



## Imperialism, Social Control and the Colonial Curriculum in Africa

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## *Imperialism, Social Control and the Colonial Curriculum in Africa<sup>1</sup>*

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One of the commonest assertions to be found in accounts of schooling in less-developed countries in Africa is that their present-day education systems are trapped, and inhibited in their development, by the legacies of the colonial past. Furthermore, it is normally taken for granted, both by indigenous writers and Western commentators, that these legacies stem directly from the imposition of forms of Western, academic schooling by the colonial power. While accepting the former assertion as undoubtedly true, I intend in this paper to challenge fundamentally the latter assumption of colonial imposition. I have three main arguments to put forward.

Firstly, I would argue that one of the major features of the process of dissemination of Western educational institutions, especially with respect to the definition of school curriculum, 'what counts as valid knowledge', is the role played by the *demand* for education by indigenous peoples. This is important in a number of respects. For example, any crudely formulated notion of enforced incorporation of 'the natives', through compulsory schooling, can be discounted immediately. The examination of colonial policy for education quickly demonstrates the enormous and enduring mismatches which emerged between the wishes of the metropolitan governments and colonial administrations and the form of education provision which actually took shape. Furthermore, the analysis of these mismatches must take into account the role played by *forms of resistance*, by the indigenous peoples, to attempts by the colonial and metropolitan authorities to control and determine the school curriculum.

Secondly, the whole history of colonial schooling is marked by the contestation between rival social and political groups with separate and conflicting vested interests, which Anderson calls 'the struggle for the school'.<sup>2</sup> This struggle, for the most part, is between the colonial authorities, the missionaries (of various persuasions) and particular groups within the indigenous peoples, though, in some cases, it is also necessary to take into account the interests and influence of other economic groups like the immigrant Indians in East Africa and the white settlers in South and East Africa. And, from the 1920s on, the intervention of the forerunners of the modern-day international aid agencies must also be considered.

Thirdly, much of the sociologically informed analysis of colonial schooling (in particular I am thinking of the work of Carnoy<sup>3</sup>) sets itself within an essentially economic frame of analysis, drawing primarily from Lenin's<sup>4</sup> work. I shall argue that this perspective both overestimates the economic, and concomitantly underestimates the political functions, of the colonial school: indeed it contains a profound misreading of the objectives of British colonial education policy.

As far as the curriculum of the colonial school is concerned, three competing types of curricula, based upon radically different assumptions about the nature and purpose of schooling will be identified. These three versions of 'what is to count as school knowledge' may be termed: the evangelical curriculum; the 'adapted' curriculum; and the academic curriculum. As outlined below, these curricula may be linked to particular sponsors and identified, to some extent, with particular phases in colonial history.

### **The missionaries and the evangelical curriculum**

Throughout the 19th century the bulk of the provision of Western schooling in colonial Africa was initiated by and remained in the hands of a wide variety of American and European missionary organizations which had entered Africa to proselytize the natives and 'envisioned themselves as bringing a higher view of life to benighted savages'.<sup>5</sup> The provision of schools, at least before 1900, was therefore essentially a means to an end. The early missionaries did not hope to educate the Africans, but rather to convert them. The school played a dual role in this main aim. On the one hand schooling provided the most effective means of achieving religious instruction—this was also the case in Britain itself where, in the first half of the 19th century, 'the Sunday school offered virtually the only formal educational experience for most of the population'.<sup>6</sup> Native colonial and British working-class children alike were taught to read the Bible, the catechism and religious texts. In the mission schools religion pervaded the whole curriculum. Bacus,<sup>7</sup> drawing from the reports of the Inspector of Schools in Barbados, notes that:

In 1872 about 68% of the 3709 examinations conducted in reading were based on the old and new testaments while about 60% of the dictation examination passes were drawn from the same source. In the 'higher subjects' which included grammar, geography, etc., this influence was even more dominant. Of the 7913 examinations conducted in this area about 88% (7022) were in 'Catechistical Religious Knowledge' (6625) and Bible History (397).

The parallels between the British working-class and native pupils are not there merely to be drawn through the distance of historical analysis. In the case of one of the largest missionary organizations, the Church Missionary Society, 'prospective overseas missionaries were encouraged to practice by evangelizing the working class and poor of East London'.<sup>8</sup>

So the missions hoped to use the schools to turn the Africans into 'Good Christians', a process which involved both 'civilizing' and converting them. For many societies the success of their enterprise was often reduced to producing the largest possible number of recruits to the faith. And in many areas of Africa it was soon the case that missions of different denominations were in direct competition for converts. This was to have a far-reaching significance for the development of educational provision, as we shall see later.

The second role played by the school was as an attraction and incentive for the Africans to allow their children to be subjected to the missionary influence. Nonetheless, in the earliest phases of missionary schooling the missionaries were not above offering additional material incentives to attract the reluctant Africans. Both

Foster<sup>9</sup> and Anderson,<sup>10</sup> describing educational penetration in Ghana (West Africa) and Kenya (East Africa) respectively, make the point that the 'attractions' of the mission school were firmly related to the availability of (a) models of advantage in the form of a 'normative reference group';<sup>11</sup> and (b) prospects of social advantage in terms of employment in the newly arrived cash economy. Foster argues that 'If . . . there had been an attempt to offer Western education *in vacuo* and if it had not been associated with significant change in the economy or the system of political control, it is likely that educational demand would have remained minimal'.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in East and Central Africa the early missionaries who penetrated the interior far beyond the influence of the European military and economic establishment found little enthusiasm for their schools. Similarly in Ghana, where only the Basel Mission ventured inland away from the coastal zone, the missionaries found that it was only possible to establish themselves by making fundamental changes to the sort of schooling they were offering. For example by concentrating efforts into boarding schools ('a policy of detachment of individuals from the traditional milieu'<sup>13</sup>) and teaching in vernacular languages. Nevertheless, in some cases, for instance in Bechuanaland, the missionaries were actually invited to establish schools by the native rulers. But this had little to do with an interest in Christianity. Rather, the 'Missionaries were known to procure and repair guns, weapons which had assumed an important role in hunting and warfare'.<sup>14</sup>

These two interrelated aspects of missionary schooling, the prime concern with proselytization and conversion and the need, therefore, to attract children into the schools, are of fundamental importance in understanding the development of schooling and the nature of its impact on the natives and should not be lost sight of. It is all too easy to overestimate the extent of common interest between 'Bible and Flag'.

Carnoy suggests that the missionaries 'attempted to transport to Africa the ideal of the individualistic, capital accumulating small-farmer who raised goods demanded in European markets'<sup>15</sup> and sees them as important agencies of the dissemination and inculcation of Western capitalist values. However, in a number of respects this argument is difficult to sustain. It appears to misconceive the single-mindedness of the missionaries and the colonial and metropolitan governments and unrealistically glosses over the important differences in ideology between the different missionary societies. It also fails to take account of the important supply and demand relationship which underlay the 'success' of missionary activity.

The missionaries of the Church Missionary Society (CMS), for example, were clear in their rejection of the materialism of the capitalist industrial society which they left behind in Britain. They associated the industrial advancement witnessed in Europe with the corruption and denigration of basic Christian values. Thus:

The missionaries were reluctant to teach secular skills to Africans because some feared to teach such skills would be to teach the wrong aspects of the world . . . Even during the 1920's, the CMS still taught no skilled trades in most of its East African schools, but instead only simple tasks.<sup>16</sup>

And also in Nigeria the hardline evangelical position of the CMS was clear in the teaching methods and curricula of their schools in the Niger Mission region. They

played down the role of English, preferring to teach in the vernacular,\* and maintained a firmly catechistic curriculum. However, this situation was eventually changed as the CMS began to lose ground to the rival Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers. Would-be pupils and converts began to see the disadvantages of the narrow catechistic education offered by the CMS schools. They turned in increasing numbers to the nearby Catholic schools where the teaching was in English. A second factor that was not insignificant in encouraging the CMS to rethink its educational philosophy at this time, just after the turn of the century, was the failure of their existing provision to qualify for government 'grants-in-aid' under the system of 'payment-by-results'. The running of the mission schools was placing an ever-increasing burden on the finances of the Society. Nonetheless, the changes embarked upon could hardly be described as hurried and neither were they authorized without considerable anxiety and heartsearching by the Niger Mission representatives and the home committees of the Society.<sup>17</sup> But in February 1910 the Executive Committee authorized the introduction of several English-language books into their schools:

Readers:

- (1) Indian Readers (to be adapted for use in Africa)
- (2) Tropical Readers

English Grammar and Composition:

- (1) Davidson and Alcock's Grammar
- (2) McDougall's 'Line upon Line'

Geography: Lawson's Geographical Series

English History: Ransom's Elementary English History

Hygiene: Dr. Strachan's Hygiene.

