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THE CHANGING FACE OF COLONIAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

A book review by Prof Corene de Wet

The author of this work is Peter Kallaway, Emeritus Professor, University of the Western Cape, and Research Associate, School of Education, University of Cape Town. Kallaway is one of the foremost authorities on history of education in South Africa. He is a prolific writer of many books and academic articles about the history of education under apartheid in South Africa and British colonial Africa. His highly valued edited works include *Apartheid and Education: The Education of Black South Africans* (Johannesburg: Raven, 1984), *The History of Education under Apartheid, 1948–1995* (New York: Peter Lang Publishers, 2002), and *Education after Apartheid* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1997). The publication of a new book by Kallaway always creates interest among academics, because he is known for his accurate research and deep understanding of the African colonial world and education in South Africa.

In his “Acknowledgments” Kallaway gives the reader a glimpse into factors that played an important role in his development as an academic and human being. He pays homage to his parents for their support for his education. He mentions the impact of his father’s respect for his fellow human beings on his own humanness. Mention is also made of the impact of academics such as Prof Winnie Maxwell from the History Department at Rhodes University, colleagues in South Africa and abroad in his development as a lifelong student and academic. Kallaway acknowledges the important influence of the interdisciplinary nature of revisionist studies prevailing at the University of the Witwatersrand during his tenure on his understanding of the history of education in Africa. This allowed him to distinguish “between the context of policy formulation and the context of policy realization – between what people said (discourse) and what people actually did in the practice of educational policy development in colonial context” (Kallaway, 2021:4). In the first five chapters of the collection Kallaway (2021:4) explores how “particular interpretations of policy emerged as part of an intertextual and institutional context that made the texts ‘reasonable’” for those in power. In the last two chapters, Kallaway focuses on the South African context.

In Chapter 1 the author focuses on the worldwide Protestant mission church's response to the changing political, social and economic environment of the interwar years. He explores how mission initiatives helped to shape thinking about education in Asia, Africa, North America, Oceania and Latin America by the 1930s in the political framework established by the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Chapter 2 expands the discussion of the reframing of the nature and purpose of missionary education in colonial education. This chapter highlights the changing emphasis of conferences of the New Education Fellowship (NEF) during the Depression and the rise of totalitarianism in Germany, Italy, Japan and the USSR. Through his critical analysis of the leading discourses of the different conferences, especially the NEF conference in South Africa (1934), Kallaway sheds light on the complex debates on how to link the propagation of Christianity to the economic, social, medical and educational needs of colonised people, and how to work within the political framework of colonialism.

In Chapter 3 Kallaway interrogates the ambiguities and contradictions of education policy and practice in British colonial Africa (1918–1945). This chapter highlights the link between the emerging international politics of welfare and the provision of education in the colonial context. Kallaway concludes that the lack of resources in colonial Africa restricted greater access to schooling in these colonies.

Kallaway furthermore critically explores the influence of the emergent science of social anthropology (Chapter 4) and linguistics (Chapter 5) in shaping debates on education policy in Africa. Chapter 4 makes for interesting reading. Kallaway (2021:160) argues that Bronislaw Malinowski's notion of "cultural contact", as promoted by him during the 1934-New Education Fellowship Conferences held in Cape Town and Johannesburg, provided "a near perfect rationale for what was later to become 'Bantu Education', the blueprint for apartheid education in South Africa after 1948". In Chapter 5 Kallaway draws attention to Diedrich Westerman's (1875–1956) contribution to the field of African languages and the promotion of African studies on the international stage.

Kallaway demonstrates the African response to colonial education in two case studies from South Africa that highlights the careers of two African leaders in the field of education. In Chapter 7 Kallaway contributes to the limited body of knowledge related to the intellectual history of black South Africans in the pre-apartheid era. In his discussion of the life and career of Donald M'timkulu (1907–2000) Kallaway (2021:194) highlights "the complexities of these colonial lives". He pays tribute to "a committed educator who defended the rights of Africans to a schooling equal to that of their white colleagues, and to an education that allowed blacks to achieve their potential in the modern world" (Kallaway, 2021:244). In Chapter 8 Kallaway reviews cultural activist Samuel E.K. Mqhayi's (1875–1945) historical writings and presentations in relation to the field of academic history and evaluates the impact of his literary works on the education of children schooled in the isiXhosa language since the mid-1930s. Despite a scarcity of resources, Kallaway was able to give a voice to two leading pre-apartheid South African intellectuals who sought to defend the rights of colonial people to have a say in the nature of their education.

The concluding section of the book renders an excellent reflection by the author on the following: (1) Difficulties researchers encounter while researching colonial education due to a lack of credible resources and the absence of the voices of the colonised. (2) The part Christian missionaries, the New Education Fellowship and American philanthropic foundations played in the construction of colonial education policy network. (3) The complex part individuals such

as J.H. Oldman and C.T. Loram played in the development of welfare and education policy for the African policies. (4) African's response to pre-apartheid education.

The book makes a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge on education in colonial Africa despite the fact that the first five chapters were previously published in academic journals, edited books and/or presented at academic conferences. Making previously published research available in a South African edition of *The changing face of education in colonial Africa*, gives students and researchers of the history of education insight into how the discourses of missionaries, members of philanthropic movements, academics and to a lesser extent members of the colonial bureaucracy, changed over a period of fifty years. The author should be lauded for the inclusion of two never before published case studies in the publication. These two chapters give voice to the colonised and explain why the colonised often supported colonial education (Chapter 6 and 7).

The book is a critical narration of the changing face of education policy in late colonial Africa against the background of broad social and economic trends. This highlights the importance of contextualisation. The book is however more than a critical account of colonial education in Africa; it contributes to the historiography of history of education. The author makes for example no claim of so-called objectivity. In the "Acknowledgements", Kallaway sets the tone of a personalised approach to history writing. In his narrations Kallaway often enters into, albeit one-sided, conversations with the readers in his endeavours to make sense of a complex research venture hampered by a scarcity of primary sources.

The changing face of education in colonial Africa is a well-written book, based on sound research that contributes to our understanding of the roots of apartheid education in South Africa. Students and academics with an interest in history of education, policymakers, as well as historiography should read the book.

Full publishing details and information on where to purchase the book are given below.

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