workers, soldiers and heroes, often jumbled together into textbooks which reveal the preoccupations of both their producers and their consumers, b) discipline specific textbooks in the field of classics, geometry, science and English literature, and c) a broader literature aimed at an emerging wider market for adult literature.<sup>27</sup> All of these themes are also evident in the development of a literary culture in the Cape at a later date.

The emergence of science was a significant aspect of the mid-century increase in a literate culture and the spread of non-formal education. There was a wide and growing demand for materials to meet this need. The opposition to the SDUK from educational radicals, socialists and community organisations, together with the emergence of Owenite Halls of Science, Chartist Halls and proletarian reading rooms, extended the remit of education and meant that there was a great demand for secular knowledge outside of the safe boundaries set by the SDUK.<sup>28</sup> New kinds of knowledge began to dominate the public media, and there was increasing pressure for this to be accommodated in the school curriculum and textbooks. There was a demand from working-class people for education to fit their needs, however diverse these might have been. David Layton's excellent book on *Science for the People* charts these developments, from the work of Kay Shuttleworth to establishing a special committee for science education in the Council of Education established in 1843.<sup>29</sup>

This growth of secular education for adults and schoolchildren provided a large market for educational materials by the mid-century in England. This significantly impacted the spread of modern ideas and modern science to the rest of the British Empire. However, little research has been conducted on this issue to date.

## The Chambers Story: Education with a difference?

The story of Chambers publishers in Edinburgh (and later London) is a remarkable episode in Britain's growth of popular knowledge. Beginning with a hand printing press in

27 J Rose (2001); L Howsam, C Stray, A Jenkins, JA Secord & A Vaninshaya, "What Victorians learned: Perspectives on 19th Century Schoolbooks", *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 12(2), 2010, pp. 262–285. I will not deal with issues related to (b).

28 Simons (1974): Ch.5.

29 Layton, (1973), Ch. 5, 8. In 1853 Kay Shuttleworth promoted a curriculum which featured: "Explanations of natural phenomenon", "Home and health", "Sanitary and nursing", "Products", "The use of machines".

a backstreet bookshop in Edinburgh, the Chambers brothers built up a publishing empire that has endured to the present day.<sup>30</sup> The goal from the outset was to produce cheap and accessible material for common readership in the emerging market, given the increasing literacy rates from the mid-19th century.<sup>31</sup> These inexpensive publications from the 1830s embrace a wide variety of topics.

The first success of the publishing house was in the form of the *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*,<sup>32</sup> a compendium of useful knowledge, or what we now might call ‘cultural literacy’. Perhaps the most successful cheap educational texts were Chamber’s *Information for the People* (beginning in 1833); Chamber’s *Miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts* (in 21 volumes) (1845). There were also various reference books, including *Chambers’ Encyclopaedia* (ten volumes completed in 1868) and *Chambers’ Technical Dictionary*. Perhaps most significantly, Chambers expanded on the secular trend toward popularising scientific knowledge. Physics, chemistry, geology, biology and evolution, as they came to be known in later years, were all featured.<sup>33</sup>

## Chambers’ Educational Course

This course aimed at teacher education and teachers and began with two simple books relating to teaching grammar in 1842—offering, by modern standards, surprisingly progressive pedagogical suggestions on how to teach language and composition. By 1872 a wide variety of texts was available in this series, including works on English reading and grammar (standard reading books, advanced reading books, grammar and spelling books.) There were also manuals for subject-specific instruction in algebra, animal physiology, geography, history, arithmetic and mathematics, the sciences, Latin, and German. This literature, along with that published by Longmans, Cassell, Macmillan, Blackwood, Blackie, Edward Arnold and others, was widely available by the last quarter of the century when the Education Act took effect. The sheer variety and range of materials from these publishers

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30 The firm would eventually become part of Chambers Harrap Publishers in the late 20th century.

31 For the history of Chambers see A Fyfe, *Steam-powered knowledge: William Chambers and the business of publishing: 1820–1860* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2012); SM Cooney, “Publishers for the people: W & R Chambers: the early years 1832-1850”. PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 1970.

32 The first issue of the *Edinburgh Journal* in 1832 sold 25 000. This rose to 87 000 by 1844.

33 Robert Chambers was the author of *Vestiges of the natural history of creation* (1844) and this was followed by *Rudiments of geology* and *The introduction to the sciences* (1844), *Ancient sea margins* (1848), George Coombe’s biology on *The constitution of man*, (1835). *Natural philosophy: first treatise: laws of matter and motion* (1857) was a popular title probably aimed at the schools market.

make this a remarkable achievement, and the extent of sales demonstrates the new desire for knowledge in a mass market.<sup>34</sup>

## Nelson Royal Readers

Thomas Nelson (1822–1892) and his brother William (1816–1887) also originated from Edinburgh and entered their father’s business as booksellers and publishers at the time of the rapid extension of the publishing industry. Thomas was exceptionally skilled in the mechanical side and was attributed to the invention of the rotary press in 1850. The staple of their trade was the reprinting of standard authors at low prices.<sup>35</sup>

After the Education Act of 1870 had created a demand for improved schoolbooks, the Nelsons initiated their Royal Reader series, which proved to be a great success. They were soon imitated by many other great publishing houses in search of markets in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world. The first Royal Readers were published in the 1870s and were regularly re-issued till the 1930s. According to Howsam, the Royal Readers sold over five million copies in the four years 1878–1881, “reaching a sixth of the population” in England.<sup>36</sup> Through the Royal Readers, generations of students were raised on the same excerpts from Scott’s *Ivanhoe* and Dickens’s *Martin Chuzzlewit*, reproduced in the fifth volume of the series from 1872 to 1924. Readers produced 52 years apart were quite literally stereotype copies of each other. Pupils using *Nelson Royal Readers* No IV in the 1920s would have encountered not merely the same selection of novels, poems, historical summaries and informative essays but the same preface, illustrations, exercises, pagination and typeface and cover design as their Victorian grandparents. Little attempt was made to modify or prepare the material in suitable ways for children—even in Royal Readers specifically designed for young children—“they made only slight concessions to youth”. Much the same could have been said of similar textbooks produced by other publishers.<sup>37</sup>

## The South African Context

Due to the absence of research on the topic, it is difficult to estimate the extent to which the developments outlined above-impacted education in the Cape Colony and Natal, the

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<sup>34</sup>Rose (2002), pp. 187–88.

<sup>35</sup>Wikipedia, “Thomas Nelson (1822–1892)”, (available at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Nelson\\_\(1822-1892\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Nelson_(1822-1892))).

<sup>36</sup>Howsam (2010), pp. 278.

<sup>37</sup>Rose (2002), pp. 373 ; Howsam (2010), pp. 278–79.

two British colonies in South Africa, during the period under review. The establishment of the Department of Education in the Cape as early as 1839 was doubtlessly based on some of the influences of educational thinking and practice in England referred to above. Still, the extent of the borrowing has not been recorded in detail. By the 1830s, there were clear parallels in the gradual displacement of the influence of religion that had previously been asserted through the Bible and Schools Commission (inherited from the era of Dutch control) and the secularisation of the educational policy under the influence of the astronomer and reformer Sir John Herschel.<sup>38</sup> Herschel's views reflected the ambitious aims for education popular among progressive Whig politicians at the time when he argued at a public lecture in Cape Town that "the advance of a Nation's intelligence ... did not depend upon a few successful philosophers toiling away in their lonely studies...but that a Nation's progress rather lay in the diffusion of knowledge among the masses of people".<sup>39</sup> Herschel's progressive vision of an education system where "the pupils would not just be passive listeners, but active respondents" has still to be achieved in the majority of our schools.<sup>40</sup> It is also important to note that Herschel, John Philip, John Fairbairn, the editor of the influential *South African Commercial Advertiser*, along with the librarian of the South African Library, Alexander Jardine, were all involved in the campaign for the emancipation of the slaves, and linked to the Whig reformism in England referred to above. They also promoted a Popular Library in Cape Town to expand adult education without class or race distinctions. The initiative prospered from 1834 to 1867.<sup>41</sup>

Suffice for the present purposes to note that the Watermeyer Education Commission

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38 As noted above, this trend can be associated with John Philip and the campaign for slave emancipation and the defence of the rights of indigenous peoples in the Cape at this time. For more on Herschel see WT Ferguson & RFM Immelman, *Sir John Herschel and education at the Cape 1834–1840* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1961); DS Evans et al., *Herschel at the Cape: diaries and correspondence* (Cape Town, Balkema, 1969).

39 Herschel's views on this occasion show remarkable similarity to those that Lyons associates with Francis Bacon, where "there is an emphasis on an educated cohort of citizens, rather than the romantic solitary figure of genius, in the creation of "useful knowledge". See Lyons (2014), p. 58.

