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Title: History Bites. Understanding the history of technical and vocational education in the context on the recent focus on skills development.
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Introduction

This paper traces the development of technical and industrial education in South Africa from 1920 and sketches the key debates that framed such provision. The paper initially provides a social context from which to understand the debates around technical and vocational education provision at that time. It then examines the development of the systems of industrial and technical education provision in South Africa in the early twentieth century and outlines the major issues that informed the provision of trade training and industrial education programmes. The idea of exploring the history of TVET provision in South Africa is to explore the recent focus on skills development and the move to the FET band. The paper is meant to generate discussion about what the historical lessons are as we move towards particular human resource goals of the country.

The paper makes two generic assertions. It firstly argues that Union Government technical education programmes in the period 1920 to 1960 were shaped and formulated according to particular notions of social and educational inferiority, backwardness, indigence and abnormal behaviour. In the noted period technical and industrial education provision represented a fundamental component in social and educational programmes and was deemed by respective Union Governments to be a critical provision for working class, poor and indigent children in urban areas. Social and educational policies were focused on the technical training needs of the emerging industries as part of the reconstruction of the South African economy, as well as ‘teaching people the habits and main social requirements of work’. The latter reason was deemed a crucial aspect of the regulation and socialisation of the growing numbers of urban workers and inhabitants, especially those from the submerged ‘poor white’, African and coloured communities.

It is notable in this regard that the various white elected governments in the period 1920 to 1960 all addressed the need to provide work training for the urban unskilled and unemployed from the perspective that they needed to “enable them (unskilled and unemployed) to enter the ranks of the workers and be self-supporting.”\(^1\) Crucially, the provision of skilled manual labour opportunities in that period was determined and shaped by the prevailing system of apprenticeship in South Africa. Any reform or provision of technical education thereafter had to not only frame changes in the system within the logic and previous development of industrial and technical education provision in South Africa, but also had to be mindful of the role of apprenticeship in the racially constituted labour market.

The second key assertion is that technical and vocational training in South Africa after 1920 was primarily framed by social debates about the ‘useful citizen’ and social order in urban areas, and by the notion that all workers (particularly males) needed to be provided with certain kinds of social and work skills. These skills were understood to refer primarily to

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discipline and preparedness that made people both good workers and good citizens. Along with the emphasis on providing education and training that would lead to employment opportunities, in the period after 1920 greater attention was equally paid to the early age that children were leaving school, the lack of opportunities for learning an employable skill and thereby securing ’gainful’ employment, and the general lack of social welfare, educational and recreational facilities that provided for a ‘stable’ working and social environment.

The construction of Union Education policy from the 1920s

Crucially, three factors informed the formulation of technical and vocational education provision after 1920, namely:
1. The predominant focus of technical and vocational education provision before 1900 on the African and coloured populations (as part of colonial ideology)
2. The particular needs of the white (especially rural) population
3. The impact of the emerging social democratic tradition of the 1920s

1. The colonial provision of vocational education

EG Malherbe has noted that when vocational and industrial training was first introduced at the Cape Colony it was provided for coloureds and not for whites.

For almost 50 years before 1900, bricklaying, plastering, painting, decorating, engine cleaning, shoemaking, tailoring, carpentry and masonry were in fact widely considered only fit for coloured men and overseas workers.”

In this respect, the earliest traces of vocational education can be traced back to (separate) mission schools for ‘native’ and coloured children. In 1855, Governor of the Cape Colony Sir George Grey instituted a scheme of industrial education for ‘native’ children, and in 1861 industrial departments were attached to certain coloured mission schools at the Cape.

Certainly, industrial or vocational education occupied a very “special place in colonial ideology that was directly related to efforts aimed at ‘civilising’ African peoples in the latter half of the nineteenth century.” In fact, for a long time before the turn of the twentieth century the industrial education movement (expressed loosely in ways that drew upon experiences of experimental projects elsewhere) was firmly focused on providing ‘different’ or ‘adapted special education’ for ‘primitive peoples’ in a rural context. Andrew Paterson addressed this aspect of colonial education provision in the previous paper.

Indeed, it is argued that it was only when large numbers of the white population had been propelled off the land by changes in agrarian relations in the 1890s that the focus of technical and vocational education provision shifted from the coloured and African populations.

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4 Kallaway (1992). p18
5 Even though technical and industrial education provision was predominantly focused on the white population after the 1890s, technical education continued to be stigmatised as “kaffir work” and looked upon by white workers as ‘degrading’ and unacceptable. The reluctance of members of the white population to engage in ‘training for manual labour’ was certainly
2. The particular needs of the white population after 1900
From the 1890s the provision of technical and industrial education in South Africa became more intimately linked to an argument in favour of schooling that was directly relevant to the environment and life chances of white, especially rural, children. An article in the Cape Argus in 1892 noted that:

What to do with our white boys promises to be as troublesome a question in this new country as in the outworn communities of the old world. It is not that the commercial and professional classes in towns find it difficult to place their sons satisfactorily in the way of attaining a position equal to that of their fathers. The difficulty extends to the sons of working men and what is more serious for the future of the country, to the sons of the farming community.

An Education Commission appointed by the Cape Government in 1891 had noted that:

The schoolwork must be made more variously fitted for the scholar. There must be thousands of white children even in the towns for whom booklore has not a complete charm. Yet these children need the discipline and training to be had only in a school. In many of these cases, blackboard drawing, woodcarving, cardboard modelling and some other handicrafts and modes are particularly applicable.

Industrial education after the 1890s thus came to be directly associated with the social salvation of white children and as part of the push for greater differentiation within the emerging education system for white children. This shift in focus in industrial education policy was a fundamental aspect of colonial state strategy at the turn of the century that increasingly sought to respond to the social and political context of the emerging white education system.

In this regard Linda Chisholm has observed that the prescribed task of liberal education in the period after 1920 was to respond to both educational and socio-economic dilemmas. With the gradual shift in educational focus from cultural adaptation to social and economic adaptation from the 1920s, the educational system for white children was increasingly challenged to address:

1. The diversified educational needs of pupils due to bigger numbers, longer school life and a wider range of abilities being drawn into the school net; and

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7 Malherbe (1977), p162. Also see Loram, C. 1921.
9 Kallaway (1992), p28
10 Kallaway (1992), p28
12 Kallaway (1992), p18, p30
2. The economic and social needs of the country due to increased industrialisation.\(^{13}\)

EG Malherbe has noted that by 1930 “most white children of school-going age had been drawn into the school net by gradually extending the limits of free and compulsory education”.\(^{14}\) This was the result of unprecedented state funding in education provided for white children.

Increased state funding was also a direct response to address the social problems associated with increased white urbanisation in that period. The white population of urban areas had increased from about 50% to roughly 66% in the period before 1930, and state expenditure in education for white children had grown from about R3.5 million in 1910 to R18 million in 1930. This expenditure represented 20% of national spending on all state services (excluding railways) at the time.

Having brought these white children into the school arena then the education authorities were increasingly faced with the problem of the suitability of the education provided at the different levels. “People began to ask why so many of the adolescents who left school were unemployed, and why so many of those who got work did not seem to give satisfaction”.\(^{15}\) These issues were of particular concern given the need for a stable white working class in urban areas in that period.

It was also around this time that the ‘poor white’\(^{16}\) question loomed very large in the white public mind in the context of the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War, the large number of natural disasters and the Depression of the late 1920s.\(^{17}\) The ‘white nation’ was seen to be in trouble economically in the period before 1930 and it was believed that ‘effective remedies’ were needed to address social and economic needs. In 1932 it was estimated that there were as many as 300 000 ‘poor whites’ out of a total white population of 1.8 million (16.6%) in South Africa, a large proportion of whom were the beneficiaries of charity and relief.