And in June 1914 the Educational Committee of the Parent Committee approved a full elementary curriculum for their schools. However, the major feature of the CMS attempt to wrest the initiative from the Catholics was even longer in its gestation. That was the introduction of a secondary school at Onitsha, the Dennis Memorial Grammar School, which was finally opened in 1925.

The Society's committee proceedings throughout this period and letters written home by the missionaries<sup>18</sup> leave no doubt that these innovations were directly associated with the Catholic threat to the CMS rate of conversion. This is one indication of the role of native demand producing changes in the nature of the education being offered to them. However, not all the missionary societies were imbued with the hardline evangelical ideology of the CMS. The Church of Scotland Mission, for example, which had established schools in Kikuyu in Kenya, advocated from the time of Livingstone, a strategy of 'commercialization'. They saw the incorporation of the African into wage labour as an effective means of inculcating the disciplines of their faith. One CSM missionary (quoted by Rigby<sup>19</sup>), D. C. R. Scottl, argued for 'industrial work as a means of preparing Africans for conversion to the faith'. But this orientation cannot be taken outside the relationship between the missionaries and the white-settler population in East Africa. It is to be remembered

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\*As only the Bible and a few other religious texts were translated into Ibo, the language of the Niger Mission Region, the Africans were effectively prevented from employing their literacy skills to obtain clerical employment or to read other secular books.

that there was no such population of any size in West Africa. Settlers were represented on the Kenya Board of Education from its inception in 1910 and were a powerful influence in the shaping of Kenyan education right up to the time of independence. The work so earnestly advocated by the missionaries turned out to be labouring for the settlers in their plantations and taking over the clerical and technical positions which were being filled in ever-increasing numbers by Indian immigrants, much to the dismay of the colonial authorities. Indeed, at one point the pressure from the settlers resulted in a government circular advocating a scheme of forced labour, which was supported by many of the missionary societies. The missionaries also supported the settlers in their alienation of the native lands and, according to Rigby, 'became the moral apologists for the expansion of capitalist settler interest'.<sup>20</sup> The result, in terms of education, was that Kenya acquired what was probably the most highly developed system of 'industrial education' in Africa. Between 1911 and 1934 both the mission and the government schools were primarily vocational and from 1935 post-primary 'trade schools' were established. In the former period

Pupils were indentured as they entered primary school (that is after their four years of what was then called elementary school); most of their school day was organized around productive labour in the particular vocation to which they had been legally bound, and there was an opportunity to pick up the academic subjects at night school. Most pupils were indentured to follow the basic trades of masonry and carpentry, although in some missions it was possible to follow a course for hospital dressers, teachers and catechists. As the government grants-in-aid were primarily allocated for the artisans apprenticeships, no school could attract substantial grants unless it technicalised itself.<sup>21</sup>

Here, then, we have a point of colonial history and a set of specific structural conditions where the interests of the colonial government, the settlers and the missions appeared to coincide and give rise to a relatively well co-ordinated schooling system. The only group in this instance which did not find its needs and interests being served were the Africans themselves. However, this co-ordination of colonial interests is not typical of all the colonies. In Ghana, the Basel Missions were the only ones to successfully establish a trade and agricultural training curriculum in their schools. In Nigeria, attempts to introduce 'adapted' curricula had virtually no impact.

It is the Kenyan case that we find probably the clearest support for Carnoy's contention that the missionaries may be considered as disseminators of capitalist ideology. But in general terms Carnoy's emphasis remains too crudely economic. As social groups, the missionaries carried their own particular ideologies 'within the overall context of the intrusion of peripheral capitalism in its colonial form'.<sup>22</sup> However, the materialistic superiority of the missionaries over the Africans certainly provided an image of wealth and power that the Africans sought to imitate and emulate. In this respect it may be argued that the missionaries 'stood for' the advantages and superiority of the culture and the economy of the colonizers. Even when the missionaries sought to reduce their own standards of living to the simplest level, they were materially better off than the Africans to whom they preached. Despite the spiritual message of the missionaries, especially the rejection by the more evangelical societies of the teaching of secular skills, the Africans came to identify

and value education as a source of individual material betterment. Sorrenson notes that 'no matter how genuine their motives, the missionaries could not avoid the African suspicion that a missionary was no better than a settler'.<sup>23</sup> It is in this respect that the missionaries may be seen as 'carriers' of a capitalist ideological message.

Nonetheless, as suggested previously, the missionaries were not in every circumstance a welcome partner in the colonial enterprise. I shall offer one brief illustration of conflict between missionary and commercial interests and then go on to examine the attempts by the colonial and metropolitan governments to influence and change the curriculum of the African colonial school.

The role of the missions in the West Indies provides a clear instance of a conflict of interests. Before the official ending of slavery in 1833 the missions were prohibited from establishing schools on the slave estates and were forcibly discouraged from establishing them elsewhere on the islands. As noted already, proselytization and conversion was normally achieved via a catechical, functional literacy. To the slave-owners literacy represented a threat to stability and the maintenance of a compliant labour force. After abolition, the demand for schooling increased enormously as literacy came to be seen by the ex-slaves as a source of power and prestige previously monopolized by the whites. While the missionaries were not seeking in any way to undermine the established social order, indeed they used their religious teaching to extol the virtues of obedience and thrift etc., the slaves and their children were 'not merely passive recipients of white middle class values, they reacted and modified such values in a sociological dynamic which in many ways helped create their own history'.<sup>24</sup> Rooke notes that eventually even the missionaries came to see the educated catechists as rivals for their own jobs.<sup>25</sup>

### **Colonial policy and the 'adapted curriculum'**

This distrust of the effects of literacy was not limited only to the settlers, estate-owners and traders in the colonial territories. From the earliest point of intervention by the metropolitan government into the field of the education of 'the natives', two themes are evident in their policies, recommendations and comments. One is the criticism of the 'bookish' nature of the curriculum offered in the native schools; the other is the criticism of the attributes and attitudes of the graduates of these academically oriented schools. The first systematic expression of British government views on education came in 1847 in the report by the Education Committee of the Privy Council to the Colonial Office.

A short and simple account of the mode in which the Committee of the Council on Education considers that industrial schools for the coloured races may be conducted in the colonies and to render the labour of the children available towards meeting some part of the expenses of their education.<sup>26</sup>

There is also an indication here of a notion which was to become one of the major tenets of colonial policy. That is, that the provision of education should be self-financing. This was to have a considerable inhibiting effect, especially during periods of economic depression in the colonies. The other striking feature of this report is its anticipation of issues and policies that are currently being aired in the context of the

so-called 'world education crisis'. According to the Committee the principal objectives of the education of the natives in the colonies should be:

- (1) To inculcate the principles and promote the influences of Christianity by such instruction as can be given in elementary schools.
- (2) To accustom the children of these races to habits of self-control and moral discipline.
- (3) To diffuse a grammatical knowledge of the English language as the most important agent of civilization.
- (4) To make the school the means of improving the condition of the peasantry by teaching them how health may be preserved by a proper diet, cleanliness, ventilation and clothing, and by the structure of their dwellings.
- (5) To give practical training in household economy and in the cultivation of the cottage garden as well as in those common handicrafts by which a labourer may improve his domestic comfort.
- (6) To communicate such a knowledge of writing and arithmetic and of their application to his wants and duties as may enable a peasant to economize his means, and give the small farmer the power to enter into calculations and agreements.
- (7) Improved agriculture is required to replace the system of exhausting the virgin soils and then leaving to natural influences alone the work of reparation. The education of the coloured races would, therefore, not be complete for the children of small farmers, unless it included this object.
- (8) Lesson books should teach the mutual interests of the mother country, and her dependencies, the natural basis of this connection and the domestic and social duties of the coloured races.
- (9) Lesson books should also set forth simply the relation of wages, capital, and labour, and the influence of local and general government on personal security, independence, and order.