40 EG Malherbe (1925), pp. 75,77.

41 RFM Immelman, "Book provision in Cape Colony, 1800–1860", *Journal of Library History* 5, 1970, pp 35–46; A Dick, *The hidden history of South Africa's book and reading cultures* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2012). The "instructive cheap reading" provided included the *London penny journal*, *Boys and girls penny magazine* and the *British cyclopaedia*. The *Cape cyclopaedia* was published locally in two volumes (Cape Town, Bridekirk, 1835–1837). The *Cape of Good Hope Penny Magazine* also made a brief appearance between 1835 and 1837.

(1861–64)<sup>42</sup> and the Education Act of 1865 provided a parallel to the English Commissions described above. The foundation of a system of local school committees was laid, and a system of free schools emerged in the 1830s in keeping with the broader Whig ideals outlined above. The English language was adopted as a medium of instruction. English educational methods, such as the Monitorial systems of Bell and Lancaster, were introduced with a small number of English or Scottish schoolmasters. There was a brief attempt to institute a reform of educational provision on a model of inclusive citizenship that recognised education as a key element of ‘civilisation’, and acceptance to civil society in the form of the Common Government Schools introduced to the Cape.<sup>43</sup>

As far as I can establish, the textbooks used in school during this period were initially, and perhaps dominantly, the same as those used in England, and much of what has been said above seems applicable to the schools of the Cape.<sup>44</sup> The Monitorial system seems to have lasted much longer in African and mission schools than it did in schools in England at the time, or in white colonial schools, for the reason of its economy. It can probably be assumed that much of what went on in mission schools for the indigenous peoples resembled the picture provided above, characteristic of English working-class schools in the early part of the century.

## Chambers and Nelson Royal Readers in South Africa

Chambers and Nelson Readers appear in the Catalogue of the Educational Museum of 1860, along with the works of many other British suppliers of educational books.<sup>45</sup> It has not been possible to establish to what extent these books were used in mission or African

42 Education Committee Report on the Education System of the Cape Colony: (G 24-1863). see Malherbe Vol. I (1925), pp. 92–97.

43 See H Ludlow, “State schooling and the cultural construction of teacher identity in the Cape Colony, 1839-1865” (PhD dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2011); “Shaping colonial subjects through government education: policy, implementation and reception at the Cape of Good Hope, 1839-1862”, Kallaway & Swartz, (2016), pp. 81–110.

44 A thirty page catalogue of the books held in the Educational Museum of the Department of Public Education in 1860 has miraculously survived in the South African National Library in Cape Town. Most of the books are school textbooks or teacher’s manuals published in Britain. None of them were published in South Africa. see Cape of Good Hope, Office of the Superintendent General of Education, *Catalogue of the educational museum* (Cape Town, Saul Solomon Steam Printing Works, 1860). Books published by Chambers, Nelson, the British and Foreign Schools Society, and the SPCK feature prominently on the lists.

45 Cape of Good Hope, Public Education Department, *Catalogue of the educational holdings* (Cape Town, Saul Solomon Steam Printing Office, 1860.) 30p. It is important to note that none of the textbooks or educational books that appear in this catalogue were printed in South Africa.

schools. However, Chamber's Reading Books and Nelson's *Reading from Best Authors* and *Young Reader* are noted as having been in use in Classes I, II and III at St Matthews Elementary School in Keiskamma Hoek in 1873.<sup>46</sup>

Other textbooks I have been able to trace in this context are *The South African Readers* No 4 & No 5: Royal Schools Series;<sup>47</sup> *Royal South African Geography: introductory book*.<sup>48</sup> There is also evidence that this series was used by the Department of Public Education for teacher training: Royal Schools Series: *Model Notes of Lessons for Class Teaching*;<sup>49</sup> *A Graded Series of Object Lessons*.<sup>50</sup> Nelson's *Highroads of History* (in ten volumes) was recommended for primary school teachers by the Department of Public Education in 1923.<sup>51</sup> These represent attempts to extend the developments that were characteristic of the British educational experience to the schools of the Cape by providing reading materials considered by the Education Department to be appropriate to schools at various levels and demonstrate an attempt to supplement religious teaching with new secular and scientific subject matter and modern pedagogy. In the 1920s, the Cape African Teacher's Association (CATA) noted that the curriculum and the library provision for schools did not extend to "native schools", and the support material for teachers ignored this important context. There were calls for circulating libraries to make material published by *People's Library*, *Everyman* and *Home University Library* available to a broader audience.<sup>52</sup>

## Juta Publishers

Juta Publishers in Cape Town contracted to supply reference books for the new University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1857 and entered the market as an educational publisher and

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46 Cape of Good Hope: Eastern districts – report on schools during the quarter ending 31 March, 1873 by Mr OH Hogarth, Deputy Inspector (G:38-73) p.23, para 50. cited by PM Fihla "The development of Bantu education at St. Matthews Mission Station, Keiskamma Hoek, 1853–1959" (MED dissertation, UNISA, 1962), pp. 131.

47 London: Nelson, (1881; 1894-5), p. 320). In these readers "interesting moral stories are interspersed with instructive lessons in Natural History and Descriptive Geography...relieved by and abundance of Narrative Poetry and verses suitable for recitation". See Note in *The Royal Readers* No. VI (London, Nelson, 1881).

48 London: Nelson, 1911.

49 London: Nelson, 1891.

50 London: Nelson, 1899.

51 Department of Public Education, Cape of Good Hope, *The primary school: suggestions for the consideration of teachers* (Cape Town, Cape Times, 1923), p. 145. (also revised in 1924 and 1929). These represent impressive an attempt to provide support for teachers, but it pays little attention to issues relating to African education.

52 AV Murray, *The school in the bush* (London, Longman Green, 1929), pp. 95–96.

supplier of schoolbooks for use in the Dutch and English languages from the 1850s. These books were used throughout the Colony to supplement imported textbooks, but I have not been able to trace detailed evidence.<sup>53</sup>

In the 19th century, there was no sign of books authored by Africans or aimed at the African market, barring C.J. Crawshaw's *A First Kafir Course*<sup>54</sup> and Fred Eylers' *Zulu Self-Taught* (1901).<sup>55</sup> In the 20th century, there are also a few examples of books addressed to African language students, such as FSM Mncube, *Xhosa Manual*,<sup>56</sup> *English Readers for Bantu Schools: Books 1 to 4* (n.d), Mary W Waters, *Stories from History for Bantu Children* (for Standards I to VI), *Our Native Land: for Use in Bantu High Schools and Colleges* (194?), *Great Man and Great Deeds for Bantu Children* (for Std. V & VI) (1953).<sup>57</sup>

One of the first examples I have found of an adaptation of the British textbook model by a South African publisher is *The South African Reader: No V*, aimed at upper primary school. The note appended at the beginning indicates that the book "will be found to contain a great variety of interesting and instructive lessons in Prose and Verse" on the model of the Chambers and Nelson Readers and that it was "prepared with great care, and is offered with confidence to the notice and examination of all classes of Teachers".<sup>58</sup> The contents referred to over 380 pages of text, including cultural and scientific material similar to that found in English readers and extracts highlighting local knowledge content. It is divided into three parts. Part I includes 36 short essays (or poems). Part II has 26 items on a wide variety of topics, with an effort to include considerable local content and material relating to the history of the Cape (*Early history of the Cape of Good Hope, The colonial rule of the Dutch East India Company, The Government of the Cape Colony* and some, somewhat limited, material relating to the indigenous African context such as *A Kaffir Law Court, Makanna, the Kaffir prophet, The Zulu Song of Peace*, interspersed with references to scientific topics—*The water we drink, Salt, Limestone, Marble, The telescope and microscope, The atmosphere, Wind, Soil and manure, Matter and force, Lessons in astronomy, Lessons in natural history*. There is a reference to the global world, including *The Mediterranean Sea, The Black Sea, The Caspian Sea, and The River Congo*. There is a residue of the old 'political economy' theme and human conduct; *Councils for the conduct of life*. And there is grammar

53 The only reference I have been able to trace on this issue is AB Caine & L Liepoldt, *Bibliography of publications of J.C. Juta and J.C. Juta & Co.: 1853-1903* (University of Cape Town, School of Librarianship, 1954).

54 Various editions found (Lovedale Press, 1888 and Juta, (1903).

55 Juta, 1900.

56 Juta, 193?

57 Cape Town: Juta, All published in the 1940s.

58 Jointly published by Nelson and Juta, 1894.

—*Improvement of language, Exercises in paraphrasing, and English derivations.*

Although it has often been remarked that little effort was made at this time to tailor the material for a juvenile audience, there is some evidence that efforts had been made here to adapt the material to the local environment and pitch it at the required level. In the case of specific fields, like history and geography, there had also been an attempt, by the early 20th century, to recruit local authors and to include relevant local content. However, as far as I can see, little of that content was specifically adapted for African schools, and no attempt seems to have been made to include African authors.