In a period of rapid economic transition in rural areas that had involved a move to modern forms of industrialised and commercialised agriculture, farmers and their families had been faced with severe competition that involved a close association with markets in urban and industrial centres. Many failed to make the transition and chose instead to move to the cities in search of employment.

Urbanisation of this nature brought with it new social problems. With the very limited employment opportunities for rural emigrants in the cities, ‘poor whites’ found themselves in open competition with Africans, coloureds and Indians for unskilled jobs. This had particular political ramifications, especially since rural white emigrants believed that doing unskilled

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\(^{13}\) Malherbe (1977), p155  
\(^{14}\) Malherbe (1977), p156  
\(^{15}\) Malherbe (1977), p156  
\(^{16}\) By using inverted commas to frame certain terms, I highlight the contested and multi-dimensional meanings associated with them  
\(^{17}\) See Freund, W. 1991. “Introduction: The Poor Whites: a social force and a social problem in South African History”. In Morrell, R. ed. White but Poor: Essays on the History of Poor Whites in Southern Africa 1880-1940. Pretoria. University of South Africa Press. Freund also usefully discusses the elusiveness of the term ‘poor whites’ and its social and ideological construction. Chisholm has also noted that not only were rural whites ‘pushed’ into the cities as a “consequence of the growing commercialisation of agriculture, stimulated by the proclamation of the goldfields”, but their number also grew as a result of many “rural disasters of rinderpest, drought and locusts”. See Chisholm (1989), p65
work would seemingly reduce them to the ‘level’ of these groups. This dilemma was addressed in the context of the rise in support for Afrikaner Nationalism in that period. Malherbe has noted that even though rural whites came to the cities unskilled, they quickly found very useful allies in the cities in the form of Afrikaner nationalist politicians who were keen to ‘save them from their plight’.19

Also, the Carnegie Commission of 193220 found that on leaving school nearly 47% of all white rural boys went in for farming, and that up to 58% of them had not even completed standard VI at that stage. The Commission observed that if the parents of boys with low levels of schooling were themselves poor, these boys would probably become ‘poor whites’ at times of economic strife.21 To remedy the situation in the rural areas, the Union Government intervened by providing national agricultural schools22 from the 1920s under the Union Education Department. The Union Government felt that the Provinces could not afford the costs of providing practical training facilities and therefore set aside large amounts of funds for the establishment of national state agricultural schools for white rural children23.

Yet, despite all these efforts to intervene in favour of rural white children in an attempt to keep them in rural areas, agricultural schools were very poorly supported. This was linked to the great expense of providing proper agricultural vocational education, by the lack of skilled teachers for such an enterprise and the associated residential requirements that this entailed. By 1937 state agricultural schools had a total of less than 200 pupils24.

Certainly, in many European countries during the nineteenth century, large industries, the army or the navy were used quite effectively to absorb those ‘alienated’ from the land during the transition to industrialisation. In South Africa in the period after 1900, other than the railways and the mines, there were no other ‘employers’ that could absorb the large numbers of unskilled previously rural populations. In that respect, the Union Government in the period before 1930 sought to address the needs of both the ‘displaced’ white rural population (by providing them with particular work skills and therefore access to employment) as well as that of the expanding secondary industries sector that required particular skills for further growth through reformulating the focus of the vocational and technical education system.

Crucially then, the way in which the Union Government set about reformulating industrial and technical education provision after 1920 was informed by two key factors, namely:

➢ The particular social and educational problems associated with ‘poor whites’ in that period. In this regard the Union Education Department reported in 1938 that “a large

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18 Malherbe (1977), p157
19 Bill Freund refers to the “plight” of ‘poor whites’ as both their lack of skills and their having to compete with ‘non-whites’ for unskilled work. Morrell (1991), pp.xiii-xiv.
21 Malherbe (1977), p157
22 Rickett (1971), pp259-296
23 The central government had initially attempted to introduce agriculture as a subject in high schools but could not enforce the provision given that schools were governed provincially
24 The reason for this low enrolment was two-fold. Malherbe has noted that as farming became more and more mechanised from the 1920s the percentage of economically-active whites engaged in farming actually decreased, from 30% in 1926, to 15% in 1950, to 10% in 1960, to 7% in 1970. Secondly, many white children seeking access to vocational education were not keen to attend the agricultural schools because of the general association of Union Education Department institutions with destitution and deficiency by that time. See Malherbe (1977), p161. Also see Chisholm (1989), and Badrooien, A. 2001. A History of the Ottery School of Industries in Cape Town: Issues of Race, Welfare and Social order in the period 1937 to 1968. Cape Town. University of the Western Cape. Unpublished doctoral dissertation.
percentage of the white children in schools were endowed with intelligence so limited that they cannot be expected to achieve a high standard of scholastic attainment. 25

The presence of a large coloured and African population in urban areas that added to the difficulty of providing white children of less than average ability with suitable education that would lead to suitable employment. 26

3. The social democratic tradition

Furthermore, the growth of a social democratic tradition after 1920 that emphasised the contribution of vocational education in 'preparing citizens to take their rightful place in society' significantly shaped the reformulation of industrial and technical education provision. Prominent educationalists like Fred Clarke 27 emphasised in the 1920s that vocational education "needed to be understood as including all its far-reaching relationships, economic, social and political", and that each man had to be treated "not merely as a worker, but as a working citizen, with all a citizen's responsibilities." 28

In Clarke's view the distinction between the vocational and the 'cultural' (referring to academic education) could not be translated simply as a distinction "between quite different groups of subjects and activities, nor as a distinction between separate classes or different social groups within a community." 29 Like respected educationalist John Dewey, Fred Clarke sought to modify the relationship between the 'cultural' and the 'vocational' to ensure that "the correct balance was arrived at that would enhance the rights of the individual (and the citizen) and ensure that the individual was adequately prepared for the world of work". 30

In that respect, Clarke sought to focus on the relationship between education, human rights, work and democracy which Peter Kallaway has noted "became the basis of much policy development in the social democracies from the 1930s to the 1970s". A key aspect of that philosophy was the assumption that governments, especially democratic governments, had duties to all citizens and that it was:

The state's business to not only ensure that there were adequate educational facilities for all children, but that the necessary conditions for the exercise of those individual rights to equality of opportunity in education be enshrined in social policy and social services. 31

In the period after 1920 fundamental questions were being asked about the most potent means for equipping youth for a full and active life as citizens of modern societies that focused on

25 It is notable that with the growth of industries and the increasing reservation of semi-skilled jobs and trades for whites from the 1930s, the previous trend to reserve unskilled work for coloureds and Africans was slowly reversed. See Union of South Africa. 1939. Annual Report of the Union Education Department for 1938 (UG 59/1939). Pretoria. Government Printer: p11
26 UG 59/1939, p11
30 Kallaway (1996a), p6
their social responsibilities as well as their labour potential. The Secretary of Education in 1928 noted that:

Modern tendencies in education accentuate the necessity of regarding it as being closely bound up with economic, industrial and social questions. The Union may be said to be passing through its Industrial Revolution, and it is particularly a function of this Education Department to furnish the educational facilities that our rapidly changing industrial conditions require. At the same time we have to be aware of developing children that fulfil their role as citizens as well.32

Indeed, education policy makers after 1930 were thereafter not only unsuccessful in closing the gap between vocational and academic education but also in dispelling the ‘natural association’ of vocational education with ‘training for the activities of manual labourers’. In that regard, a closer consideration of the development of technical and industrial education provision in South Africa will further explain the key dilemmas and obstacles associated with such provision after 1930.