As Foster notes, "The general aim was the development of "habits of steady industry" leading to a "settled and thriving peasantry".<sup>27</sup> In the first aspect at least there is a direct comparison to be drawn with contemporary attitudes towards the education of the working classes in Britain. As in the British context, these attitudes represented the dismissal and the stigmatization of a whole way of life.<sup>28</sup> In the second aspect there is an illustration of the desire on the part of the metropolitan government, which as we shall see is constantly reiterated, *not* to attract the African away from the land into the modern sector of the colonial economy. Neither is it clear that this is an exhortation to teach the native African the skills of cash-crop production. For those pupils who were to stay on into the period of secondary education two sorts of institutions were envisaged: 'Day schools for Industry' with their own model farms, intended to be partly self-supporting, and 'Normal Schools' for the training of teachers. The latter were to have a curriculum including: Bible instruction, Chemistry and its application to agriculture, Land surveying and practical mensuration, Theory and practice of agriculture and gardening, and Management of farm stock. Not only does this report mark the first in a continuing series of attempts to 'adapt' the school curriculum in the colonies, but it also represents the first in a long line of failures to have such adaptation accepted by the Africans. As Foster points out, the view of the school embodied in the report's



recommendations rests on two assumptions, both of which were to prove to be unfounded. First, that 'the creation of schools and curriculums' based on the economic development of agriculture 'would generate demand for such education among the "coloured races"'.<sup>29</sup> And, second, that 'African expectations regarding the potential functions of educational institutions were congruent with those of Europeans, or could be made so'.<sup>30</sup>

The primary weakness of these recommendations lay in the failure of the Privy Council Committee to take into account the basis of 'attraction' for the existing colonial schools and the concomitant distribution of the schools. The vast majority of the existing schools were in the expanding urban areas and were attracting those Africans who saw opportunities of employment within the expanding commercial and government sectors of the colonial economy. The schools were not seen as a means to improve agricultural skills, but a route of escape from agricultural work altogether. And, indeed, the number of low-level white-collar jobs available to the literate African was to keep expanding for some time to come, alongside the increased penetration and exploitation by metropolitan economic interests. Thus, in several respects the scheme put forward in the report was unrealistic in its appraisal of the situation in the African colonies.

It must also be registered that there was a second agenda of concerns which underpinned the orientation of the report. These concerns were very much related to the initial impetus for the production of the report, and again constitute what may be seen to be another major factor of continuity in government policy towards colonial education. That is, the perceived problem of unemployed school graduates whose knowledge and attitudes make them unsuitable for and unprepared for agricultural work or a trade. I shall return to this issue shortly.

The expansion of educational provision in the second half of the 19th century was marked by continuing African support for the traditional literacy-based schooling being offered by the missions. And, indeed, there was increased pressure for a wider 'academic' curriculum and teaching in English, as we have seen in the case of the Niger missions. Here again there is the basis of the emergence of a conflict of interests between the missions and the metropolitan and colonial governments. However, paradoxically, the opportunity to 'bring the missions in line' which occurred towards the end of the 19th century, by means of 'grants-in-aid' payments, backed by government inspection of schools, reinforced aspects of the academic curriculum as well as providing a vehicle for the introduction of 'technical' subjects. Foster reports that in Ghana (the Gold Coast)

the minimal curricular requirements, upon which grants were to be based included the provision of instruction in reading, writing, English language, and arithmetic, with needlework for girls; grants could be obtained for optional subjects such as English grammar, History and Geography.<sup>31</sup>

In 1898 drawing, industrial instruction and physical exercises were added to the basic curriculum, and singing, elementary science, book-keeping, shorthand and mensuration to the list of options. In Barbados, in 1900, the Inspector of Schools reported on the initiation of a special grant-in-aid scheme for those schools which gave two hours of 'technical instruction' each day. In 1907 in Barbados agriculture for boys and needlework for girls were included in the list of basic subjects for examination. In Kenya, experimental grants for mission schools offering "Technical

instruction' were first offered in 1909 and, with the establishment of the Education Department in 1911, a scheme of 'payment by results' for industrial instruction was initiated. Anderson reports that 'by 1912 industrial training in basic skills such as smithing, carpentry, agriculture and even typing was successfully under way'.<sup>32</sup> In Nigeria, however, in relation to the employment needs of the colonial administration, the 'payment-by-results' scheme was used almost exclusively to establish an 'academic' curriculum based on the British elementary school of the time. In all these areas the introduction of 'grants-in-aid' coincided with growing economic difficulties among the missionary societies in maintaining their educational provision. Few of the societies were able to resist for very long the attraction of the 'grants-in-aid'. But, at very much the same time, another imported policy innovation from Britain strengthened the hold of the missionaries over education at the local level. That is the attempt to introduce a system of local school boards along the lines of the 1870 Education Act. In most cases, especially outside of the towns, the missionaries were virtually the only people recognized as capable of serving on such boards.

One additional factor, applying in the West African colonies (Nigeria, the Gold Coast, Sierra-Leone and the Gambia), in the Educational Ordinance of 1882, was the making of religion optional in 'Assisted schools' and its total prohibition in government schools. This clause, again deriving from educational legislation in Britain, served to exacerbate the conflict between the state and the missionaries over the purpose and the content of schooling.

From 1900 onwards three distinct themes are marked out in the conflict over educational provision in the colonies. They are: (a) the increasing level of reaction within the colonial authorities to the 'dysfunctions' of the academic/literary school curriculum; (b) the increasing emphasis given by colonial education authorities to the need for a 'relevant' agricultural/technical curriculum; and (c) the increasing level of overt African resistance to such an 'adapted' curriculum in their schools. These themes are obviously strongly interrelated. One interrelation is that of *social control*. I want to argue that there is more than one dimension to such an analysis of educational provision in the colonies. The major strategy of social control with regard to education is not the emphasis on socializing the African and producing an obedient and industrious worker, although that is strongly represented in educational policy. The main feature of social control is the denial of schooling to the vast majority of the African population. Both of these aspects of social control, limited access and limited provision on the one hand and attempts to impose an 'adapted' curriculum on the other, can be seen to be related to previous colonial experience and to the increasing manifestation of social problems of various kinds among educated school leavers in the African colonies.

To some extent, educational policy in the colonies in the early years of this century is representative of the dilemma faced by the colonial administration: on one side the demands for educated personnel in the rapidly expanding areas of government bureaucracy, trade and industry together with the demands of the Africans themselves for formal education, and on the other side the political, and social disturbance created by the unemployed or dissatisfied among the educated Africans. The writings of educationalists and government officials of this period are littered with references to the negative consequences of education for the 'coloured races'. In Nigeria, Governor-General J. D. Lugard was particularly critical of the education provided by the missionaries, describing their products as 'lacking in integrity, self-control and discipline . . . [and showing] . . . no respect for authority'.

Elaborating on this scheme he also records that: 'Education has brought to such men only discontent, suspicion of others, and bitterness, which masquerades as racial patriotism . . . As citizens they are unfitted to hold posts of trust and responsibility where integrity and loyalty are essential'.<sup>33</sup>

Somewhat later Miller, in his pamphlet *Have We Failed in Nigeria?* (1947), argues that the educated Nigerian was usually a 'spoiled, degenerate creature, vicious, unreliable and immoral'. In common with Lugard he sees 'the great failure in our system of education . . . to be in the production of character'.<sup>34</sup> Thus, in 1916, Lugard sponsored an Educational Ordinance in Nigeria aimed at rectifying the shortcomings of mission education and re-emphasizing the role of character training.