## **The Lovedale Press: Relevance to African Teachers and Students**

My quest was for published materials that might have provided a particular knowledge that was somehow appropriate to African schools in the century before the advent of apartheid in 1948. However, I have found very little information about the literature and textbooks used in the mission schools for Africans in the Cape before the early 20th century. “The early products of the mission presses in the 19th century were predominantly scriptural, linguistic and pedagogic”,<sup>59</sup> but there was from the earliest days of the missions a need to produce isiXhosa language material, particularly for the lower standards, and this opened the door for a degree of influence by Xhosa writers.

The overarching theme in the indigenous literature that did emerge from the early Xhosa intellectuals in the 1880s to the New African era from the 1920s was the critical issue of the uses of literacy. Was it only to serve the purposes of Christian mission and westernisation/ modernisation, or would it be at the forefront of the struggle to preserve aspects of indigenous culture and language and to contribute to the emergence of African nationalism in the South African context? Key literary figures like JT Jabavu, Donald Jabavu, EHA Made, SEK Mqhayi, G Ngubane, RRR Dlomo, HIE Dlomo and others would make important contributions to this debate.

What follows is an attempt to make a record of the materials that were available, with some reference, where possible, to what was used in schools.

Victor Murray mentions a book by John Murdoch, *My Duties*, which he claims was widely used in India and South Africa for moral instruction. It was in stock at the Lovedale Bookshop when he visited Alice in the late 1920s. It was modelled on the old political

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<sup>59</sup>J Opland, *Xhosa poets and poetry* (Cape Town, David Philip, 1998), pp. 228.

economy approach mentioned above. It contained stories aimed at imparting lessons on “self-help, punctuality, industriousness, benevolence, truthfulness, thrift and obedience”, though he is sceptical about their effectiveness in “realising their serious aims”.<sup>60</sup> Another foundational text of Xhosa literature was Isaiah Bud-M'belle's *Kafir Scholar's Companion* (1903),<sup>61</sup> which resembled the kind of adult readers associated with Chambers' early initiatives. Doke noted with enthusiasm that this contained a “miscellany including chapters of Xhosa literature and the Xhosa press, proverbs and versification, as well as notes on vocabulary and a bibliography of ethnographic works”. The political economy theme is also pursued in the form of Elijah Makiwane's translation of James Luke's *Political Economy*<sup>62</sup> and Bernard Huss's Marianhill pamphlets.<sup>63</sup>

The need for Xhosa Readers and school materials in the Cape represented a key aspect of the school textbook market. The market for such materials was monopolised mainly by Lovedale Press, linked to the Free Church of Scotland's flagship mission institution in Southern Africa, Lovedale Institution at Alice in the Eastern Cape. Up to the 1940s, this press was able to exercise a virtual monopoly over the publication of Xhosa language materials, with principals William Govan (1841–1870), James Stewart (1870–1905) and James Henderson (1905–1930), and Robert HW Shepherd (1930–1955), along with William G Bennie and GH Welsh of the Cape Department of Education in the inter-war years, being in virtual control of all such publications, both concerning linguistic

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60 Murray (1929), pp. 176–178. J Murdoch, *My duties* (London; Christian Literature Society, 1926). This book was apparently first published in the nineteenth century in relation to the concerns of the Christian Vernacular Literature Society (CVES) in India, was revised by ED Bowman in 1926, and subsequently by Stella Harlow in 1949. I have not been able to trace copies of the early editions. Murdoch was a key advocate of CVES which campaigned for mother-tongue education in India on behalf of the Church Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the British Missionary Society and the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society from the 1850s. The pamphlet on “Debt and How to Get Out of It” (Madras: CVES, 1890) reflects the political economy tradition referred to above, and other work by Murdoch address the great political and social questions of the day in India with an emphasis on the role of indigenous language and culture in education. Other textbooks found in this category were FJ Gould, *The children's book of moral lessons* (London, Watts & Co., 1899); J Luke, *Political economy for schools in Africa with special reference to South Africa* (translated by Rev. ET Makiwane, as *Ukumiseleka kobytyebi bezizwe* (Lovedale, Lovedale Printing Department, 1909); Lancelot Foggin, *The civic reader: for upper classes* (Wynberg, Rustica Press, 1918); RJ Hall, *Civics: An introduction to South African social problems* (Durban, Technical College, 1920) (also cited by AV Murray (1929) , pp. 203).

61 Lovedale, 1903.

62 Lovedale Book Depot., 1909.

63 B Huss, *Social history: or the Roshdale co-operative store for African students* (Marianhill Press, 1925); *Peoples' banks or the use and value of co-operative credit for African Natives* (Marianhill Press, 1928);

conformity and financial capacity.<sup>64</sup>

The muted critique that does emerge during this time relates to the missionary censorship of African authors that parallels the religious censorship in England in the early 19th century. This critique came from the emergent intellectual elite who were products of the mission school education but increasingly sought to place their stamp on the colonial culture by asserting the significance of Xhosa culture and tradition while usually embracing the emergent modern forms of school culture. In Leon de Kock's terms, "the master narrative of 'civilisation' with its teleology of 'ultimate fairness' and equal justice in the British constitutional structure was used strategically, rhetorically and tactically, in the process of a very material and political struggles".<sup>65</sup> There is surprisingly little work on this aspect of South African history.

There was a degree of change and reform related to using textbooks in schools during the first half of the 20th century. I will base my observations on two articles which documented this change in the early editions of the journal *Africa*.<sup>66</sup> The editor, Diedrich Westermann, professor of African Languages at the University of Berlin, and a key authority on African languages, noted in the first edition of the journal in 1928 that one of the "foremost duties" of the Institute was "to direct attention to the serious and urgent problem of obtaining better schoolbooks for African schools" which "met the requirements

64 see J Peires, "The Lovedale Press: literature for the Bantu revisited" *History in Africa*, 6, 1979, pp. 155–175; J Opland, "Nineteenth century Xhosa literature", *Kronos*, 30, 2004, pp. 22–46. For detail of Bennie's career see *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol 1 : 51-2. Also see Kallaway (2020/2021) Ch.7.

65 L de Kock, *Civilising barbarians : missionary narratives and African textual responses in nineteenth century South Africa* (Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1996), p. 123; N Masilela, "South African literature in African languages", S Gikandi (ed.) *Encyclopaedia of African Literature* (London, Routledge, 2003) on line; M Ndletyana, (ed.) *African intellectuals in 19th and 20th Century South Africa* (Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2008); T Mkandawire (ed.), *African intellectuals: rethinking politics, language, gender and development* (London, CODESRIA/Zed, 2005); AC Jordan, *Towards an African literature: the emergence of literary form in Xhosa* (Berkeley, UCLA Press, 1973); DDT Jabavu, *Bantu literature :classification and reviews* (Lovedale Press, 1921); *The influence of English literature on Bantu literature* (Lovedale Press, 1943); B Willan, *Sol Plaatje: a life of Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje 1876–1932* (Johannesburg, Jacana, 2018); see also Kallaway (2020/21), "Donald Mtimkulu: South African educationalist".

66 *Africa* was a journal that had been set up in 1928 by the International Institute of African Languages and Culture (IILAC) in London to publish research on Africa. For earlier attempts to map the field see James Dexter Taylor, "Vernacular Literature in South Africa", *Christianity and the Natives of South Africa* (General Missionary Conference of South Africa) (Alice, Lovedale, 1927), pp.131–144. For Xhosa language users this demonstrates that by 1927 there were a limited number of Graded Readers for primary schools but no Xhosa textbooks in geography, history, arithmetic, physiology, or school management. Some advances with regard to health readers, hygiene and agricultural studies are noted.

of modern education”.<sup>67</sup> Westermann promoted vernacular language teaching in the schools and noted that there had been a considerable growth in the number of textbooks available as primers and readers in local languages for the lower grades. He was critical of the shortage of good books that could represent the African cultural heritage to children in credible form and keen to overcome the challenge of representing the modern world to Africans. In this regard, he sought to promote an academic approach to these problems which drew on the professional expertise of experienced practitioners in African education and sought the guidance of Africans and Europeans to ensure that only the ‘best’ textbooks were used, and that all such books should be approved by textbook committees.<sup>68</sup> The orthodox orthographies that emerged as an aspect of this ‘scientific’ approach to African language construction were open to considerable contestation from African language speakers. However, given the limited power and influence of African authors and educationalists at the time, there was little space to take up such critiques.<sup>69</sup>

Although there was wide agreement on the use of local African languages as the medium of instruction at the lower primary school level, Westermann argued that “European languages should be used along with the vernaculars” in secondary education since most of the textbooks would, in any case, be in the Colonial language. Despite favouring the promotion of African languages at school, he acknowledged that “the demand for European languages is growing everywhere with the advancement of higher education”. Although he recognised that books on mathematics, science and arithmetic would inevitably contain materials common to European and African contexts, he favoured textbooks specially adapted to Africa in fields like botany, zoology, political economy, history and geography.<sup>70</sup>

Seven years later, Clement Doke, a former Baptist missionary in Nyasaland and now head of the Department of Bantu Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, followed up this initiative with a comprehensive article on *Vernacular Textbooks in South*

67 “Textbooks for African schools: a preliminary memorandum by the council”. *Africa* 1, 1928, pp. 13–22.