The development of industrial and technical education in South Africa

The histories of industrial and technical education provision in South Africa have different origins and their development was informed by quite different contexts. Importantly, the two forms of provision converged substantially by the 1940s. Thus, while it is initially necessary to deal separately with the way in which the two forms of provision evolved in South Africa, both provisions are addressed together for the period after 1940.

i) Industrial Education

The history of vocational or industrial education in South Africa is intimately linked to the history of technical education and cannot be understood separately. It is important to recognise however the rather different origins of the two aspects of policy. Malherbe has noted that:

The genesis of industrial education is not identical with that of technical education. Technical education arose out of the needs of the growing industries, while industrial education developed out of the desire to help the poor whites.33

Certainly, industrial education evolved as a specific measure to combat ‘poor whiteism’ from the 1890s and as the means to train potential poor white boys from the rural areas in industrial occupations such as shoemaking, carpentry, smithy work etc, and poor white girls for domestically related occupations. In this period the Dutch Reformed Church in particular was instrumental in the establishment of industrial schools in an attempt to alleviate the destitution and poverty of poor white children that accompanied war, epidemic and economic depression.34

This form of vocational education provision needs to be understood in the context of the emerging edifice of ‘white education’ in the early part of the century and the complex ways in

33 Malherbe (1932), p55
34 Malherbe (1977), p164
which the white education system evolved in the period after 1910. It is notable in that respect that the development of the industrial education system was directly informed by:

- The construction of ‘native education’ policy from the 1920s; and
- The ongoing conflict between the Provinces and the Central Government vis-a-vis the nature and control of vocational and technical education in the Union

Importantly, until 1925 industrial education provision was manifested quite differently at the private, provincial and central levels.

**Industrial/technical education: the struggle between the Provinces and Central Government**

Rickett (1971) and Malherbe (1977) have both emphasized the pioneering role of the Churches and the Provinces with regard to industrial education at the turn of the century. Rickett in particular provides a rich account of the diverse types of industrial schools that evolved at the private, provincial and rural levels in the Cape Colony at the turn of the century. He observes that industrial schools (in the Cape Colony) in the early part of the century were essentially schools for teaching trades to the children of white parents in poor circumstances.

Rickett notes however that these industrial schools were of varying types and that:

> It is necessary to point this out as terms were used somewhat indiscriminately about this time and cause confusion to this day.

There existed industrial schools (referred to ‘loosely’ as trade schools) started by the Dutch Reformed Church that sought to indenture white indigent boys between the ages of 11 to 20 years as apprentices in one of the trades of bookbinding, cabinet-making, carpentry, plumbing, shoemaking, or upholstery in factories and workshops in the towns. These institutions focused more however on the indigent conditions of the children than on their trade training needs.

Then there existed a type of industrial school that was privately owned and ‘paid its own way’ by selling the work produced at the institution. An example of such an institution would be the Salesian Institute in Cape Town.

There were the farm industrial schools like the Stellenbosch Boys’ Industrial Home that focused on agricultural trades such as saddlery, shoemaking, blacksmithing etc. There were also many single-teacher industrial departments attached to indigent boarding houses.

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35 Colonial strategy with regard to industrial training for ‘natives’ was rather different to that envisaged for ‘poor whites’. There is very little literature on industrial and technical education provision for Africans after 1920. This is made even more difficult by the separate and different kinds of educational provision in the previous ‘homelands’ in the later period and the ways in which such provision was developed. The development of African industrial and technical education provision after 1930 is not addressed in this paper. For a historical survey of ‘native’ education, see Union of South Africa. 1936. *Inter-Departmental Committee Report on Native Education* (U.G. 29-1936). Pretoria. Government Printer: Paper 1 and 2. See also De Villiers Commission (1948), pp232-251.

36 Rickett (1971), pp9-11, pp46-52
37 Malherbe (1977), pp164-5; Also see De Villiers Commission (1948), pp5-7
38 Rickett (1971), p52
39 For an account of the Cape Town Industrial Home (1892-1902) and the Uitenhage Industrial School (1895-), noting also the essential differences between the two institutions, see Rickett (1971), pp56-63
40 This institution was “renowned for its work in the rehabilitation of wayward boys not committed to government industrial schools, and for the care it provided boys from broken homes especially in the 1970s”. See Rickett (1971), pp63-5
41 The Stellenbosch Boys Industrial School was closed in 1914. Rickett notes that farm industrial schools concentrated on teaching trades more relevant to the needs of the farm. Also, it is noteworthy that agricultural industrial schools generally were not in the later period converted into agricultural high schools. See Rickett (1971), pp63-5.
Lastly, there were industrial schools that were established by the Churches but that were given grants-in-aid by Provincial administrations, namely provincial industrial schools that provided trade training at the post-primary school level.\textsuperscript{42} Rickett notes that the function of the bulk of these trade or industrial schools in the period 1895-1925 was to give pre-apprenticeship training in skilled trades for those who wanted to become artisans. While pre-apprenticeship was certainly an intention, this provision was also significantly informed by the need to socialise the indigent white class in urban environments.

Two key observations are critical here. Firstly, the term industrial education (whether provided by provincial education departments or central government) was used in the period before 1910 in a very loose way to refer to all education provision that responded to the needs of poor and indigent white children. In this regard, in purely legislative terms the term ‘industrial schools’ after 1917 was supposed to refer specifically to those institutions under the Union Education Department (central government) that provided for white children ‘in need of care’ and as determined by the Children’s Protection Act of 1913. Such institutions had significant links to the penal system.

In reality however, most of the trade schools under the provincial education departments continued to also be referred to as industrial schools until the 1940s.\textsuperscript{43} In fact, the only discernible distinction between the central government industrial school and the provincial industrial school until the 1940s was that in the former children were committed to the educational institution via the legal/penal system.

The Secretary for the Union Education Department, George Hofmeyr, reflected in his Annual Report for 1925 that:

> The terms ‘trades’ and ‘industrial’ as applied to schools have been applied somewhat indiscriminately. In the past the industrial school has been taken to imply an institution for juvenile-(type) offenders. (However) the industrial school is neither more or less than a trade school for boys/girls who have been committed under the Children’s Protection Act. From the educational standpoint the trades and industrial schools must be regarded as a single group.\textsuperscript{44}

Secondly, ‘trade’ or provincial industrial schools were themselves not a homogenous group of institutions. From the early 1900s industrial education in the form of trade training and apprenticeships had been actively advocated as the recipe to address white unemployment. The Report of the Transvaal Indigency Commission of 1906-8 (and later also the Report of Industrial Education Committee of 1916 and the Report of the Relief and Grants-in-Aid Commission of 1917) had stressed the necessity to provide various forms of vocational education alongside the institution of a Juvenile Labour Exchange and provision of apprenticeships for boys to the ‘skilled trades’.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{42} The two most prominent of these ‘industrial schools’ in the Cape Province were the Paarl Boys’ Industrial School and the Worcester Industrial School (later renamed the Drosdy Technical High School). See Rickett (1971), pp63-7.

\textsuperscript{43} This ‘problem’ was initially resolved by referring to industrial schools for children ‘in need of care’ as government industrial schools. In 1944 when most trade schools and provincial industrial schools were given permission to offer courses to the standard-ten level, these institutions came to be referred to as technical high schools. Similarly, after 1944, Union Education Department industrial schools were referred to as ‘schools of industries’.

\textsuperscript{44} Union Education Department. 1926. Annual Report of the Union Education Department for 1925. Pretoria. Government Printer, p78

\textsuperscript{45} Chisholm (1989), p253
The provision of industrial and vocational education at the provincial level therefore sought to serve both the needs of the indigent as well as those seeking trade training. In this regard, the *National Advisory Board for Technical Education* had observed in 1913 that there were many 'trade' industrial schools that provided a rather different service to that of 'indigent' industrial schools, but that due to the poor state of primary education for white children at the time and bearing in mind the 'indigent condition of a considerable section of the European population', it was necessary not to pursue an overall high standard of technical instruction at provincial industrial schools. The Board asserted that 'trade' industrial schools would eventually replace 'indigent' industrial schools as the standard of white education improved.\(^{46}\) It was envisaged that with greater control and co-ordination that all industrial ('trade' and 'indigent'), schools would come to serve students who had completed their primary school course and who were seeking apprenticeship in trade theory and training.\(^{47}\)

*The transfer of all Industrial Schools to the Union Education Department in 1925*

By 1925 a considerable degree of experimentation\(^{48}\) had therefore already taken place in the different provinces with regard to the development of industrial education. In that year the administration and provision of *all* industrial and vocational education facilities became the sole responsibility of the Union Education Department\(^{49}\). This transfer of power from the Provinces to the Central Government in 1925 represented the single most important development in the history of industrial and technical education in South Africa.