In a similar vein Gordon<sup>35</sup> quotes the West Indies newspaper *The Echo* (18 July 1898) as critical of the schools for turning out 'lads and lasses whose memories were well stocked with fundamental knowledge but who found it difficult to find a job because of the lack of skills', adding that they were, as a result, becoming 'pests of the society'. Referring to the Gold Coast, Foster notes that the unemployed products of schools were characterized as 'dishonest, unwilling to undertake employment, and willing to live by their wits at the expense of their illiterate brethren'.<sup>36</sup> Batten, a long-serving colonial administrator wrote in his *Lectures on Education in Colonial Society* that:

the present picture is one of ferment and conflict in which the individual, much more than in the past, sees himself and his private interests ever more clearly, and society and his duties to it as something outside himself, demanding and frustrating. The ranks of criminals, delinquents and other social misfits appear to be most largely recruited, not from the illiterate peasants, or from the best educated, but from the products of the schools.<sup>37</sup>

Even where technical schooling had taken root, as in Kenya, the outcomes in terms of the aspirations and orientations of the graduates were not always those anticipated by the providers. Thus King, discussing the graduates of the Kenyan trade schools, suggests that:

It is quite understandable that boys and girls who are in a sense the aristocracy of the school population should think of themselves as 'big people', and that even boys in technical and vocational schools should see themselves being prepared for careers of directing and supervising others rather than having a direct practical orientation to their work.<sup>38</sup>

This is one indication of a typical pattern of the functional use by individuals of any kind of schooling experience and certification as a means of access to sought-after non-manual employment. This casts the school, whatever its intended training objectives, into the role of what Kinsey calls a 'conduit institution'.<sup>39</sup> He gives the example of the use made by students of the Tunisian Khalduniya College, set up with the intention of training teachers of Arabic for government schools, as a 'conduit' which 'led to non-educational jobs in the modern sector'. This kind of 'misuse' of educational provision by pupils reinforced the opinion held by some colonialists that any kind of schooling for 'the natives' would have undesirable consequences.

In the *Report of the Commission on Native Education in Southern Rhodesia* it is noted that: 'a clear majority of Rhodesian women, a large number of whom are fair and indulgent mistresses, have the opinion that mission-trained Natives are self-assertive and impudent. It is also said that mission natives are not as honest as "raw Natives". What appears to lie behind this kind of statement is the notion that education can 'spoil' 'the native'. But the deleterious affects of education were not solely linked with the development of 'unhealthy' social characteristics on an individual level. Large-scale threats to social order were perceived by some. Anderson reports the underlying conflict of perspectives between the District Commissioners in Kenya, who held the responsibility for the maintenance of law and order at a local level, and missionaries and others interested in the expansion and development of African education. 'Too much Education for many of them [D.C.s] spelt too fast a pace of change and therefore disturbances which might alter the whole frame of control which they had built up in their areas'.<sup>40</sup> The fears and concerns of the anti-education Europeans and those who urged gradualist strategies of change were directly related to what they saw as the destabilizing effects of the *detrribalization* of the African. The creation, that is, of a rootless class of urban 'malcontents' lacking in respect for traditional tribal authority and poorly socialized with regard to the behavioural standards of the white society. This was one of several factors which gave credence to Lugard's concept of *Indirect Rule*, which was to have a particular impact on British colonial education policy throughout the period up to the end of the Second World War. Access to schooling was to continue to be extremely limited, especially at post-elementary level. Renewed efforts were made to orient the school curriculum to the village, to aspects of traditional culture and to bolster the traditional forms of tribal authority.

Another strand in the policy, and one which directly linked the attempt to revitalize traditional tribal authority with selection and sponsorship in education, was the attempt in several of the colonies to establish schools specifically for the sons of tribal chiefs and government-appointed headmen. In the Gold Coast, as Foster reports, the traditional élites had not availed themselves of the opportunities of Western education and the emergence of an African intelligentsia with no base in the traditional authority system had led to antagonism and political instability, despite British attempts to bolster the authority of the chiefs. Support for tribal authority was fundamental to *indirect rule* and Lugard argued that the:

Identification of the ruling class with the Government accentuates the corresponding obligation to check mal-practice on their part. The task of educating them in the duties of a ruler becomes more than ever insistent; of inculcating a sense of responsibility; of convincing their intelligence of the advantages which accrue from the material prosperity of the peasantry, from free labour and initiative; of the necessity of delegating powers to trusted subordinates; of the evils of favouritism and bribery; of the importance of education, especially for the ruling class, and for the filling of lucrative posts under government.<sup>41</sup>

The Phelps-Stokes Report criticized missionary schools for their failure to make any differentiation between 'the education of the masses' and 'the development and training of Native leaders'.<sup>42</sup> The Report urged the need for education to be planned in relation to such a differentiation. The political service hoped that, by limiting access to post-primary education and the literary/academic curriculum,

they would be able to reproduce and control a neo-traditional native élite and avoid the creation of an unemployable educated group. There are many examples in Africa and elsewhere of attempts by the colonial authorities, and in some cases also the missions, to establish, with varying degrees of success, schools for the sons of chiefs. In Uganda the development of the 'high school' system of schools, modelled on the British public school tradition, was based almost entirely upon the provision of boarding education for the sons and other relatives of chiefs.

Mento High School was opened in 1905 with the aim of training the sons of chiefs. All of its first forty students were sons of chiefs . . . Iganga Girls' School was built to cater for the daughters of chiefs . . . Moreover, the fees paid in these High Schools were so high at that time that only sons of the rich—who were chiefs at that time—could afford to pay.<sup>43</sup>

The structure of the modern Ugandan education system, and many of its problems, are directly related to the high school system which developed between 1905 and 1950 almost exclusively for the education of the traditional élite.

In contrast to the 'success' of the Ugandan schools, similar attempts to establish schools for the sons of chiefs in the Dagomba region of the Ghanaian Northern Territories made little headway against the reluctance of the local aristocracy. Staniland reports that 'One or two divisional chiefs' sons were enrolled, but other chiefs sent the children of slaves or commoners, fearing that the European schools would turn their sons into labourers or stewards'.<sup>44</sup> Duncan-Johnstone, a provincial commissioner in the Northern Territories, and a staunch supporter of the policy of indirect rule, proposed in 1930 the establishment in the government school in Tamale of a special division for the training of 'the future governing class' in the responsibilities of native administration. A curriculum including administrative studies, local history, English, animal health and road maintenance was envisaged. This straightforwardly reflects the concerns and interests of the political service. However, despite the attempts of District Commissioners to persuade chiefs to allow their sons to be enrolled, the scheme was never implemented. As far as the children of commoners were concerned, the administration used its influence to restrict the numbers of children moving beyond Standard III schooling: the administration was haunted by the fear of a repetition of events in the south, where, it was thought, the authorities had 'allowed education to outstrip native administration in the race of progress'.<sup>45</sup>

It is only in the case of the education of traditional élites that an orthodox 'education as social control' thesis can be pursued with any confidence, since it is only at this level that colonial education policies were aimed at the Europeanization of 'the native', inasmuch as 'both the missionaries and the government wanted to have an influence on society through powerful individuals sympathetic to their views'.<sup>46</sup> As far as the education of the masses is concerned, the strategies employed by the colonial administrations cast education in the role of disrupter of political stability, rather than as a means of achieving political hegemony. The schooling of the masses must be seen in terms of policies of exclusion from schooling altogether or at least exclusion from the literary/academic curriculum.