Westermann recommended the establishment of a committee of experts to coordinate efforts in this regard.

68 Such appeals invoked the notion of professional judgement by ‘experts’ but seem to have clearly operated as a filter for censoring educational materials not thought suitable to the missionaries. Again, I have no evidence of how such issues might have been handled by the Cape Education Department.

69 See R Gilmour, *Grammars of colonialism: representing languages in colonial South Africa* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). Also see S Pugach, *Africa in translation: a history of colonial linguistics in Germany and beyond, 1814–1945* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan press, 2012); N Maake, “Publishing or perishing : books, papers and readings in African languages in South Africa”, N Evans & M Seeber (ed.), *The politics of publishing in South Africa* (Scottsville, UKZN Press, 2000). Also see Kallaway (2000/2021) Ch 7.

70 Westermann, (1928), pp 21–22.

*African Native Schools*<sup>71</sup> in which he catalogued material gathered from experts in the field of African education. The index of material gathered referred to the whole region, but I will confine myself predominantly to remarks about the Cape. Doke pointed to the great variety of languages that were a feature of the Southern African educational landscape and the uneven development of textbooks for and in those languages. He noted that the paucity of vernacular textbooks is “a strong argument in favour of the early introduction of English or Afrikaans as a teaching medium” and also notes that “the Bantu themselves are to a great extent in favour of the latter policy, fearing the differentiation in education with the promotion of the vernacular would have negative effects on their advancement”. The broad policy that had evolved by 1935 in the Union of South Africa was that the vernacular language would be used as a medium of instruction up to and including Standard IV, after that to be replaced by one of the official languages—English or Afrikaans.<sup>72</sup>

I will limit my comments to his report on the state of the textbook and other materials prepared for the Xhosa language group in the Cape Province. Here Doke presents a promising picture regarding Readers for ‘Native Schools’ in 1935, with at least three series available. He refers in particular to the Lovedale Press series *Xhosa Readers for Native Schools*, which was replaced in 1934–35 by the Stewart Xhosa Readers (*Iincwadi Zisixhosa Zabafundi*), which were published in the new orthography. Doke had fulsome praise for the Lovedale *Stewart Readers* prepared under the editorship of WG Bennie, the first Chief Inspector for Native Education in the Cape, which included “a certain amount of traditional material” but also included “contributions in verse and prose specially written by well-known ‘native writers’ such as JJR Jolobe, SET Mqhayi, John Solilo, Page SW Yako, and HM Ndawo.”<sup>73</sup>

Doke commended these *Stewart Xhosa Readers* for “being of outstanding merit, well graded according to difficulty and reading matter, and calculated to sustain the children’s interest from the beginning.”<sup>74</sup> It can be noted, therefore, that Doke’s synopsis of the Senior Readers locates them in the Chambers tradition explored above. As with

71 *Africa*, 8, 1935, pp.183–209; *Bantu Studies*, VII (1), 1933, pp. 26–30.

72 Doke, 1935, p. 188. The additional question of the production of a standard orthography for all of Africa under the influence of the IALC research guidelines which were strongly influenced by Diedrich Westermann, was a central issues that Peires develops in relation to Lovedale Press. (Peires, 1979). These issues were taken up by the Department of Public Education, Cape of Good Hope. See IALC, *Practical orthographies for African languages*, Memorandum I (1927) and revised edition 1930 (Oxford University Press); *Native education: the orthography of Xhosa* (Cape Town, Cape Times, 1934).

73 For a more detailed treatment of this issue see Kallaway (2020/21): Ch 7.

74 Doke (1935), p. 192.

the Chambers series, guest writers were recruited to contribute pieces relevant to their particular expertise. The *Readers* included extracts from various authors on various topics relevant to an introduction to key aspects of modern knowledge and African themes. Elsie Chubb's contribution to biology was based on her *Imizimba Yetu Nickusebenze Kwayo (Yagugulwa ngo) (Our bodies and how they work)* was translated by J. Henderson Soga);<sup>75</sup> Robert Godfrey wrote on nature study;<sup>76</sup> Alexander William Roberts, a science teacher at Lovedale from 1883 to 1938, wrote about science education;<sup>77</sup> and Sydney H Skaife, from 1921 to 1945, the Inspector of Science in the Cape Department of Education, was a prominent entomologist and naturalist, and author of research publications and school texts, on biology.<sup>78</sup> There are lessons on health (the section on the skin and the defences of the body against disease); historical sketches with African themes including Ntsikana; Sarili, the Gqunukhwebe, Khama, the Kuruman Mission, Livingstone's travels, and the work of the African Labour Contingent during World War I in France; Greek mythology (Theseus and the Minotaur); Arabic tales including *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*; pieces on soil erosion, the treatment of plants and animals, and several short stories and *iintsomi*, in addition to Bible stories like *The Story of Ruth* and extracts from Tiyo Soga's translation of *Pilgrims Progress*. When the series was extended to include Readers for the high school, Doke asserted that "the Xhosa—speaking child will be provided with a wealth of material in his language suited to his needs from the infant School to the University".<sup>79</sup> According to Peires, this series "struck gold" for Lovedale Press in the 1930s and was reported to have sold 56 000 copies every six months in the early 1940s.<sup>80</sup> Doke omitted to mention the *Healdtown English Readers* edited by Candlish Koti, which appeared in various versions between 1917 and 1946,<sup>81</sup> and Juta's *English Readers for Bantu Schools* (Books 1 to 4).<sup>82</sup> By

75 London, Sheldon Press, 1929.

76 See *Incwadi yesiXhosa yesequibi lesine* (London, Longmans Green, 1941). Based on his work on *Bird lore in the Eastern Cape* (Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1941).

77 See K Snedegar, *Mission, science and race in South Africa* (London, Lexington Books, 2015).

78 *Animal life in South Africa* (Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1920); *Lessons in nature study for rural primary schools : A textbook for student teachers and teachers in South Africa* (London: Longmans, 1931); *New junior certificate biology for South African schools* (Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1931).

79 WG Bennie (ed.), *The Stewart Xhosa readers : Iincwadi Zesixhosa Zabafundi : Primer; Infant Reader, Std. 1.; Std. 2.; Std. 3.; Std 4.; Std.5.; Std.6 and Senior.* (Lovedale Press, 1934). See review in *Bantu Studies* 9 (1935), pp. 83–4; 289.

80 Peires, (1979), p. 160.

81 London, Longmans, 1946. See review by GP Lestrade, *Bantu Studies* 10, 1936, pp. 117-18.

82 Cape Town, Juta, n.d.

the mid-century, there was a greater emphasis on writing and English composition.<sup>83</sup>

Although the problem of the availability of suitable literature in the vernacular was a constant theme in writing about African education,<sup>84</sup> Doke notes that “there are a growing number of books available in Xhosa for general and cultural reading in the upper classes” and provides a list of those that are most significant. I have added to this to bring it up to the 1940s. These included John Knox Bokwe, *Ntzikana: Story of an African Convert*;<sup>85</sup> WB Rubusana (ed.) *Zemk’inkomo magwalandini* (The Cattle are Departing You Cowards);<sup>86</sup> Tiyo Soga, *Umambo lohambi Mhambi* (a translation of Bunyan’s, *Pilgrim’s Progress*)<sup>87</sup> and *Intlalo ka Xosa* (The Way of the Xhosa);<sup>88</sup> James Jolobe, *U-Zagula and Amavo* (Essays);<sup>89</sup> Thomas Mofolo, *Meoti oa Bochabela* (Traveller to the East) and *Chaka*;<sup>90</sup> HIE Dlomo, *Nongquashe the Liberator: The Girl Who Killed to Save: a play*;<sup>91</sup> Enoch S Guma, *Nomalizo*;<sup>92</sup> RR Dlomo, *An African Tragedy*;<sup>93</sup> Guybon Sinxo, *Imfene ka-Debeza (U-Mdlalo)*;<sup>94</sup> *Umfundidi wase Mtugwase*;<sup>95</sup> *Umzali Wolahleko*;<sup>96</sup> AC Jordan, *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (The Wrath of the Ancestors);<sup>97</sup> Victoria Swartbooi, *U-Mandisa*<sup>98</sup> and EHA Made *Indlafa yaseHarrisdale*.<sup>99</sup> Sol T Plaatje’s *Diphòshò –phòshò*, a Tswana translation of Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors*, and his epic novel *Mhudi: An Epic of Native Life Hundred Years Ago*

83 WN Cheadle, *English composition for African students* (Cape Town, Juta, n.d.) ; AJE Winter, *English composition for Bantu students* (London, Longmans, 1944).