Crucially, by 1925 most of the 'dangerous' 'poor white' youth had been diverted to government industrial schools under the Children's Protection Act of 1913. In that respect, all white children in technical colleges, provincial industrial schools and in the developing system of commercial, agricultural, and housecraft schools in 1925 were regarded as 'deserving recipients' of government educational intervention.

*The evolution of a uniform system of control over industrial education post-1925*

Also, until 1925 each province in South Africa had been free to develop its own systems of industrial education. In this respect, the systems of industrial education within individual provinces were largely uncoordinated\(^{50}\). The transfer of all industrial education facilities to the Union Education Department in 1925 thus provided for the first time the opportunity\(^{51}\) to develop a national system of industrial schools for white children.

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\(^{47}\) Rickett (1971), p82

\(^{48}\) While many of the industrial schools described above were closed before 1925, many continued to exist, albeit in rather different capacities and roles. See De Villiers Commission of 1948, pp5-9. Also see Rickett (1971), pp45-157

\(^{49}\) They remained under the control of the Union Government until 1967. In that year control of industrial education was again handed over to provincial administrations.

\(^{50}\) A survey done during 1925 showed that, even in the same Province, the transferred institutions were managed under a variety of ordinances and under many different forms of control. See Union of South Africa. 1926. *Annual Report of the Union Education Department for 1925.* Pretoria. Government Printer: p75

\(^{51}\) Cape Province. 1923. *The Special Report on Industrial Schools and Industrial Departments in the Cape Province (CP2 of 1923)* is of great historical value in this regard. It provides a vivid picture of the state of affairs that existed in relation to industrial schools at that time.
From 1925 nineteen state institutions and twenty-three state-aided industrial institutions were transferred to Union control. Of these, many small uneconomic provincial industrial schools were shut down and their pupils transferred to other institutions. These included many of the farm industrial schools and single-teacher industrial departments attached to Indigent Boarding House schools. Several of the other industrial schools were re-organised and converted into housecraft, commercial and agricultural high schools in rural areas, while some state-aided industrial schools remained subsidised institutions (till the 1970s).

Malherbe has noted that the Union Education Department established vocational schools during the 1920s to serve areas mostly outside the main metropolitan centres (namely, rural areas). These facilities were basically of three types: (a) technical; (b) commercial; and (c) housecraft, and “developed as a response to the large number of white farm children who left school on completion of the compulsory school standard, or on reaching the compulsory school age, and returned to the farm without any specific training in agriculture.”

With regard to the above set of institutions, most provided board (hostels) and training facilities for children between the ages of 14-18 years old with the proviso that the student had passed standard VI. Such facilities led to increased numbers of learners in such industrial schools under the control of the Union Education Department (though comparatively the numbers were still very small).

White student enrolment at vocational schools rose from 2,211 to 12,423 between 1926 and 1947. However, in 1931 only about 53% of those white boys and girls who ‘graduated’ from vocational schools found employment in the jobs they were trained for. This was “the result of the little recognition afforded the training in these institutions by organised industry,” as well as the tendency by new manufacturing industries to employ cheaper unskilled African and coloured labour. In this respect, both Davies and Lewis have noted that while the Union Government adopted industrial schools as an important part of their ‘white labour policy’ from the 1920s, the state could do little about labour and employer attitudes to learners that emerged from that system.

For that reason, the Union education Department was keen after 1925 to develop an overall system of technical and vocational education that provided learners with equivalent qualifications. One of the significant outcomes of this approach was the determination of a single Department Trade School Certificate for all pupils who passed out at provincial industrial (or trade) schools as well as at government industrial schools.

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52 Union Education Department officials inspected 36 industrial schools and provincial industrial schools that consequently fell under its jurisdiction. See Union of South Africa. 1926. Annual Report of the Union Education Department for 1925. Pretoria. Government Printer: p84
53 Malherbe (1977), p178 Also see De Villiers Commission Report (1948), pp9-10; Rickett (1971), pp90-91
54 Malherbe (1977), p178
55 De Villiers Commission (1948), p97
56 Even more significantly, this number increased to 32, 955 by 1967 under the Apartheid Government. See Malherbe (1977), p712
57 Malherbe has noted that spokespeople for organised industries often expressed their general concern about the lack of applicability of the training offered at these institutions to the workplace. See Malherbe (1977), p165.
Subsequently, it was decided that all industrial school courses would take three years to graduate and would include two examinations, namely the Preliminary Technical Certificate Examination and the National Trades School Certificate Examination. The Preliminary Technical Certificate course lasted one year and required that pupils passed standard six. Subjects in this course included:

i) English or Afrikaans (first language)
ii) Afrikaans or English (second language)
iii) Technical drawing
iv) Mathematics
v) Science
vi) Trade theory of relevant trade to individual child
vii) Civics or History or Geography

The National Trades Certificate course was a two-year course that was divided into two parts:

i) A written examination that required fluency in Engineering Drawing 1, Trade Theory 1, and Maths 1;
ii) A practical work test that was conducted in workshops and included projects and course reports.\(^{59}\)

Notwithstanding identical forms of trade instruction in both provincial and government industrial schools, it was generally assumed however that children in government industrial schools were of lower intelligence than those in trade schools and that instruction at such institutions needed to focus predominantly on social order and welfare needs.

*Low intelligence and industrial education provision*

Furthermore, the Durban Agreement of 1924 had more or less confirmed the status of industrial education in South Africa. In terms of the agreement\(^ {60}\), the provincial education authorities were to be held responsible for all general, secondary, full-time education while the Union Education Department was to be responsible for all full-time and part-time vocational education.\(^ {61}\)

As vocational education and industrial schools under the Union Education Department had previously been primarily associated with criminality, deviance and indigency, industrial education after 1925 struggled to shake off the stigma that it provided primarily for the uneducated, poorly nourished offspring of ‘poor whites’. Malherbe notes that an “aura of charity” and “rehabilitation” dogged the subsequent growth of industrial education under the Union Education Department.\(^ {62}\)

Furthermore, Rickett observed that:

Principals of other schools were well aware of this and, in many cases through ignorance of the progress made at vocational schools, labelled these schools as inferior and advised parents not to send their children to them. Particularly was this in the case of average and above-average pupils. Hence it was that many children who would

\(^{59}\) Rickett (1971), pp88-90

\(^{60}\) The accord was signed mainly for financial reasons since the costs of providing industrial training were regarded as very inhibiting for provincial administrations.

\(^{61}\) All education other than general, academic education under provincial authorities was deemed to be ‘higher education’. See De Villiers Commission (1948), p10

\(^{62}\) Malherbe (1977), p178
have benefited from a vocational education were kept from it and, in all too many cases, left school at the earliest opportunity for lack of interest in or ability to cope with the subjects of the ordinary high school curriculum.63

This caused great consternation amongst educationalists, teachers and instructors, to the extent that the Union Education Department contemplated handing back previously provincial industrial schools to the provinces in the 1930s.64 Despite such concerns, it is notable that the status of industrial schools gradually improved from the 1930s. In that regard, Secretary for Education, Dr. Gie, noted in 1932 that while industrial education had previously been associated with poverty and disorder, the transfer of control to the Union Education Department had significantly improved the levels of training provided. Gie asserted that:

The Union Education Department was the first educational authority that gave the problem of vocational education in South Africa such well-informed, careful and sympathetic attention. It was the Union Education Department that for the first time drew up properly graded courses of workshop practice and of trade theory to go with practice; and that gradually introduced a study of languages and cultural subjects.65

From the 1930s, aware that industrial and technical education was generally associated with ‘the weak and maimed’, the Union Education Department sought to address the narrow conception of vocational education at the different points of provision. The department was particularly concerned about the relationship between vocational education, work and society, as well as about the effectiveness of the social reproduction of work discipline within the system of industrial and technical training. This concern was further emphasised by the boom in secondary industry from the middle to late 1930s, which led to more attempts by the educational authorities to re-organise the system of industrial and technical education in South Africa.