Over and above the immediate political problems which had emerged from the colonial experience in Africa there is one factor which supported the particular direction given to education policy. That is the 'lessons that were learned' from the free rein given to the development of academic education in India. The links between

India and the policy in Africa and between education and social disorder are clearly made in the following comments from Arthur Mayhew, the long-standing Secretary of the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education. Defending the expense of attempts to develop a limited access system of technical and vocational education in Africa, he wrote:

The high cost per head is a necessary result of our African policy, born of bitter experience in India; a policy of caution and firm foundations, advancing gradually from a few selected and well-equipped centres in slowly widening circles, secondary education being restricted with reference to local demand and the more urgent claims of primary education.<sup>47</sup>

And on the consequences of unchecked expansion of education: 'There is a tendency which, although natural, is capable of perversion, to guard against a surplus production of graduates which may stimulate unrest and discontent'.<sup>48</sup>

Lord Lugard, also for some time a member of the CAC, made a similar connection:

The system which had proved so disastrous in India had its counterpart in the Crown Colonies and dependencies, and its results were similar. The lessons of India were ignored. I have already quoted the opinion of a French writer that a literary education on European lines had mischievous results, and only produces hostility and ingratitude. The results achieved by Holland, and to a lesser degree by Germany, in their Eastern Colonies are contrasted to our disadvantage. In South Africa General Smuts has recently described the existing system as 'wholly unsuited to native needs, and positively pernicious, leading the native to a dead wall over which he is unable to rise, and he becomes ready prey to the agitator'.<sup>49</sup>

Specifically, secondary education, in the minds of colonial administrators in Britain and Africa, became associated with political unrest. Thus the school came to be seen neither as an instrument of mass political socialization nor as a means of inculcating Western values. Rather, as more recent manpower planning theorists have urged, access to education and the rate of expansion of provision was to be directly linked to the needs of the economy (for example in Kenya to train Africans to replace the Indian immigrant workers and provide labour for the settler-owned coffee plantations) with the majority of school attenders experiencing a village-oriented, skills-based curriculum.

Support and impetus was given to these policies by the influential reports of the Phelps-Stokes Commission, an American-funded investigation into African education which visited West and South Africa in 1921 and East and Central Africa in 1924. The reports, *Education in Africa: A study of West, South and Equatorial Africa by the African Education Commission* (1922), and *Education in East Africa* (1925), were both written by Jesse Jones. The Commission was appointed by the British government, which warmly received their reports. And the original conception of the Commission was very much an outcome of the concern felt by some of the Protestant missions, the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society in particular, about the state of education in Africa.

The reports of the Commission were very much influenced by the work of black American educators at the Hampton and Tuskegee Colleges and parallels were drawn between the educational problems of the American negro and the African. As a result of this transfer of concepts, the emphasis of the reports was on the role of *rural education*. The 'wholesale transfer of the educational conventions of Europe'<sup>50</sup> to Africa was strongly criticized as 'educational slavery',<sup>51</sup> and the Commission advised in their stead 'the adaption of education to the needs of the people . . . and . . . to African conditions',<sup>52</sup> to include agricultural education and 'the simpler elements of trades required in Native villages and to prepare for the less skilled occupations in industrial concerns'.<sup>53</sup> The need for a small sector of academic education to feed into the professions was also recognized. The use of vernacular languages was recommended for the lower elementary forms, with English reserved for those who reached the upper standards. And it was urged that subjects like history and geography should be more related to 'the record of our own institutions and activities than that of strangers'.<sup>54</sup> These educational recommendations were then set within a wider framework of social change advocating the adaptation of 'primitive' and 'civilized' culture so that 'the people shall be urged and developed according to the best experience of both'.<sup>55</sup>

But Anderson makes the point that no account was taken in the reports of African participation in politics and decision-making: 'it badly neglected his aspirations for individual and political advancement'.<sup>56</sup> The reports of the Commission were closely followed by the publication by the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education (formed in 1923) of a *Memorandum on Educational Policy in British Tropical Africa* (1925), the main emphases of which Foster notes as being 'generally similar to those of the Phelps-Stokes Commissions but amplifications were made concerning the precise application of principles within British colonial areas'.<sup>57</sup> Significantly, increased government supervision of education was stressed. Foster summarizes the main points of this and the subsequent *Memorandum on the Education of African Communities* (1935) as being:

- (1) The structure of education was to be based on the continued activities of voluntary agencies but with general direction of policy in the hands of the respective colonial governments.
- (2) The schools were to be adapted to native life.
- (3) Grants-in-aid were to be made on the basis of efficiency.
- (4) The use of local vernaculars in education, particularly in the lower forms was to be stressed.
- (5) There was a growing need for more active supervision of schools by the colonial governments.
- (6) Great stress was laid on the need for technical, vocational and agricultural training at the expense of more 'traditional' subjects within the curriculum.
- (7) There was an increasing awareness of the need to expand educational facilities for women and girls.<sup>58</sup>

Again, remarkable similarities are apparent between these policies and the literature on non-formal education which emerged in the 1970s from the analysis of the world-wide educational malaise and which seemed to undercut the reliance that had been placed by developing nations on the 'take-off' effects of formal educational expansion. But in the 1920s and 1930s, while the social problems associated with formal academic/literary education were already long established, the rationale

behind the attempts to limit growth in this area was motivated in a somewhat different way, as we have seen. The ramifications of Phelps-Stokes are apparent throughout the British colonies but we must not fall into the trap of assuming that there was a straightforward and unproblematic transfer of policy into practice. In particular, the role of African *resistance* to 'adapted' education must not be ignored, and this is discussed below. Nonetheless, it is possible to trace the impact of these policies in a number of ways. For example in the holding down of educational expansion. Figures from the *Gold Coast Annual Education Report* of 1934, analysed by Mumford and Jackson,<sup>59</sup> show the total numbers of children attending school year-by-year for the previous 25 years (1911–1934). The trend of increase so shown reveals that it would have taken 600 years before the number attending school would have been as great as the child-population figures of the 1931 census. However, when these figures were amended to take account of the increases in population, the trend suggested it would take 3500 years before primary education would have been made available to 100% of the school-age population.

In Kenya, as King notes, 'the colonial government had a very effective examination hurdle low down the primary cycle, which meant that 65 to 75 per cent of all standard four children never went on to the last four years of primary education'.<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, as recommended in the Colonial Office Memorandum, English was only taught in the upper standards. The introduction of trade schools and vocational training in Kenya has already been recorded. In the Gold Coast, Kenya and elsewhere all pressures from the Africans to establish government secondary schools were resisted by the colonial authorities and most government expenditure went in grants-in-aid to the mission schools. As a result 'In 1939 there was still no secondary education for Africans anywhere in Central Africa'.<sup>61</sup> This position was carefully sustained in Central and East Africa by a rigid racial segregation of schooling for the European settlers, the Indians and the Africans. Koinange<sup>62</sup> reports the Kenya government as spending £59 on each European child, £4 16s 0d on each Asian child, and £1 10s 0d on each African child per annum. In some cases it is possible to establish a direct link between political policy and the holding down or reversal of educational expansion. In 1934, Morris, Director of Education in Uganda, closed four of the eight junior secondary schools in the Protectorate because of what he saw as the consequences of the overproduction of school graduates who would be 'the political emissaries of agitation and discontent' and have no outlet for their energies 'but political intrigue and the flouting of authority'.<sup>63</sup> In 1924, in the Northern Territories of Ghana, a Superintendent of Schools was appointed, the Reverend A. H. Chandler, 'and made answerable directly to the Colonial Secretary in Accra, instead of the Education Department'.<sup>64</sup> During Chandler's period of administration all schooling above Standard IV was ended outside of Tamale, the administrative centre of the Territories—and access to the Tamale schools was heavily restricted. In every case alongside these restrictions on educational provision:

officials sought to revitalize tribal authority and to restrict the ambitions of the emergent few. Black and white teachers were encouraged to regard African children as members of a traditional rural society, which slowly and cautiously would adopt the modern blessings of hygiene, morals and manure.<sup>65</sup>