84 See AV Murray (1929/1938): Ch. VIII

85 Lovedale, 1914.

86 First published in London by Butler & Frome, 1906/1911. This included an extensive collection of Xhosa praise poems and collected works from the newspaper *Izwe labantu* which Rubusana had edited.

87 First published: Lovedale, 1868.

88 Lovedale, 1937.

89 Lovedale, 1926.; Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand Press, 1940.

90 Morija, Morija Book Depot, 1912; Morija Book Depot., 1925. (London, Oxford University Press/ IALC, 1931).

91 Lovedale, 1933. See a critical review by CM Doke, *Bantu Studies* 11 (1937), pp. 63-64.

92 London, Sheldon Press, 1928.

93 Lovedale, 1928.

94 Lovedale, 1925.

95 Lovedale, 1927.

96 Lovedale, 1944.

97 Lovedale, 1940.

98 Lovedale, 1934.

99 (Shuter & Shooter, 1939). See reviews in *Bantu Studies* 14, 1940. It is significant to note that some of the early writers like JS Bokwe, WH Soga, WB Rubusana and JT Jabavu were prominent member of the Native Education Association at the end of the 19th century. (see A Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu: The beginnings of Black protest politics in South Africa to 1912* (Cape Town, David Philip, 1984), pp.7–10; WW Gqoba, *Isizwe esinembali : Xhosa histories and poetry 1873–88* (Pietermaritzburg, UKZN Press, 2015) (edited by J Opland, W Kase & P Maseko).

(1930) also needs special attention as they were widely read.<sup>100</sup>

Samuel E Mqhayi (1875–1945) is best known for having reputedly written the first novel in Xhosa, *U Samson* (1907), which was aimed at young people and said to have had a strong political message, but unfortunately, no copies have survived. Also significant were Ityala lama-wele (The Court Case of the Twins)(1914),<sup>101</sup> *Imi-hobe nemibongo* (1927), *U'Don-Jadu* (1929-34),<sup>102</sup> and *i-Nzuzo*.<sup>103</sup> A book of verse for schools, *Imi-hobe nemibongo* (1927), was published by Sheldon Press in London after he failed to find a South African publisher.<sup>104</sup> Doke noted Mqhayi as “easily the finest Xhosa writer we have and has much literary merit”. Lev Shoots notes that “it is his ability to explain the new as a continuation of the older traditions that makes Mqhayi’s work so powerful and explains why he has been so revered as a public figure in his own time and why his work is still drawn on today.”<sup>105</sup> One of the most interesting texts of the time is Mqhayi’s autobiography *U-Mqhayi waseNtab’Ozuko*.<sup>106</sup>

There were also white authors who contributed to this growing Xhosa literature, including the anthropologist and sociological researcher Peter AW Cook,<sup>107</sup> William

100 Lovedale Press, 1930. Also see B Willan, “What other devils?: the texts of Sol T Plaatje revisited” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 41 (6), 2015, pp. 1331–1347; Sol Plaatje: a life of Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje 1876-1932 (Johannesburg, Jacana, 2018).

101 Lovedale, 1914. This has recently been translated into English but fails to inform the reader of the complex history of this text that was rewritten and amended many times by the author and by the publishers. See Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 2018.

102 Lovedale, 1929 and subsequent editions. There were also various amendments to this text over the years. The first English language translation was published by Oxford University Press, 2018.

103 Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1942.

104 *U-Aggrey* (London; Sheldon Press, 1945); *I-Nzuzo* (Johannesburg, Wits Press, 1942/3); *Imihobe* (London, Sheldon Press, 1927). Sheldon Press was linked to the SPCK and showed considerable commitment to the publication of materials for the colonial African educational market in the inter-War era. It would merit further research. It is worth noting that Mqhayi won the first prize for Bantu Literature in the May Esther Bedford Fellowships for literature and poetry offered by the Colonial Department of the Institute of Education, London University in 1935 (for *U-Don Jadu*) and 1936 (for *U-Mhlekezzi u-Hintsisa*). African Book Awards Database Results : see <http://www.indiana.edu/~libsalc/africa/scripts/awards1.php?award=193>; Doke (1933) p. 44. See also Kallaway (2020/21) Ch7.

105 See LJ Shoots, “The sociological imagination of SEK Mqhayi” (M.A. dissertation, UCT, 2014).

106 Lovedale Press, 1939. This was first published in Diedrich Westermann, *Afrikaner erzählen ihr Leben* (Essen, Essner Verlagstaldt, c1938) and edited by P Scott, *Mqhayi in translation: a short autobiography of Samuel Krune Mqhayi* translated by WG Bennie (Grahamstown, Communications No 5: Dept of African Languages, Rhodes University, 1976). For detailed treatment of Mqhayi’s work see J Opland (ed.), *Abantu Besizwe: historical and biographical writings, 1902–1944* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2009); Opland & PT Mtuze (eds.) *SEK Mqhayi: Iziganeko Zisizwe; Occasional poems 1900–1943* (Pietermaritzburg, UKZN Press, 2017); Kallaway P (2020–21) Ch 7.

107 See Kwane: *an African saga* (Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1935/1939, 1969); *Ukhwane : ibhalwe ngu-iqulewe isixohaseni ngu- D.M.Lupuwana* (Cape Town, Maskew Miller, 1957).

Bennie,<sup>108</sup> Edward Grant,<sup>109</sup> and Mary W Waters.<sup>110</sup>

As early as 1895, Thomas Muir, the Cape Superintendent General of Education, launched a programme to encourage the systematic teaching of science and ensure, in keeping with the Progressive ethos of the time, that “the main object would be to ensure that the work done shall be observational and experimental and not accomplished merely by help of books”. But he notes that a major hindrance to this project is that there were no textbooks in Agriculture, Botany or Geology related to local conditions.<sup>111</sup> By 1935 Doke mentions books that he feels are appropriate, but it seems that in science and mathematics, there was still a strong reliance on easily available books printed cheaply in Britain. Locally, concerning biology and hygiene, he gives high praise to Neil Macvicar’s *Health Reader for Standard III*<sup>112</sup> and *Book of Health*,<sup>113</sup> and to JH Soga’s *Imizimba yetu nokusebenza kwayo* (Our Bodies and How They Work).<sup>114</sup> Despite the call for a focus on agriculture, the only books on the topic available in the Cape in the 1930s seem to have been WA Mazwai’s *Incwadi yaba limi* (The Cultivator’s Book),<sup>115</sup> HH Lund’s *Primer on Agricultural Science*,<sup>116</sup> Bernard Huss, *A Textbook on Agriculture*,<sup>117</sup> and WG Dowsley’s *Farming for South African Schools*, which seems to have been prepared for white schools but were translated by Mqhayi into Xhosa.<sup>118</sup> Dudley Hampton’s *Agriculture for Africans*<sup>119</sup> was an adaptation of his book, first published in India. The main geography texts mentioned are those by Edith A How<sup>120</sup> and Mary Waters.<sup>121</sup> It is worth noting that there was a focus on the promotion

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108 *Imibeng : A Xhosa anthology* (Lovedale, 1935)

109 *Isihokelo Sabasumayeli Naba fundi Bezibalo* (Lovedale Press, 193?)

110 *Nongquause; Ukukanya: the light* (Lovedale Press, 1925); *Cameos from the kraal* (Lovedale Press, n.d.)

111 Cape of Good Hope, Report of the SGE (Thomas Muir) for 1895 (G2 - 96): 21. See also P Elliott & T Muir, *Lad O’Pairs’: The life and work of Sir Thomas Muir (1844–1934), mathematician and Cape colonial educationalist* (Cape Town, 2021). On the teaching of nature study and agriculture in African school also see M Wrong & DG Brackett, “Notes on nature study and agricultural textbooks used in African Schools” *Africa*, 5, 1932, pp. 474–486.

112 Lovedale, 1935.

113 Translated as *Lokwalö hwago Tahela sentlé* by Theopholis Gaboutlwele. (Lovedale, 1941).

114 A translation of Dr Elsie Chubbs’ book. (London: Sheldon Press, 1929). For books on hygiene also see : “Hygiene Books”, *Africa* Vol. III (4); Vol V (1).

115 Lovedale, 1923.

116 Juta, n.d.

117 London: Longmans, 1920; Marianhill Press, 1931.

118 *Ulimo lucazelwe zase-Afrika ese Zantsi* (Cape Town, Nationale Pers, 1920).

119 London, Longmans, 1943.

120 *Abantu Base-Lizwe*: 1) *Abantu base-Afrika* (Peoples of Africa); 2) *Abantu Bamanye Amazwe* (Peoples of other lands) (London, Sheldon Press, 1925).