In fact, particular attention was drawn to the unsatisfactory state of industrial education in South Africa with the unprecedented industrial expansion that accompanied the start of World War II in 1939. By that time, despite attempts to address the growing gulf between the provision of industrial and technical education and the availability of trained technical workers, the Union Education Department had been unable to change learner and employer perceptions of the merits of industrial and vocational provision and so increase learner participation.

It is notable however that the Union Education department had significant success in raising the level of scholastic work in industrial schools by the 1940s and in changing the white learner population from indigent children to those mostly interested in vocational subjects. In this respect, the De Villiers Commission observed in 1948 that much effort was made “to raise the level of scholastic work done in these institutions” as well as to “generally ‘improve’ the type of girl and boy admitted to them”.66

63 Rickett (1971), p24
65 Report of Union Education Department (1933), p5
66 De Villiers Commission (1948), p13
With regard government industrial institutions Linda Chisholm has made two quite critical observations. Firstly, she has argued that the conflation of the issues of delinquency, mental defect and poverty in the minds of educators and policy makers in the early 1930s shaped in quite tangible ways the provision of industrial education in South Africa. The growth of the developing ‘sciences’ of mental health and IQ testing provided for greater classification and segregation of ‘mentally defective’ and ‘maladjusted’ children after 1930, and greatly influenced the ways in which learner populations for industrial education institutions were thereafter determined. In particular, the notion of a ‘mentally deficient’ child in government industrial facilities emphasised in policy makers’ minds the need to provide differentiated education programmes within the industrial schools system. In this regard, the Union Education Department asserted in 1937 that:

The starting of a special institution for subnormal industrial-school boys must be regarded as an important advance. The presence of a relatively high percentage of subnormals at some industrial schools for boys has presented serious difficulties. In the workshop the subnormals often present difficulties because the course is too advanced and too exacting. The starting of the special institution at Dewetsdorp (known as Meadows School of Industries) will now bring the subnormal boys into their own, and the best opportunities will be created for them of developing what limited ability they enjoy. To the ordinary industrial school the removal of the subnormals will bring great relief, and it will now be able to raise the general standard of the work in the school as well as in the workshop to a higher level.

While the initial impetus for the establishment of government industrial schools was to service poor white youths ‘in need of care’ and those who were deemed to be mentally and socially ‘defective’, the ability to scientifically grade white learners and so place them in educationally-relevant institutions after 1930 then provided policy makers with the opportunity to use the government industrial school system in more differentiated ways than was previously possible.

A Union Report on ‘maladjusted’ and ‘uncontrollable’ children noted in 1934 that:

Most of the children in industrial schools were transferred from certified and non-certified institutions at the age of 15 for the purpose of trade training. (While) the quality of the trade training was generally satisfactory the trades taught were not always in keeping with the pupils’ abilities. To a great extent the dissatisfaction expressed regarding the quality of the training may be explained in terms of the quality of the human material with which the schools must work. In some institutions...
the number of sub-normals was as much as 40% of the school population. The Committee therefore recommended that admission to all industrial schools be restricted to children of normal intelligence capable of profiting from academic education and trade training.\(^71\)

As noted by the Union Education Department in 1938, only a small proportion (28%) of the pupils at government industrial schools were actually in need of rehabilitative treatment. Most learners were purportedly ordinary boys and girls for whom “a place needed to be won in the economic structure of society”. Trade training (for boys) in these institutions was deemed to be very “important for character building and to empower the pupil for bread-winning purposes”.\(^72\) By 1947 all government industrial schools for white children were graded according to the characteristics of the pupils. And training suitable to the respective aptitudes and interests of learners were generally based on levels of intelligence\(^73\):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Accommodation available</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Normal intelligence</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal intelligence</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>1030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal intelligence</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal intelligence</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Housecraft</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subnormal intelligence</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Varied</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subnormal intelligence</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>varied</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour deviates</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>varied</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour deviates</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>varied</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2209</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondly, Chisholm has argued that the 1940s witnessed a significant shift towards white learner certification in industrial education institutions and to providing white pupils with trade certification that would ensure their employability\(^74\). Given the widening racial division of labour in the broader society industrial education facilities focused sharply on ways in which to provide white learners with ‘skills’ to compete in a labour market that was becoming increasingly differentiated. In this respect, the Apprenticeship Act of 1922 compensated for the fact that white learners from industrial education facilities were inevitably only equipped for unskilled or low-skilled work, and heavily disadvantaged all other ‘competitors’ in the labour market.

_How effective was this trade training?_

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\(^{71}\) Union of South Africa. 1937. *Report of the Inter-departmental Committee on Destitute, Neglected, Maladjusted and Delinquent Children and Young Persons 1934-1937* (UG 38-1937). Pretoria. Government Printer: p36-7. Also see UG 41-1948, p.33. The report notes that 462 children were transferred to government industrial schools from certified or non-certified institutions in 1945, compared to 213 who were direct committals by Children’s Court Commissioners


\(^{73}\) UG 41-1948, p17

\(^{74}\) Chisholm (1989), p255
It is similarly significant that pupils at government industrial schools in the 1940s wrote the same examinations as those at provincial industrial schools and vocational high schools. The De Villiers Commission noted in 1948 that:

The training in these industrial schools, in addition to the ordinary subjects, comprised of various trades for the boys and domestic science for the girls. (And) the syllabi followed approximated to those for the vocational high schools. Also, pupils sit for the same examinations.\(^7\)

Nonetheless, only 41.5% of the white children that left government industrial schools in 1951 took up work in the trade that they had been taught. The majority of pupils (48.5%) either could not find work in their trade or chose to work in another trade. By 1954 the number of pupils who were working in their taught-trade had only risen to 48.8%.\(^6\)

**Particulars concerning Pupils who left the Government Industrial Schools\(^7\) in 1951 and 1954:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Work in taught trade 1951</th>
<th>Work in other trade 1951</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Work in taught trade 1954</th>
<th>Work in other trade 1954</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baking</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmithing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boot/shoemaking</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricklaying and plastering</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinetmaking</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentry and Joinery</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitting and turning</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor work</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing and sheetmetal work</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailoring</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upholstery</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwork</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housecraft</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong></td>
<td><strong>41.5%</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.5%</strong></td>
<td><strong>(90%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.8%</strong></td>
<td><strong>30.18%</strong></td>
<td><strong>(79%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^7\) De Villiers Commission (1948), p10


\(^7\) UG 41-1948, p19
This suggests that while the levels of training and education provision at industrial schools improved markedly in the period 1920 to 1945, the training nonetheless did not sufficiently link learners to employment opportunities. Chisholm has noted that:

Although industrial schools were linked to the state’s ‘white labour’ policy, there was not a direct connection between the state’s interest in these schools and what they actually produced. Although industrial schools were a class specific form of schooling within the overall white educational edifice, and was designed for the children of the dangerous classes, they did not turn their charges into skilled workers. They did, however, always attempt to imbue them with values suitable for disciplined labour, and patriotic, militarist dispositions.\(^78\)

On the other hand, it is notable that a high number of learners in provincial industrial institutions were able to secure employment in their taught-trade. In the case of the pupils from commercial, housecraft and technical high schools, more than 75% of them were able to secure jobs in the trade that they were taught.\(^79\)