Taking Kenya again and recognizing the particular influence of the existence of a



permanent and economically dominant white-settler group, we can also note the particular orientation given to the rural education offered in the school agricultural programmes. The growing of plantation crops by the Africans was forbidden. It was clearly intended that they should not be allowed to emerge in competition with the white plantation-owners. The Africans were interested in *Ngirigaca* (a Kikuyu corruption of the English work for agriculture), learning, that is, the European skills involved in the cultivation of cash crops. They were not interested in *urime* (tarming of a traditional kind) or *gicumba* (digging), although it was these latter two that were represented in the rural education curricula of the bush schools. The effects of adaptation were not limited to the East African schools. In West Africa also there were attempts to change the direction of development of African education. In Nigeria, in the absence of a permanent white-settler community, a limited system of secondary education had developed (20 secondary grammar schools were established by 1930, 10 of them government schools). Attempts at adaptation here included changes being made by the British Overseas examining bodies in the contents of their school certificate and matriculation examinations. At the instigation of the Colonial Office Advisory Committee, the English universities involved in overseas examining expressed a willingness, in the best traditions of Phelps-Stokes, to modify their syllabuses 'in order that the external examination system might be adapted to local needs' and to ensure that colonial subjects were 'not being forced into an educational mould that might deform their particular attitudes and unfit them for a life in their own country' (*University of London Minutes, 1935-1936*). In 1935 a subcommittee was set up to co-ordinate the activities of the examining bodies. The subcommittee finally recommended that three examinations subjects seemed appropriate for adaptation: Botany: by the substitution of local plants; Geography, by giving greater emphasis to local geography; and English language, where both topic material more relevant to African interests (the forest; native markets; popular superstitions; native salutations and greetings; polygamy; the choice of career for an educated African; the good and bad characteristics of native religions) and options in vernacular languages could be introduced. The University of London subsequently accepted Hausa and Yoruba as suitable as academic subjects, as 'Special Language Options'. Both Efik and Igbo were however rejected because, among other things, they lacked sufficient native literature for 'an adequate test of proficiency' to be conducted. Even so, a success in any of the certificates continued to require the candidate to pass the English language paper.

In 1935 the Advisory Committee also considered a recommendation from one of its members who had recently made a tour of Africa, for the sponsorship of textbooks on African history, but this appeared to come to nothing.

It is important to put the scale and the impact of these examination changes into perspective. The remaining subjects in the examinations were left intact (apart from some changes in Art) and continued to be examined in English. Even the Africanized essay topics were to be written in English. And the other paraphernalia, rituals and experiences of an English secondary education continued to be a part of the school careers of those Nigerian pupils who gained access to the secondary grammar schools: 'The use of uniforms, college blazers and caps, cutlery and the English language continued undisturbed'.<sup>66</sup>

The African's motivation to obtain school certificates was abated neither by the adaptations, nor the renaming of the school certificate examination as the 'Overseas School Certificate' which did not:

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**School Examination Subjects in Nigeria: 1916–1936**

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	Subjects offered to Nigerians before adaptation	Subjects offered to Nigerians after adaptation
Group I:	English	English
Group II:	History Religious knowledge Latin	History Religious knowledge Latin Yoruba
Group III:	Arithmetic Geometry Algebra Geography Physics-with-chemistry	Arithmetic Geometry Algebra Geography Chemistry Botany Biology
Group IV:	Drawing	Drawing Book-keeping Shorthand Art

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Note that candidates were expected to pass in a minimum of five subjects taken from at least three group including Group I.

(Source: Annual Reports and Examiners' Reports of the Oxford Delegacy for Local Examinations, Cambridge University Local Examinations Syndicate, and the University of London Matriculation and Schools Examinations Council, 1916–1936.)

bring any noticeable changes in the performance of Nigerian students. Many of them, who came from good, well-equipped schools, continued over the years to do very well in the examinations, whilst those from the schools where there were few competent teachers and ill-equipped library and laboratory facilities, continued to do poorly at examinations.<sup>67</sup>

Again this was not in small part due to the resistance of the Nigerians to the philosophy of adaptation. There was, Omolewa reports, 'a very strong suspicion among Nigerians that they were considered unworthy of English education'.<sup>68</sup> The policy of adaptation was also heartily condemned by many established members of the educated African élite.

While it is the case that the Phelps-Stokes Commission provided the colonial authorities with a powerful ideology of legitimation for the policy of adaptation throughout Africa and the other colonies\* there was also a second, but publicly less-acceptable legitimating ideology at work, an ideology of *racism*. This ideology was based on the idea of the intellectual inferiority of the African. Thus Anderson notes that 'A recurring basic assumption made by Europeans was that the African was innately less intelligent than the European and therefore needed a long period of practical education, before any further plans for his development could be considered'.<sup>69</sup> Such an assumption is certainly evident in the views and writings of many missionary educators. It was frequently considered that a minimal ability to

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\* D'Souza specifically mentions its application to the New Zealand Maoris, South African Blacks and the natives of The Philippines.<sup>70</sup>

read the scriptures was the most that could be expected in the way of intellectual achievement from the vast majority of the mission school pupils. Even the achievements of the successful African pupils could be dismissed. J. W. C. Dougall writes 'It is noteworthy that the effort of pupils is given to the feat of memorization and those who know the African will agree in expressing astonishment at his remarkable power of verbal memory *as against* his power of understanding meaning.'<sup>71</sup> (My emphasis.)

Exactly the same arguments were levelled against the examination performances of those pupils who passed junior, higher and matriculation examinations. W. H. Maclean (1932) put the exceptional performances of colonial students in these examinations down to 'their highly developed faculty for passing our usual type of examination by feat of memory without any understanding'.<sup>72</sup> And Sir Michael Sadler, a member of the Colonial Office Advisory Committee on Education, expressed a similar view at a committee meeting in 1932. He argued that 'The natives had such a power of memorising that they gave on paper a misleading impression of skill and ability'.<sup>74</sup> But, as Omolewa notes, 'when the African candidates failed the examinations, they were considered by those who believed in their ineducability as true images of their backward society'.<sup>75</sup> (Heads I win, tails you lose.) Thus 'for long stretches of the colonial era, ... Africans as a group were thought sufficiently different from Europeans not to merit the same access to knowledge'.<sup>76</sup> To the arguments stressing the political and social undesirability of African access to European education, and those which emphasized the need to adapt the education being offered to the 'needs' and 'conditions' of the African, can be added the case of the Africans' intellectual inability to benefit in any real way from European subject-matter.

### African resistance and the academic curriculum

As indicated already, the realities of African education cannot simply be read off from the colonial policies formulated in London. In particular is it necessary to take account of the role of African *resistance* to colonial policy on education. This resistance took several forms: there was the pressure exerted on the missions and the colonial governments to increase the provision of schools; in addition there was specific pressure to provide secondary and further education opportunities for the African pupil; and, finally, there was opposition to attempts to 'adapt' the curriculum of the African school. These forms of resistance are related, naturally enough, to the Africans' perception of the role of education, collectively and individually, in their future. In particular, as noted already, education was seen to be one source of the material superiority of the white colonialists, and a route for individual social mobility. For example, Anderson quotes two extracts from essays written in 1930 by Alliance High School pupils under the title 'Why I go to School':<sup>77</sup>

- (a) 'If I go to school and get much knowledge I would not always work for others but I may have much money, I will look for many workmen'.
- (b) 'I myself want to go to school. But every boy who does not want to go to school is stupid. You can't be a great man without going to school. If you want to be a great man then go to school'.

Where secondary education was established, the emphasis on preparation for the overseas examinations provided the successful pupil with the opportunity to proceed to higher education in Britain or elsewhere.