121 *Our native land: for use in Bantu high schools and colleges*: Book I and II. (Cape Town, Juta, 19??).

of industrial education in the Cape from the last quarter of the 19th century but I have not been able to locate textbooks relating to this topic.<sup>122</sup>

Concerning history, Doke notes that “no textbooks were prescribed for the junior standards, but in Standard IV, certain English books are suggested to teachers, in addition to four small books in Xhosa”.<sup>123</sup> J Whiteside, *A New School History of South Africa*,<sup>124</sup> Peter AW Cook’s *South African History for Natives*,<sup>125</sup> and RW Wells’s *History for Bantu Schools*<sup>126</sup> seem to have been among the few history books published exclusively for African high schools before the apartheid era.<sup>127</sup> This neglects the emergence of a strong tradition of historical work among the new Xhosa intelligentsia, concerned with recovering the traditions of their people. They include William Gqoba’s *Imbali yama Xosa* (The History of the Xhosa People) (1887), *Imbali yase Mbo* (The History of the Eastern Territory) (1887), *Isizatu sokuxelwa kwe nkomo ngo Nongquause* (The motive for the Nongquause Cattle Killing (1888)<sup>128</sup>, Magma Fuze, *Abantu Abamnyama Lapa Bavela Ngakona* (The Black People and Whence They Came) (1922),<sup>129</sup> Richard T Kawa, *I-Bali Lama-Mfengu* (The History of the Mfengu),<sup>130</sup> Victor P Ndamase, *Ama-Mpondo: Ibali ne-Ntlalo* (The History and Ways of the Mpondo),<sup>131</sup> Alfred Z Ngani, *Ibali lama Gqunukhwebe* (The History of the ama-Gqunukhwebe).<sup>132</sup> Dr SM Molema, *The Bantu*,<sup>133</sup> JH Soga’s *The South Eastern Bantu and Ama-Xosa Life and Customs*,<sup>134</sup> and Donald Jabavu’s *The Black Problem*<sup>135</sup> would have also

122 See “Industrial training, a part of Native Education”, L Dale, *Technical instruction and industrial training, a necessary supplement to the colonial system of public education* (Cape Town, Juta, 1875), pp. 7–13. (also published in 1884, 1892). See also “The development of vocational education in the colonies” *Oversea Education*, VII (4), July 1936, pp. 171–179. AD Dodd’s important study on *Native vocational training* (Lovedale Press, 1936) makes no mention of such textbooks.

123 Doke, 1935, p. 187.

124 Cape Town: Juta, 1897 and various other editions; referred to by I Balie, *Die geskiedenis van Genadendal* (Cape Town, Perskor, 1988), p. 129.

125 London, Longman, 1932–1943: various editions.

126 London, Nelson, 1946.

127 Also see MW Waters, *Stories from history for Bantu children* (Cape Town, Juta, n.d.); *Great men and great deeds for Bantu children* (Cape Town, Juta, n.d.); V Ridgway, *Stories from Zulu history* (Pietermaritzburg, Shuter & Shooter, 1946).

128 See WW Gqoba, *Isizwe Esinembali : Xhosa Histories and Poetry (1873–1888)* (edited by J Opland, W Kusde & P Maseko) (Pietermaritzburg, UKZN Press, 2015), pp 264–299; 300–349; 460–484.

129 Republished Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1979.

130 Lovedale Press, 1929.

131 Lovedale Press. 192?.

132 Lovedale Press, 1938.

133 Edinburgh, Green, 1920.

134 Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1930; Lovedale Press, 1931.

135 Lovedale Book Department, 1920.

featured prominently in this library.<sup>136</sup>

At the end of the period under review a few publications also addressed the preparation of African teachers. Dumbrell's *Letters to African Teachers* (1935) and *More Letters to African Teachers* (1938);<sup>137</sup> R R Young's *Suggestions for Training Teachers in Africa*;<sup>138</sup> Harold Jowett's *Principles of Education for African Teachers*<sup>139</sup> and *Suggested Methods for African School*,<sup>140</sup> Alban JE Winter's *African Education: suggested principles and methods for African students*,<sup>141</sup> and WH Seaton's *The One -Teacher Kraal School*,<sup>142</sup> were widely used throughout colonial Africa. We must assume that the books used in white schools were also used in the African teacher-education context, and many were still published in Britain up to the 1940s.

Against this background it seems safe to say that the curriculum in mission schools would have been somewhat more conservative than that to be found in English schools towards the end of the 19th century but that there was a limited growth of local literature, both fiction and non-fiction in South Africa by the mid-20th century, within the limits of what the publishers thought desirable, given their rather restricted view about what was morally, politically and religiously acceptable.<sup>143</sup>

Somewhat surprisingly, a careful search of journals dedicated to the concerns of African teachers in the 1930s, *The CATA or The Teachers' Vision* (the journal of the Cape African Teachers' Association), *The African Teacher* (The Orange Free State African Teachers' Association), *Native Teachers' Journal* (Natal African Teachers' Association) and *The Good Shepherd* (Transvaal African Teachers' Association), failed to uncover any major debates about the nature of the textbooks available or the need for changes. The publishers' advertisements cite the materials listed above, with Lovedale Press being the primary supplier.

## The Bantu Treasury Readers

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136 See also GP Lestrade, "European influence upon the development of Bantu language and literature", I Schapera (ed.), *Western civilisation and the Natives of South Africa* (London, RKP, 1967), pp. 105–127. For a wider African perspective see "History and geography textbooks", *Africa* Vol VII (2) (1934). Also see P Kallaway, "History in popular literature and textbooks for Xhosa schools, 1850-1950s" *Yesterday & Today*, 20, December 2018, pp.165–174.

137 London, Longmans Green.

138 London, Longmans Green, 1931.

139 London, Longman, 1945.

140 London, Longman, 1946.

141 London, Longman, 1939.

142 Cape Town, Juta & Co., 1936?

143 Peires (1979), pp. 155–175.

The only other significant contribution to indigenous language publishing in the pre-apartheid era was *The Bantu Treasury Series*, initiated by Professor Doke and Benedict Vilikazi. It was a project of the University of Witwatersrand Press, and quite divorced from its mainstream academic publishing endeavours. In all, some fifteen titles were produced during the period when it was active from 1935 to the early 1950s, featuring authors like James Jolobe, Benedict Vilakazi, Sol Plaatje, Nimrod Ndebele, SEK Mqhayi, SM Mofokeng, Leetile Raditladi, Jac Mocoocoeng, Elliot Zonde, JM Sikakana and P Myeni. Some of these represent reprints from earlier publications. Elizabeth le Roux notes that there were considerable tensions over Doke's paternalistic approach to the endeavour, and as a consequence, some African intellectuals distanced themselves from the project. Doke does not seem to have been accused of censorship or screening, but he was central to the "great orthographic upheaval" referred to above in relation to Westermann.<sup>144</sup>

Although most of these publications achieved two or three reprints, the series does not seem to have been financially viable as it failed to access the school textbook market in the way that Lovedale Press had. From the 1950s when the market for school texts in African languages expanded dramatically under Bantu Education, the vernacular textbook market was captured by politically connected Afrikaans publishing houses like Van Schaik, Via Afrika and Educum. The history of these developments still awaits research.<sup>145</sup>

## Newspapers and Journals

There is no space here for an in-depth review of the newspapers and journals that also contributed to the culture of literacy in the Cape. Still, these publications played an extremely important role in the establishment of an emergent culture of reading in the Cape during the period under discussion.<sup>146</sup> Alongside the strong development of an English and Dutch/Afrikaans language press from the mid-19th century, these publications established

<sup>144</sup> Doke was chairman of the South African Orthographic Committee established in 1929.

<sup>145</sup> E le Roux, "Black writers, White publishers: the case of the Bantu Treasury Series in South Africa", *E-rea*, 12/15/2013, issue 11 (1); "Book history of the African world: The state of the discipline" *Book History* 15 (2012), pp. 248–300; *African Studies*, 22(1), January 1963, pp. 36; *African Studies* 29 (2) Jan 1970 p. 140; N Maake, "CM Doke and the Department of Bantu Studies", *African Studies*, 52(2) Jan 1993, pp. 77–88; I Schapera & B Vilikazi, *African Studies*, 11 (1), 1937, pp. 53–66; G Mabile, *Review African Studies* 6 (4) Dec. 1947, pp. 210–211; *African Studies*, 14, Jan. 1940, pp. 455–467. For a full list see : *African Studies*, 29 (2) 1940, p. 140.