**Particulars concerning Pupils who left the Vocational High Schools (Technical, Commercial and Housecraft High Schools) in 1951 and 1954:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Work in taught trade 1951</th>
<th>Work in other trade 1951</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Work in taught trade 1954</th>
<th>Work in other trade 1954</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmithing</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrician work</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricklaying and Plastering</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinetmaking</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpentry and Joinery</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Mechanics</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitting and turning</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor work</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumbing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailoring</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodwork</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagonbuilding</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upholstery</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housecraft</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Percentage</strong></td>
<td><strong>88.15%</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.1%</strong></td>
<td><strong>(96.25%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>73.72%</strong></td>
<td><strong>16.42%</strong></td>
<td><strong>(90%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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\(^78\) Chisholm (1989), p270

\(^79\) UG 12-1954, p78 and UG 20-1956, p61
ii) Technical Education

As previously noted, the history of industrial education in South Africa has significantly different origins to that of technical education. Technical education institutions evolved mainly in response to the growing needs of the railways, mining and industries for trained and skilled artisans. It was therefore more localised. Courses offered at technical education institutions developed in response to the local, industrial and commercial needs of particular areas.

However, with the Higher Education Act of 1923 all institutions for technical training were brought under the control of the Union Education Department. Thereafter, the courses provided at technical education institutions focused on complementing the general functions of provincial schools, namely to provide ‘training for work’.

In that respect, from 1925 technical colleges started establishing technical high schools that offered pre-apprenticeship training, with the entrance qualification being a pass in Standard VI. This course initially lasted two years and included a mixture of ‘academic’ and ‘vocational’ subjects (humanities, maths, science, art, mechanical drawing and manual training in woodwork). With time, other trade training courses in metalwork, electrical work, fitting and turning were added to the syllabus. By 1936 the courses pursued at technical high schools were extended to three years and were very similar to that followed at provincial industrial or ‘trade’ schools (though it was claimed to be of a higher quality).

Significantly, the technical colleges and their technical high schools were largely situated in the large urban centres and catered exclusively for the ‘town’ boy and girl. Born out of the needs associated with increased industrialisation and commercialisation, these technical institutions became very popular among white working urban-dwellers that sought to either further their ‘skills’ or do their apprenticeships part-time. Malherbe describes the part-time facilities of technical colleges as follows:

Technical colleges provide further education for the boy or girl who has to leave school early to go to employment and needs part-time education to supplement curtailed full-time education; further education for the boy or girl whose special interests and abilities justify secondary education with a vocational bias; further education for the adult who finds he is inadequately prepared for his post or for

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81 The first technical high school (a Day Continuation School for Boys) was established by the Durban Technical Institute in 1910. However, this type of pre-apprenticeship school found little favour outside Natal. The other Provinces at that stage preferred the ‘trade’ school. See Rickett (1971), p94
82 Rickett has noted that technical colleges fell under the jurisdiction of the Union Education Department in 1923, and that from 1927 the technical colleges sought to establish as part of their institutions technical high schools. These schools had an important influence on the eventual ‘raising’ of the standard of courses taught at provincial industrial schools in South Africa. At technical high schools great emphasis was placed on general, formative education, but as many as 20 hours out of the 36-hour week at school were devoted to workshop training. Also, because the teachers employed at technical colleges were ‘supposedly’ better qualified than those at trade schools, technical high schools were regarded as ‘more advanced’ than provincial industrial school. In 1944 there were only nine technical high schools. By that year however, provincial industrial schools were deemed to have “sufficiently raised their standards” so that “the term technical high school could also substitute for trade and industrial school from 1944”, and include both sets of institutions under that title thenceforth. See Rickett (1971), p100 and pp93-100. Also see Union of South Africa. 1946. Annual Report of the Union Education Department for the Years 1941-1945. Pretoria. Government Printer: p5.
83 The Transvaal Technical Institute for example in 1950 boasted of a total enrolment of 26 500 students (full and part-time). See Malherbe (1977), p169
promotion; further education for the matriculant who wishes to become a pharmacist, commercial artist (etc).......

Governed by the requirements of the Apprenticeship Act of 1922 (that stipulated compulsory attendance at technical classes) and informed at the local level about the needs of particular environments, these colleges stood at the forefront of provision for the technical educational needs of town and fee-paying students.

Paradoxically, technical colleges were also the only institutions in the period under review that was providing technical instruction to African, Indian and coloured children. The De Villiers Commission of 1948 observed that technical colleges like the Cape Town College (at a branch in Roeland Street) had provided facilities for up to one thousand coloured learners who were mainly apprentices in the furniture and building trades by 1948. The commission noted that coloured workers had contributed "considerably to the building operations of the towns in that they lived by that time." In this respect, while the Union Education Department had committed itself to promoting vocational education for young white adolescents in the inter-war period, the outbreak of the Second World War forced the department to re-evaluate its emphasis on providing technical and vocational education only for white children. The war certainly brought under sharp focus previous policies that provided predominantly white learners with industrial and technical education.

*Industrial and technical training needs during World War II*

The Union Education Department noted in 1948 that:

At the outbreak of World War II, South Africa was cut off from overseas supplies to an alarming degree, and plans had to be made to cater for her own needs and, in particular, to meet the enormous demands for technical equipment to carry on a war that, as soon became apparent, would be waged by technical weapons on an unprecedented scale. It was estimated that the Union would require 20,000 technicians to maintain the production level deemed necessary. In order to undertake this gigantic task the Union had to train her own technicians.

During the war, South African industries boomed. As with the First World War foreign supplies were completely cut off and South Africa was forced to turn to its own resources. As the war was expected to last for many years, it was increasingly felt necessary that the South African economy focus on becoming independent. Callinicos has argued that:

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84 Malherbe (1977), p173
85 Trade training was also provided at church vocational schools (state-aided). In 1948 there were 15 of these institutions in South Africa, of which 10 were for African, Indian and coloured children. Of these the Midland Trade School at Graaff-Reinet and the St. Josephs Trade School at Aliwal North provided for coloured boys only. Most of the vocational schools for African, Indian and coloured children were run by the Roman Catholic and Methodist missions and thus had a strong religious background. See Union of South Africa. 1948. *Annual Report of the Union Education Department for the Calendar Years 1946-7* (UG 41-1948). Pretoria. Government Printer: p14
86 In 1962 the enrolment of all coloured, Indian and African children in technical colleges was terminated in line with apartheid policy. See Malherbe (1977), p188
87 De Villiers Commission (1948), p252
At this stage of its development, South Africa was well placed for enormous growth. Iscor was already producing the iron and steel needed to make machinery; coal and electric power were available and cheap; and there was enough capital from the gold boom to start all these new projects. In the six years between 1939 and 1945 manufacturing nearly doubled its output so that by 1943 it was producing more of the country’s wealth than gold mining.\(^{89}\)

Furthermore, Terreblanche and Nattras have argued that the Second World War effectively made the colour bar economically redundant.\(^{90}\) The loss of most skilled labour to the army, coupled with the ‘more liberal’ policy thrusts of the United Party with regard to labour regulations in this period, resulted in the government increasingly authorising Africans, coloureds and Indians to work in skilled positions in industry. Economic pressures during the war drew more and more of them into skilled labour, so that by the end of the war African, coloured and Indian labour was virtually indispensable to the production of goods in both primary and secondary sectors of the South African economy.\(^{91}\)

William Beinart notes that of the 125,000 people absorbed into manufacturing and construction employment during the Second World War, only 15% were white. State policy makers were therefore well aware of the significant increase in African, coloured and Indian urban workers in secondary industries in this period, alongside the overtaking of mining by manufacturing (in which most worked) both in its share of the country’s GDP and in employment. After the war, the concerns of manufacturers about new markets and a more settled labour force then became a greater priority for the United Party-run state.\(^{92}\)

*The war effort and the move to Apartheid*

In the period 1937-48, developing policies of segregation emerged alongside an unprecedented growth in industry and the rapid urbanisation that accompanied this. Driven by the war effort, the Union Government in this period struggled to overcome or reconcile the different pressures and contradictions inherent in its ‘liberalisation’ policy. Policy makers in this period therefore readily conceded that they needed to graft ‘new’ policies onto old ‘established’ ones with great care.