Thus we find, as early as 1885 in the Cape, opposition from African school graduates to the plans to drop Latin and Greek from the curriculum of Lovedale School. And Anderson records a strike of boys at Maseno School in 1908 who refused to take part in manual labour and made demands for more reading and writing. The early African enthusiasm for technical education soon wore off as it came to be realized that the sort of skills being offered were directed at preparation for routine subordinate positions. Increasingly the missions and the colonial authorities came under pressure to provide an academic/literary type curriculum that would prepare the successful pupil for a lucrative government or commercial post as clerk. And, as we have seen previously, the Africans also resisted the limitations of the narrow catechistic curricula, taught in the vernacular, by many of the evangelical missionary schools. Ndabaninga Sithole, himself a Wesleyan missionary school pupil, captures the perceptions and aspirations of the African pupil in these comments on his schooldays:

to us education meant reading books, writing and talking English, and doing arithmetic . . . At our homes we have done a lot of ploughing, planting, weeding and harvesting . . . We knew how to do these things. What we knew was not education; education was what we did not know. We wanted as we said at Ndebele, 'to learn the book until it remained in our heads, to speak English until we could speak it through our noses'.<sup>79</sup>

In Bernsteinian terms what Sithole is describing and demanding in this passage is the strong framing of a literary/academic education. That is to say, a strong 'boundary relationship between what may be taught and what may not be taught', between 'non-school everyday community knowledge' and 'educational knowledge'.<sup>80</sup> In terms of individual social mobility, the literary/academic curriculum was regarded by the African pupils as 'vocational' inasmuch as it provided the possibility of employment in the wage sector of the economy. There is perhaps a second reading of Sithole's comments, in which we can see the commitment to an academic/literary school-based education reflecting back as a rejection of, and to some extent alienation from, the traditional tribal culture 'as a whole way of life'. This may be seen more clearly in the following contrasts drawn by a 'school-Xhosa' (a Christian mission educated Xhosa) between himself and the traditional, tribal 'red-Xhosa'.

The difference between a Red man and myself is that I wear clothes like white people's, as expensive as I can afford, while he is satisfied with old clothes and lets his wife go about in a Red dress. After washing I smear vaseline on my face: he uses red ocre to look nice. He is illiterate whereas I can read and write. I want to educate my children, but he just wants to circumcise his boys so that he should have a daughter-in-law. A Red man attends sacrifices but I attend church. I pray for my sins when I am sick. He knows nothing about sins, and approaches a diviner for his illnesses. I was baptized, he was sacrificed for. I may not use any words that are obscene, but he uses any type of words, even in the presence of his elders, without fear or rebuke.<sup>81</sup>

Discussing this cultural separation between the 'school-Xhosa' and the 'red-Xhosa', Mayer notes that 'The Xhosa think of this division as bisecting their entire population'.<sup>82</sup> Clearly, for the 'school-Xhosa' the acquisition of a European education also involves the acquisition of European values and a life-style, aspirations and consumption patterns taken from European 'models'.

It is important to reiterate the point that the perceived relationship between academic/literary certification and wage employment was at many points during the colonial period a realistic assessment of the job market on the Africans' part. At least some of the claims made about levels of unemployment among school leavers during this period are unsubstantiated attempts to bolster the case for industrial and agricultural education. This is evident, for example, in the account by Rev. Kemp of the state of affairs surrounding his mission in the Gold Coast in 1891:

We have been told that our schools simply glutted the market with clerks. For our own part, we have most earnestly wished that there was even a shadow of truth in this statement. Were this really the case, we, as a Mission, should not find so much difficulty, when desiring teachers and catechists for our own work, in competing with merchants in their tempting salaries to our young men. And further, we should not have expressed the strong feeling of disgust that the merchants and the Government alike so constantly employed young men without references from us. But this nevertheless, has been our experience, so great was their desire to employ the candidates, with or without testimonials.<sup>83</sup>

Here again is the contradiction between the metropolitan government policy of industrial and agricultural education and the colonial administration's need for literate clerks. The same contradiction at a much later point in time is recorded in the case of Guyana by Bacus.<sup>84</sup> Here, government attempts to orient the primary school curriculum to agricultural employment can be set against the differing levels of unemployment in the occupation market.

**Percentage of employed and number of unemployed to each vacancy in different occupational groups in Guyana in 1965**

Occupational group	Percentage unemployed	Number unemployed to each vacancy
Professional	0.0	0.00
Non-professional with specialized training	0.3	0.47
Administrative, executive and supervisory	0.1	0.20
Clerical and sales workers	6.4	7.64
Other service workers	10.7	20.30
Craftsmen and technical workers	19.2	12.22
Manual workers	39.9	108.86

The *resistance* to 'adapted' education by pupils and parents did not only take the form of representations or political action. In the day-to-day running of the schools the pupils were able to subvert the attempts to impose non-academic subjects by devoting their energies only to those subjects which they saw as being useful in terms of their job aspirations. Religious instruction lessons and rural studies lessons were

simply not attended to or taken seriously. Pressure was also exerted on the teachers to confine themselves to those topics covered by the examination syllabuses. But the most dramatic, and in some respects, most successful line of resistance was the setting up by the Africans of independent schools of their own. In East Africa in 1929, the Kikuyu Karing'a Education Association was formed to co-ordinate the work of a number of already existing independent Kikuyu schools. These independent schools were closely linked to the establishment of independent African churches.

The attitude of the colonial government to these independent schools was initially sceptical. There was clearly a fear of the political role being played by these African-controlled institutions. But as Anderson<sup>85</sup> reports, the government increasingly came to accept the existence of these schools as a part of the overall educational provision in the colony. From 1935 the annual reports of the Department of Education began to record these schools in its statistics. The reports of 1935 to 1938 list the following numbers of schools and pupils:

	Schools	Pupils
1935	34	2510
1936	44	3984
1937	54	7223
1938	41	6494

These are registered schools but there was also a small number that were unregistered. These schools were inspected by the Department and, according to the 1938 Report, 'increased efficiency in these schools is evidenced by the results of the Common Entrance Examination to the secondary schools. In 1936 five were successful, in 1937, 15 were successful. During the present year, out of 199 candidates, 27 passed. One third of the total acceptance of Kagumo were pupils from independent schools'.<sup>86</sup> These schools were normally built and supported by the local community and often run by a single teacher working without salary. In the larger schools headmasters were appointed or provided by the Department of Education. This independent school movement led in 1939 to the establishment of Githunguri College, an independent teacher-training college and the first post-primary educational provision for Africans in the whole of Central and East Africa. 'The aim was to produce students, who, whilst able to handle so-called "European knowledge and techniques" remained firmly linked with their African heritage and committed to achieving an African form of modern independent society'.<sup>87</sup> Among those who were teachers at Githunguri was Jomo Kenyatta. The College attempted to escape from the restrictions placed on the normal school curriculum by the government and was regarded with some hostility both by the government and the missions. Several of the teachers became involved in political activities, and lectures on politics and current affairs were offered in addition to the normal curriculum subjects. The College was eventually closed in 1952. Indeed it is a significant reflection on the colonial government's view of the independent schools and their overall attitude to African education that at the outbreak of the 'emergency' in Kenya

the whole independent school system was closed. The government clearly saw the independent schools as a base for political opposition. While less organized and coordinated, a similar pattern of self-help, in the founding of community schools, is to be found in Nigeria during the period 1939–1960. Most of this development took place at the secondary level with the setting up of secondary-grammar schools. In 1940 there were 29 secondary schools in Nigeria, 12 of them government schools and by 1960 there were 227 secondary schools, 26 of them government schools. Almost all of this expansion was the outcome of local community effort. The schools established, while varying enormously in their facilities, equipment, quality of teachers etc., were uniformly modelled in the British grammar school of the period and provided for 'the intensification of the process of acceptance of the literary tradition introduced by the Christian missions through formal classroom education'.<sup>88</sup> Again the founding of these schools is closely linked to pupil and parental aspirations toward employment in the expanding modern sector of the economy. And these aspirations were not limited only to those Africans who had come under the influence of the Christian missionaries. In the Muslim regions, Ahmadiyah separatist schools were set up on the basis of Western educational curricula and methods.