<sup>146</sup> See AJ Friedgut, "The non-European press", E Hellman (ed.), *Handbook on race relations in South Africa* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 484–510. He describes this as 'the voice of Caliban'.

the foundations for a new market for African readers—both in English and in isiXhosa. The journal of Lovedale Mission, *Isigidimi Sama-Xosa/The Kaffir Express* (1870–1888) (later called the *Christian Express* and, after that, *South African Outlook*), was to play an extremely important role in creating a reading culture. In its early years, *Isigidimi* was edited by Elijah Makiwane, and between 1881 and 1884 by John Tengo Jabavu.<sup>147</sup> The first, and possibly most important, of the newspapers was the African-controlled weekly newspaper *Imvo zabantsunda* (Native Opinion), an isiXhosa/English publication based in King William's Town and established in 1884 under the editorship of John Tengo Jabavu when he broke away from the control of Stewart at Lovedale and found independent sponsors in the form of Jan Hofmeyr's Afrikaner Bond.<sup>148</sup> *Izwi labantu* (The Voice of the People), edited by Walter Rubusana and AK Soga, based in East London, was also an important early initiative (1897–1909). This was substantially funded by Rhodes. By 1936 Shepherd notes that there were between ten and twenty weekly newspapers nationally, the best known being *The Bantu World*, *Ilanga lase Natal*, *Umteteli wa Bantu*, *Abantu Batho* and *Leselinyana la Lesotho*. However, no magazines were significant in vernacular languages by the 1930s.<sup>149</sup>

## A Supplementary Note:

### ***Adult Education and the Night School Movement: 1930s–1940s***

Although there is no space to explore this significant education initiative in detail, it needs to be noted that critical elements of the popular education tradition highlighted above in the English context were present in the Cape from the mid-19th century. A Popular Library was established in Cape Town in the 1830s to cater for the needs of a broad reading public, including working-class readers across racial divides, in keeping with the general liberal spirit of education that was being promoted by Sir John Herschel, John Philip, Sir John Wylde and others. The library needed to be expanded within the first year of its

147 J Peires, "Jabavu, John Tengo (1859–1921), journalist and politician in South Africa", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; F Wilson & D Perrot (eds.), *Outlook on a century: South Africa 1870-1970* (Lovedale, Lovedale Press, 1973). *Isigidimi Sama Xhosa* was promoted by James Stewart at Lovedale and was published between 1871 and 1888. Leon de Kock (1996): Ch.4.

148 See TRH Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond: the history of a South African party 1880–1911* (Cape Town, OUP, 1966).

149 RHW Shepherd, *Literature for the South African Bantu: a comparative study of Negro achievement* (Pretoria, Carnegie Corporation Visitors Grants Committee, 1936), p. 6; L Switzer & D Switzer, *The Black Press in South Africa and Lesotho* (Boston, MASS., G.K. Hall, 1979).

establishment to accommodate over a thousand books.<sup>150</sup>

Aside from the libraries established in working-class areas in South Africa, under a programme funded by the Carnegie Foundation of New York in the 1930s, which built twelve libraries and promoted the extension of public library services to blacks in some areas like the Witwatersrand, I have found little evidence of similar initiatives emerging before the mid-20th century.<sup>151</sup>

Another significant feature of this educational history was the emergence of the adult night school movement. This was primarily located in Johannesburg and Cape Town.<sup>152</sup> During the 1930s, the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA) began establishing workers' libraries and producing materials for worker education. This project was initially inspired by Sydney Bunting and Eddie Roux.<sup>153</sup> Its newspaper, *South African Worker* (1928–30), *Umsebenzi* (Worker) (1930–36), later known as *Inkululeko* (Freedom) (1940–1966), played an important role in worker education. It included articles in Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho, as well as English. Perhaps most significant from the point of view of adult education in the broader sense in which it is being discussed in this paper are the materials produced by Eddie Roux both within the CPSA during the early 1930s and after he was expelled in 1935. He was responsible for setting up a new monthly newspaper, *The African Defender*.<sup>154</sup> This was linked to his project to extend general literacy amongst South African workers. His major goal was to develop basic English materials for non-English speakers. Winifred Roux gives an account of the challenges he faced in *Rebel Pity*.<sup>155</sup>

Roux gained the support of Julian Rollnick and a new publishing house, The African Bookman, in Cape Town in 1943. David Philip noted that Rollnick was “the first oppositional publisher with a consistent attitude informing and influencing his

150 The Popular Library: *A catalogue of the books in the popular library, Cape Town* (Heerenracht, G Greig, 1834); *Report of the first anniversary meeting of the friends of the popular library, Cape Town* (Cape Town, Pike, 1835).

151 RHW Shepherd, “Public Libraries”, E Hellman (ed.) *Handbook of race relations in South Africa* (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 607–8. The Carnegie Libraries initiative was promoted by the Joint Councils Movement and the SAIRR. Alan Cobley gives an account of the development of those library services, see *Class and consciousness: The Black petty bourgeoisie in South Africa: 1924–1950* (New York, Greenwood, 1990), pp. 61–73; “Literacy, libraries and consciousness: Blacks in South Africa in the pre-Apartheid era”, *Libraries and Culture*, 32, 1997, pp. 57–77.

152 See EW Grant, “Bantu Man’s Night Schools”, *South African Outlook* 60(2), June 1930, pp 12–13.

153 A Bird, “The Adult Schools Movement for Blacks on the Witwatersrand”, P Kallaway (ed.) *Apartheid and education* (Johannesburg, Ravan Press, 1984), pp. 192–221. Also see A Drew, *Between empire and revolution: a life of Sydney Bunting 1873–1936* (Pretoria, UNISA Press, 2007), pp. 144–154.

154 E Roux, *Time longer than rope* (London, V. Gollancz, 1948), p. 310.

155 E & W Roux, *Rebel pity* (London, Rex Collings, 1970), pp. 190–94; 265–66.

books”.<sup>156</sup> Roux was responsible for commissioning sixteen titles of the Sixpenny Library of educational pamphlets for African readers, which bore strong resemblances to the Chambers publications, adapted to the need for a variety of educational offerings sought after by the emerging literate adult black population in South Africa in a period of volatile change. These included *Education through Reading*<sup>157</sup> and the *Easy English Handbook: Guide to the Simplification of English for lecturers, writers and teachers*.<sup>158</sup> Given the impact of apartheid on black education, the initiative proved to be commercially unviable and only lasted until 1947.

Roux was exceptionally qualified as a Cambridge-educated botanist to interpret new scientific perspectives for a basic education constituency. He linked this expertise to his ongoing political and social concerns which were informed by the research reflected in Lord Hailey’s *An African Survey* (1938), including a new focus on issues of development which in turn related to issues of land, agriculture, water supply, soil erosion and health.<sup>159</sup> The unique African Bookman publications in this field included *Harvest and Health in Africa*,<sup>160</sup> *The How and Why of Science*,<sup>161</sup> *The Veld and the Future of Soil Erosion in South Africa*,<sup>162</sup> and *The Care of Our Children*.<sup>163</sup> The AB Adult Readers include such topics as *Why should we learn to read*, *Keeping our bodies clean*, *Telling the time*, *Fruit farms*, *Machines*, *Flying machines*, *Galileo*, *Sun, moon and stars*, and *Our soil is going*. Parallel to Chambers’s materials, there was also an introduction to the classics: *The Greeks*, *The Romans*, *The Story of Socrates*, and history: *The Stone Age in South Africa*, *The Iron Age in South Africa*, and *The Story of Russia*. There was an attempt to introduce fictional materials that it thought would extend the readers’ horizons: *The Cattle of Kumalo*,<sup>164</sup> *James Mabeta Goes to Sea*.<sup>165</sup> In the words

156 SGM Ridge, “The African Bookman: a progressive South African publisher before 1948” unpublished mimeo UWC.

157 Johannesburg, African Bookman/ SAIRR, 1942.

158 E & W Roux (1970), pp. 189–197.

159 Lord Hailey, *An African survey* (London, Oxford University Press, 1938). A supplementary volume to the Survey was also published by EB Worthington, *Science in Africa* (London, Oxford University Press, 1938). For more details on this issue see H Tilley, *Africa as a living laboratory* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2011); Kallaway (2020/21); It is also worth noting that these issues were also to be taken up at this time by civil society organisations in South Africa. See for example the publication of The Executive Committee of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce, *Cheap food for all: the only way* (1936).

160 London: Nelson, 1942.

161 The African Bookman, Sixpenny Library, 1945.

162 The African Bookman, 1946.

163 By Dr Lewis and Jessie Hertslet. (The African Bookman, 1943). 20p

164 The African Bookman, 1943/1947. This was also published in Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho but failed to obtain a wide readership.

165 London, Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons., 1949. See also Roux, (1970) pp. 190–197; 298.

of its owner, Rollnick, the closure of The African Bookman in 1947 ended a significant secular educational initiative. Although it demonstrated features of the same paternalistic /patronising attitude to learners that was often seen to be characteristic of missionary education, Rollnick argued that it aimed “at opening the big wide world of culture and ideas, and providing some kind of background of knowledge for the unsophisticated just-literate, still gaping at the modern world”.<sup>166</sup>

The extent of the readership of these volumes produced as part of this excellent initiative is unknown. Still, it demonstrates one example of the mutation of adult education traditions into various social contexts. We have no evidence of the reception of this material which sought to promote a popular understanding of science that was fundamentally transforming the world.<sup>167</sup>

The advent of repressive apartheid education and group areas/segregation legislation after 1948 effectively ended the Night School Movement and all attempts to produce alternative literature for the adult or school market.<sup>168</sup> The SAIRR Night School movement limped on for a few years into the 1960s (I taught classes in Windermere township, Cape Town, in 1965), but by the time it was closed down, it had largely been reduced to a vehicle for adult Africans to obtain a National Senior Certificate. It had lost much of its ‘alternative’ ethos.<sup>169</sup>

The demand for such an alternative or radical educational literature was to emerge once again during the 1980s as part of the work of the Peoples’ Education movement, the Alternative Education and Information Centre (AEIC) and the International Labour Research and Information Centre (ILRIG) when issues about “really useful knowledge”

166 DM Wilson, *Against the odds: the struggle of the South African night schools 1945–1967* (Cape Town, Centre for African Studies/Department of Adult Education, 1991), pp. 84–88.