David Duncan has argued that the way in that the Union Government grappled with the problems of industrialisation and urbanisation after the Second World War was the central reason why the Malanite nationalist challenge gained the degree of momentum that it did.\(^{93}\) In the 1948 election the United Party lost a fair amount of support in peri-urban areas where the threat of the African, coloured and Indian working class was perceived to be especially acute. Whites coming back from the war had found the jobs that had previously been their ‘domain’ generally occupied by Africans, Indians and coloureds.

Beinart has similarly noted that the period of relative openness during and immediately after the Second World War contributed significantly to the Nationalist Party’s victory in 1948.

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While many whites in this period emerged from the ‘war for democracy’ believing that African, coloured and Indian aspirations had to be taken into account, "most responded to the wartime challenges from Africans, coloureds and Indians in the labour market by moving ideologically in the other direction." Thus, Deborah Posel has noted that apartheid policies after 1948:

Were forged through a series of struggles within and beyond the state that forced the architects of state policy to adapt and revise many of their original strategies. Uncertainties, conflicts, failures, and deviations, although often less visible than the continuities and triumphs of Apartheid, were fundamental to its development.  

Education and training policies initiated immediately after the Second World War were therefore constituted and organised within a framework of ambiguity. In this period, policies sought to respond not only to the requirements of increased industrialisation and urbanisation, but also rising disaffection among the white working class and Afrikaner Nationalists.

The Report of the Commission on Technical and Vocational Education of 1948

Appointed in 1945 by the Governor-General of the Union of South Africa, the De Villiers Commission of 1948 was asked to investigate what were the most suitable methods of training for industry, "having regard to the role of apprenticeship and learnersh ip in such training, and the providing of facilities there for" as well as being aware of the logic and previous development of these services in South Africa.  

In that regard, the De Villiers Commission of 1948 was constituted to devise a broad framework for a reconstructed system of education and training and indicated the general principles that the Union Government believed ought to govern future growth in South Africa. Specifically, the commission sought to focus on the education and training of the adolescent and how this arena needed to be shaped in order to have a positive influence on "the real demands of the nation". Vocational education was defined as "instruction and training in commerce, agriculture, housecraft or any trade or industry."  

The De Villiers Commission conceived of its task as covering the whole field of education, as provided for by both the Central Government and the Provinces. This included the provision of "instruction of a vocational character in the curriculum of the primary and secondary schools that provided educational facilities of a general character". The Commission asserted that technical and vocational training couldn't be efficient and thereby "meet the modern-day  

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94 Duncan argued that a major factor behind the support for African, coloured and Indian state-sponsored relief (for the poor and underprivileged) arose from white perceptions of African, coloured and Indian living conditions in and around white urban areas. Besides being an outrage to the white conscience, the spread of slum conditions, malnutrition and disease among African, coloured and Indian people was regarded as a danger to the white community and therefore required remedial action by the state. On the other hand, "while the state was alive to the need for social stability and to the possibilities of legitimating itself in the eyes of diverse groups", it sought to balance the "extension of health and welfare provision against the danger of going too far" and thus alienating the white taxpayer and worker. See Duncan (1995), p72 and p90  
96 De Villiers Commission (1948), p1  
97 The De Villiers Commission noted that although the origin of technical education was quite different from that of 'industrial education', its study of vocational education referred to the education provided at industrial schools, technical and agricultural colleges and technical, commercial, housecraft and agricultural high schools. De Villiers Commission (1948), p2, p7
demands of industry, commerce and agriculture without the sound foundation of primary and general secondary education".\textsuperscript{98}

With regard to the African, coloured and Indian population, the Commission asserted in 1948 that education policy makers needed to concede the limits of providing technical and industrial education for these youth given that education was not compulsory for them. It was argued at the time that many such boys had simply not reached the requisite scholastic level to qualify for entry to the trade training examinations. Also, other than the trade training facilities at school of industries, reformatories, punishment hostels and army training centres, there were simply no other state institutions that provided technical education training for African, coloured and Indian youths at that time.\textsuperscript{99} The Commission thus argued that the provision of technical and industrial training for such children simply needed to focus "on teaching African, coloured and Indian boys how to work and that such a focus would also address the issues of poverty and aimlessness of the children of these poor and indigent groups".\textsuperscript{100}

**African, coloured and Indian learners and technical training after World War II**

Malherbe has asserted that there were two main reasons why the provision of industrial and technical education had not been extended to African, coloured and Indian children as a means to advance the industrial development of the country during the inter-war years. These were:

1) The limited field of apprenticeship for African, Indian and coloured children; and
2) The poor economic condition of these populations in urban areas.\textsuperscript{101}

The Department of Social Welfare claimed in 1943 that "the low standard of living, meagre and inferior education and the obstruction of race and class barriers was mainly responsible for preventing the entry of large numbers of African, coloured and Indian people into the skilled manual and white-collar occupations."\textsuperscript{102} It was argued that these factors made it unnecessary and almost foolhardy to "inject large funds into providing technical and industrial education facilities, even though there were large numbers of outstanding African and coloured workers\textsuperscript{103} that had the potential to become skilled craftsmen, foremen and building contractors".\textsuperscript{104}

Certainly, the post-Second World War United Party were very concerned to respond to calls from the African, coloured and Indian urban population for greater technical training provision. However, given the overall poverty-stricken level of such groups, the United Party government focused on providing industrial education provision that also responded to urban problems like crime, social ordering, labour strikes and the increase in squatting. For

\textsuperscript{98} De Villiers Commission (1948), p2
\textsuperscript{99} The Cape Technical College provided trade training for a limited number of coloured learners. The College catered for those with the appropriate grades and who could financially afford to enrol there.
\textsuperscript{100} De Villiers Commission (1948), pp256-7. It is notable that the bulk of the African, coloured and Indian populations have always been poor and indigent. The focus on their needs in the 1940s and 1950s needs thus to be understood in relation to the high number of African, coloured and Indian persons who had migrated to the urban cities and towns by that time.
\textsuperscript{101} Malherbe (1977), p191
\textsuperscript{103} It is notable in this regard that there was not a stark differentiation between poor African, coloured and Indian communities in urban areas in the period before 1948 and that state policy often attended simultaneously to the needs of these groups.
\textsuperscript{104} De Villiers Commission (1948), p252. Also see Malherbe (1977), p191

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example, in Cape Town greater attention was given to the eradication of ‘the skolly-boy’ in that period, while the Johannesburg municipality focused on the ‘native’ or ‘tsotsis problem’. These urban social phenomena were regarded as products of a system that could not provide labour for young African, coloured and Indian children leaving school. The De Villiers Commission recommended in this regard in 1948 that technical and vocational education provision be provided within military-like conditions so that African, coloured and Indian learners could learn the discipline and social habits of work as well as learn useful trade training that could make them self-supporting in the workplace.\textsuperscript{105}

Even if all the necessary facilities were available, there would still be a large percentage of juveniles who would not be able to make use of them because of economic or other circumstances. There will always be at least for many years to come many thousands of ‘native’ (and ‘coloured’) youth who will have to start work at a very early age. They will be ill equipped for it or to meet the many problems of their environment. As a result many will lose their work, wander about aimlessly and gradually drift into various forms of delinquency.\textsuperscript{106}

The Commission stressed that:

We need some sort of system to deal with the large proportion of ‘non-europeans’ between the ages of 14-18 who are not catered for by the existing post-primary educational facilities. These vast numbers are not equipped for life or work. They live at a low level, and are inefficient workers. Many become a burden upon the state as offenders or paupers. It is of paramount importance that steps be taken at once to prevent this waste of the country’s human resources by providing some sort of training. Until such time as adequate educational and vocational facilities have been established, camp training centres offer the best solution to this problem.\textsuperscript{107}

Furthermore, the De Villiers Commission observed that:

1. The educational requirements of the Apprenticeship Act made it almost impossible for African, coloured or Indian youths to be apprenticed as compared to white youth; and
2. Apprenticeship committees almost always awarded available apprenticeships to white youths.\textsuperscript{108}

Given the limiting nature of the apprenticeship system, it was asserted that technical education initiatives would then be more productive by focusing directly on the poverty and aimlessness of the indigent and poor children of the ‘submerged African, coloured and Indian groups’.\textsuperscript{109}

In this regard, one of the important outcomes of the participation of members of African, coloured and Indian populations in the Second World War was the establishment of Centres for Technical Training (COTT) under the auspices of the Department of Defence in 1940.