The effects of the African push for access to a Western literary/academic education are plainly marked in the current provision of education in most ex-colonial societies, not least because the majority of education officials and teachers had acquired their own education through the academic system. I have argued that the demand for such an education was often related to individual mobility aspirations and has to be set against the various attempts by the colonial and metropolitan governments to impose 'adapted' forms of education. However, the arguments put forward by the colonial authorities, supported by the Phelps-Stokes Commission reports, for example, were quickly 'penetrated' (Willis) by the Africans. But, as Willis argues, 'penetrations are not only crucially skewed and deprived of their independence, but also bound back finally into the structure they are uncovering in complex ways by internal and external limitations'.<sup>89</sup> That is to say there is 'a "partial" relationship of these penetrations to that which they seem to be independent of, and see into'.<sup>90</sup>

The African 'resistance' to forms of 'adapted' education may be seen to lie in the 'cultural insights' embodied in the demand for a Western style academic/literary curriculum, though we must bear in mind Willis's point that 'In their very formation these insights are distorted, turned and deposited into other forms'.<sup>91</sup> These 'insights' provide a penetration of the ideological complex surrounding the legitimation of 'adapted' education in terms of the 'needs' of African society, the long process of development towards self-government and the 'conditions' of economic production in the colonies. They were overlain, as I have already suggested, by expressions of African racial inferiority. The African came to see the social, economic and material advantages of the colonizers as founded upon their access to and control of education. For some this was a realization related to the potential for personal advance. For others, education was seen to be the key to mass political consciousness. In each case, the process of education was identified with the skills of literacy and separated from the known skills of agriculture: 'Education was what we did not know' (Sithole). The equality of the African and the drive for education are expressed in Nnamdi Azikiwe's poetic advice to African youth, which significantly is stated in the imagery of Greek mythology.<sup>92</sup>

There is no achievement which  
 Is possible to human beings which  
 Is not possible to Africans  
 Your studies in Logic should  
 Lead to the correct conclusions  
 Therefore go forth, thou  
 Son of Africa, and return  
 home laden with the  
 Golden Fleece.

And W. E. B. Dubois, an African educationalist, has a similar message in his cry that 'we will fight for all time against any proposal to educate black boys and girls simply as servants and underlings, or simply for the use of other people'.<sup>93</sup>

African resistance to 'adapted' education was thus based on the recognition that agricultural training would not provide the skills of 'cash-crop farming and was designed only to turn them back upon and 'improve' the traditional subsistence farming methods; and that industrial training was, for the most part, aimed at the production of subordinate workers skilled in routine manual tasks or in routine clerical work. Alakija argued 'Africans are not to be a nation of clerks without a future'.<sup>94</sup>

In some cases, as we have noted, the resistance to adaptation and the concomitant demand for expanded provision of formal schooling found its expression in the formation of social and political associations or in collective 'self-help' activities. Thus the 'creativity' of cultural penetration was translated from an individual to a *group level*. Willis suggests that 'Creativity is in no individual act, no one particular head'.<sup>95</sup> In some respects these social formations are linked at the cultural level to more traditional forms of African social organization. Paradoxically, they are founded upon the sharing of traditional tribal agricultural tasks. An example of this is the Kenyan notion of self-help, 'Harambee', which 'as a concept is a collective effort meaning "pull together"'.<sup>96</sup>

The concept embodies ideas of mutual assistance, joint effort, mutual social responsibility and community self-reliance. It embraces such activities as collectivist neighbourhood house-building, weeding, bush clearing, irrigation, harvesting, fundraising etc. Harambee practice is found among many ethnic groups in Kenya, for instance—

The Luo call it Konyir Kende  
 the Luhya call it Obwasio  
 the Kikuyu call it Ngmatio  
 the Masai call it Ematonyok  
 the Kamba call it Mwethia.<sup>96</sup>

This traditional conception of community collective self-reliance has been exploited recently in the development of African political culture. The second paradox of this collective recognition of, and effort towards, the potential of schooling is that it involves a commitment to institutional processes of individual competition and the notion, embodied in the didactic methods of teaching and the procedures of examining, of knowledge as private property.

It is in relation to this paradox that we can identify both the ways in which the 'insights', which give rise to resistance and self-help, are 'distorted, turned and



deposited in other forms' and are partially related to 'that which they seem to be independent of, and see into'—colonial domination. The commitment to 'progress' through Western education is also a commitment to the values, attitudes and orientations of Western culture and a rejection of the traditional forms of African culture, though in a different way from that meant by Willis: 'A commitment to work and conformism in school is not the giving up of something finite: a measured block of time and attention. It is the giving up of the *use* of a set of potential activities in a way that cannot be measured and controlled and which prevents their alternative use'.<sup>97</sup>

The defeat of the colonial ideology of 'adapted' schooling is, as Willis puts it, a 'phyrrhic' victory in that it 'passes a larger structure more unconsciously and more naturalised'.<sup>98</sup> That structure, in this case, is the cultural domination of colonialism and the social formations of capitalism that underly it. These social and cultural forms are naturalized in the process of and experience of schooling by the individual pupil. In particular the traditional collectivism of African society is yielded to the individualism of competition, examination and success and failure in the school. Also, as Willis suggests, but again not in the way he suggests, the cultural penetrations of colonialism, which provide the basis for the demand for formal schooling, are 'repressed, disorganized and prevented from reaching their full potential . . . by deep, basic and disorientating divisions'. In total opposition to the case of 'the lads', it is 'mental labour' that takes on 'a significance and critical expression for its owner's social position and identity'.<sup>99</sup> The educated African stands on that side of the line with individualism and mental activity, where manual labour is rejected as demeaning. Thus Chief J. A. O. Odebiyi condemns Nigerian secondary school graduates as 'mercenary, materialistic and complacent' and suggests that 'they tend to think that possession of a Cambridge or West African Examination Council certificate entitles them to believe that the world owes them a living'.<sup>100</sup> One *division* then, is that between mental and manual labour. Other divisions are attendant upon this. For example, the division between the modern African and the tribal African, between Western culture and traditional culture—the division, that is, that separates the 'red-Xhosa' from the 'school-Xhosa'—the division between the English speaker and the vernacular speaker, between the literate and the illiterate, or, fundamentally, between the schooled and the unschooled. But in other respects the role of education has also been to act back upon and break down divisions within traditional African society. Divisions between the sexes have been weakened as African women have gained access to school. To some extent, also, education has weakened ethnic and tribal divisions and has begun to replace them with a national consciousness. In another respect there is a fundamental difference between the analysis of schooling in Africa and Willis's analysis of working-class schooling in Britain. In the case of 'the lads', their cultural penetrations of schooling took a form which did not give them access to any possibility of political articulation. In the case of colonial Africa this is a significant and profound by-product of African success in gaining access to school and higher education.

It is obvious that by embarking on training the African in world history, freedom through the rule of law, constitutions, fellowship, equality of rights, toleration, respect, trust and free discussion the colonial government was faced with the herculean task of reconciling their teaching to the

fact of colonialism with its display of power and intolerance. For education could hardly be restricted to making a harmless, colonial-dominated African since the African was also introduced to revolutionary ideas which were feared by colonial officials.<sup>101</sup>

But it is here that the contradictions inherent in the relationship between education and colonialism bite deep. While education produced an élite political leadership to spearhead the drive towards independence, it also tied its leadership to cultural dependence upon Western models of the conceptions of development. As Carnoy explains it:

In the short run, particularly in the immediate post-World War II period, France and Britain may have seen schooling as a curse, but in retrospect, European education created 'sensible' values of liberty and freedom, ones that were derived from European standards of conduct and were likely to produce a continuing cultural and economic dependency on the ex-colonial countries. As an alternative to the kind of resistance to colonization produced by the uneducated, schooling served Britain and France well.<sup>102</sup>

The model of analysis present here moves away from the one way, deterministic, and aggregate conception of colonial schooling towards a position which recognizes the functionally linked, interactive and mutually conditioning nature of colonizer-colonized relationships. Indeed, in the light of such an analysis, colonial education may be located firmly within the framework of the Chilean *dependencia* perspective in that: 'Dependence in any given society is a complex set of associations in which the external dimensions are determinative in varying degrees of the internal ones and, indeed, internal variables may very well reinforce the pattern of external linkages'.<sup>103</sup>

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