167 For more on Eddie Roux see *Time longer than rope* (London, Victor Gollancz, 1948/1964) which is a comprehensive picture of the history for the night schools and “an attempt at a general account of the political history of the black man in South Africa, the battles he has waged, the organisations he has built, and the personalities that have taken part in the struggle” (p.7), and the autobiography. (Roux (London, 1970). Also see L Alexander, “The ambiguities of empowerment: a deconstructive approach to the adult education work of Edward Roux in the 1930s and 1940s”. (M.Phil. mini-thesis, UCT. 1999); “Poorer for it: the obscuring of Edward Roux’s contribution to adult education in South Africa since the 1940s”, paper presented at CACE, UWC, October 2000.

168 Daphne M Wilson (1991).

169 See “Johannesburg night schools for Africans”, *South African Outlook*, 77, June 1947, p. 89; R Worrell, “Native night schools”, *Transvaal Educational News*, 37, July 1941, p. 3–6; D Zwarenstein, “Night school for Natives”, *Transvaal Educational News*, 41(10), 1945, p. 7–8; SAIRR, “Night school for Africans”, (Johannesburg, SAIRR, 1947?). The neglect of adult education has also been a feature of government policy in the period since 1994.

became part of intense political debate once again.<sup>170</sup> In that context, there was a great deal of focus on the writing of Paulo Freire and radical Latin American educators—but the historical traditions of popular education and worker education from the pre-apartheid era were largely ignored.

## **Conclusions:**

This paper has attempted to set out the parameters of research for a comprehensive enquiry into the nature of schooling in the Cape colonial context over nearly two centuries with attention to the nature of the curriculum and the reading culture related to mission schooling for Africans. It begins by noting the dominant role of religious education in the early period and the strong control of the churches and missionary societies over education practices, even in the context of formal state control of schooling from 1839. By the latter part of the 19th century, that hegemony was being challenged by the need for a settlement which would allow the state to play a greater role in the provision of education and the definition of what curriculum and pedagogy were suitable to the changing economic, social and political context.

The English background to these changes during the period under consideration needs to be set in the context of the industrial revolution and the socio-political changes it brought, which demanded state action concerning social welfare and educational provision. In the Cape Colony, the humanitarian reforms associated with the Emancipation of Slaves and Ordinance 50 from the mid-century posed the question of the relationship between education, work and citizenship, with particular reference to the state's role in promoting a political order defined by the rule of law. Regarding schooling, were the working class in England or the colonised peoples of Africa to receive the same schooling as their middle-class masters, or were they to be provided with an education to fit them for their preordained places in society? And what, in practice, did that choice mean regarding its impact on economic criteria (the job market) or social and cultural forces?

The first part of this paper attempted to give a summary of how those struggles between the churches, the state and the emergent working class movements over the provision of education played out in England in the half-century before the Education Act of 1870, which finally recognised the state's role in the provision of popular education—at least in

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<sup>170</sup> The archive of the Alternative Education and Information Centre (AEIC) is preserved in the archives of the University of the Western Cape.

the primary phase. But it is important to recognise that this was an uneven process and that what appeared to be educational progress for some looked like a defeat for others. Educational activists from the working class often saw the state's capture of education as a major defeat for the cause of independent education. The multitude of local and community initiatives that flourished in the industrial classes' urban heartlands gradually gave way to state-controlled bureaucracies. Yet the 19th century had seen major advances in the literacy of the masses. By the second half of the century, there were clear signs of demand for varieties of knowledge relevant to an understanding of the complexities of a modern world strongly influenced by science and modern industry. The mass market for popular scientific publications was demonstrated. For all these complexities, the provision of schooling gradually became a key aspect of the secular religion of the times. It was increasingly understood to represent a vital aspect of good government.

In the colonial context, the colonisers often hesitated to extend education benefits to the colonised people over whom they ruled. As was the case during the early part of the century in England, those with political control often viewed education as a potentially dangerous and subversive activity. In India, the British never ceased to puzzle about the nature of an education that would suit the needs of the empire.<sup>171</sup> In the Cape, the introduction of an educational system that embraced common schools initially intended to provide for indigenous peoples and settlers marked the foundation of a formal state-supported educational system.

Although the missions continued to manage the 'native schools' until the middle of the 20th century, they were required to do so under the watchful eye of the state, with the establishment of the Department of Public Education in the Cape as early as 1839. Although little official thought was given to adapting the curriculum to the needs of local indigenous cultures and languages, there was no escape from the necessity for the missionaries to teach literacy and numeracy in the local languages, in addition to the need for citizens/subjects to be provided with the opportunity to learn the official colonial languages—English and Dutch/Afrikaans. The early initiatives of missionary educators were therefore directed toward language education and expanding a biblical library appropriate to local circumstances. Out of those beginnings, a written isiXhosa language and literature began to emerge, which, despite missionary anxieties and censorship, began to enter the market,

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<sup>171</sup> See T Allender, *Ruling through education: the politics of schooling in the Punjab* (New Delhi, Sterling, 2006); *Learning Femininity in Colonial India 1820–1932* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2016); J Tschurennev, *Empire, civil society and the beginnings of colonial education in India* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019).

and the schools, from the end of the 19th century.

I have attempted to chart these processes through the emergence of published literature relevant to the educational needs of both circumstances. In the case of England, this meant the gradual secularisation of the knowledge of schooling with the gradual domination of science. In the context of African schools in the Cape, it was indigenous culture, in particular the emergence of an isiXhosa language library, that was to dominate the process while also, to a degree, accommodating the need for modern secular knowledge.

A sub-theme refers to the kinds of knowledge produced in the schoolbooks and adult literature of the times. The material that was dominant in the books used in schools did not always match the desires of the critics of middle-class hegemony in England or the anti-colonial emergent mission-educated elite in Africa. However, in the event, the traditional colonial curriculum played a huge role in shaping the knowledge to inform the societies engaged in fundamental political, economic and cultural change.

While recognising the strength of the traditional colonial curriculum in shaping the culture of 'the new Africans' in the early 20th century, it is important to reassess the influence of the emergent class of intellectuals who navigated the interface between the colonial culture of the mission schools and the emergent renaissance of indigenous culture and language from the 1930s. The precise significance of these influences is complicated to gauge, but further investigation might provide answers to these important questions now that more of this material is available in translation.

Only radical progressive educators of the early 20th century, or the radical educators of the 1960s, posed a strong challenge to mainstream global curriculum developments. In South Africa in the 1970s–1980s, the struggles against the apartheid regime and Bantu Education elicited wide-ranging support for a radical extension of the provision of education (access). Still, such demands seldom challenged the aims of the traditional curriculum (goals/content) outside of blatantly ideological areas of the curriculum, like South African history. Proposals associated with the Peoples' Education evaporated during the planning for a modern democratic state, informed by World Bank, UNESCO and IMF guidelines in an age of neo-Liberal, market-related reform from the 1980s. The curriculum innovations of the post-apartheid era, which included such initiatives as Curriculum 2005/ Outcomes-Based Education and the adoption of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), failed to consider the historical background of school knowledge and traditions in

South Africa.<sup>172</sup> The long struggle for the recognition of indigenous knowledge and culture by the new African intellectuals of the early 20th century, the vibrant worker education traditions of the Night Schools of the 1930s and the worker education traditions of the 1970–80s, or the experience of the ANC which has been called ‘education in exile’, have all been neglected in the construction of these new policy frameworks.

Any attempt to engage substantially with questions of adult education, radical education and decolonising the curriculum needs to take place in this broader framework. Further research would seem to be an urgent priority for future scholars. It would seem necessary to reshape the future debate about the nature of popular knowledge and its relationship to formal systems of knowledge both in the metropole and in the colonial context. It would also facilitate further conversations on the precise nature of what needs to be done to begin a process of decolonising education.

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172 L. Chisholm (ed.), *Changing class: education and social change in post-apartheid South Africa* (New York: Zed Press/Cape Town, HSRC Press, 2004); M. Young & J. Gamble (eds.), *Knowledge, curriculum and qualifications for further education in South Africa* (Cape Town, HSRC, 2006); S. Allais, *Selling out education: national qualification frameworks and the neglect of knowledge* (Rotterdam, Sense, 2014).