\textsuperscript{105} It would seem that the same principles applied to the provision of industrial education for ‘poor whites’ in the earlier period was applied to African, coloured and Indian poor urban dwellers in the 1940s. It is notable that this approach to technical education provision was pursued at roughly the same time that ‘poor white’ industrial education provision had shifted focus from welfare-like provision to the pursuit of certification and skilled training. See De Villiers Commission (1948), p253

\textsuperscript{106} De Villiers Commission (1948), p247 and p253

\textsuperscript{107} De Villiers Commission (1948), p247

\textsuperscript{108} De Villiers Commission (1948), p257

\textsuperscript{109} De Villiers Commission (1948), pp256-7
The Minister of Education noted in 1948 that:

In November 1939, representatives of the Department of Defence, the Department of Labour, the Union Education Department and nine technical colleges in the Union had also attended a conference in Pretoria with a view to drawing up plans to meet this national emergency (caused by the war). At this conference details were worked out for the establishment of a Central Organisation for Technical Training (C.O.T.T.T.).\(^{110}\)

The COTT scheme, started under the pressure of wartime conditions, certainly exercised significant influence on the subsequent scope, capacity and duration of technical training in South Africa after 1945, especially given the high numbers of participating African, coloured and Indian trainees during the war period. The centres (operational by June 1940) were each attached to a technical college and provided facilities that sought to train almost 5,000 students in trades such as:

- Fitters, machine tool operators, welders, blacksmiths, tool repairers, electricians and sheet metal workers. Men between the ages of 18-40 were admitted to courses that generally lasted 24 weeks.\(^{111}\)

By the end of 1943 over 21,909 had been trained at the various COTT centres. In June 1945 the Union Education Department took over all COTT centres and focused on training mostly white ex-volunteers as bricklayers, plasterers, carpenters, plumbers, painters, electricians and motor mechanics, as well as fitters, turners, welders, and blacksmiths. The transfer of control to the Union Education Department then necessitated a large amount of preparatory work in developing schemes of work, technical instruction material and trade tests.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the COTT scheme was its provision of *basic technical training* to a large number of young men and women, which included returning soldiers of all races. Based on mass production methods, this training differed from those in operation in trade and vocational schools. Whereas individual pupils at industrial schools were encouraged to be able to create complete articles, learners at COTT centres focused on making constituent parts of articles that were later assembled to form the completed article. The De Villiers Commission later reported that this type of “modern basic training of highly skilled operatives” served as a useful example of how a technical training scheme with a definite purpose and a sharp focus could be adopted.\(^{112}\)

Importantly, the prevailing technical and industrial education systems in South Africa from the 1950s focused on responding in differentiated ways to the needs of the various race groups, as well as within the white learner population itself. On the one hand, technical education provision for African, coloured and Indian learners focused on initiating learners to basic trade training skills as well as responding to their social and community needs. On the other hand, technical and industrial education for white learners increasingly categorised white learners into ‘psychological categories’ such as morons, subnormal and normal and allocated learners to particular institutions based on IQ levels and scholastic ability.

\(^{110}\) UG 39-1948, p.4

\(^{111}\) UG 39-1948, p.4

\(^{112}\) De Villiers Commission (1948), p.142
In that regard, white children with moderate or high IQ levels were accommodated in technical training institutions that sought to develop skills that would ensure employability. No such differentiation was made available for urban-based African, coloured and Indian children in the period after 1950. It was generally assumed that all children in these groups were in danger of being uncontrollable. In the period 1948 to 1970, unlike the variety of forms of vocational, technical and industrial education that was used to re-allocate ‘poor whites’ to manual and semi-skilled positions after 1922, technical education provision for African, coloured and Indian youths were differentiated only according to rural and urban location and whether youths could afford to pay for access to such provision. Those that could not pay technical facility fees were accommodated primarily in state correctional facilities such as schools of industries, reformatories and prisons.

This latter approach is captured in the report of the Botha Commission of 1956 which noted that technical education provision for African, coloured and Indian learners needed to bring the needs of individual learners closer to that of their communities so that they could be integrated productively as members of such communities. The aim of technical education therefore was to “build up happy, useful and productive African, coloured and Indian communities that was able to realise the potential of individual members to the fullest extent.”\textsuperscript{113} This approach contributed to a specific focus in technical education provision in the apartheid era on the specific (and ‘different’) spiritual, intellectual and physical needs of children, and the particular home circumstances of respective learners. The various needs of learners were supposedly shaped by the particular social, economic and political circumstances of each individual learner.

Significantly, the Botha Commission also noted in 1956 that school population figures particularly for coloured and Indian learners had virtually tripled by 1955, and that “if it was borne in mind that a large part of the population of South Africa made a living by the use of its hands” further educational instruction for Indian and coloured youths needed to emphasise the development of their manual skills. In that respect, the commission emphasised the need to provide special courses in subjects such as woodwork, practical agriculture, needlework and housecraft in coloured and Indian public schools.\textsuperscript{114}

More specifically, the Commission noted in 1956 that:

It was most impressed by the vocational training received by pupils at institutions for children committed via the Children’s Act, and the sound vocational preparation that they are being given there. It is only to be regretted that a child has to be committed to a reformatory or school of industries before he can share in these benefits. The type of education received by the pupils in these institutions would certainly be of great value to all pupils.\textsuperscript{115}

Indeed, the provision of technical and industrial education for African, coloured and Indian children in the period 1920 to 1960 was significantly defined by external factors such as the absence of compulsory education, the levels of poverty under which most of them lived, the low levels of education attained by many of them, their exclusion from apprenticeship and job

\textsuperscript{113} Botha Commission (1956/7), p7
\textsuperscript{114} Botha Commission (1956/7), p10
\textsuperscript{115} Botha Commission (1956/7), p15
opportunities based on race and the limited availability of technical education institutions for African, coloured and Indian children in that period.

In the period between 1920 and 1970 there was a long tradition of technical training provision for African, coloured and Indian children in schools of industries, reformatories and hostels that emphasised 'work preparedness' and 'military discipline'. These training programmes did not prepare such children for skilled occupations or provide them with any better access to employment. Rather, the trade training provided to African, coloured and Indian children focused on making them 'better citizens' and less of a 'danger' to the social order of the cities.

In the period after the mid-1970s the inclination to provide trade training facilities for African, Indian and coloured children only at reformatories, schools of industries and hostels declined significantly. This development was informed by the emergence and provision of technical high schools and manpower centres and the impact of changing legislation that focused on how to best respond to the declining economic situation in South Africa at that time.

Conclusion

Certainly, the technical and industrial education system from 1920 developed in very contradictory and bifurcated ways that informed the kinds and levels of provision provided thereafter. In that respect, the contest between the provinces and central government over control over technical and industrial education provision shaped the emerging system in ways that have pertinence to this day.

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