

History of Education Society

Review: [untitled]

Author(s): Timothy Parsons

Reviewed work(s):

Education and Independence: Education in South Africa, 1658-1988 by Simphiwe Hlatshwayo

Source: *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Autumn, 2002), pp. 432-433

Published by: History of Education Society

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3217983>

Accessed: 24/04/2010 15:30

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=hes>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



History of Education Society is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *History of Education Quarterly*.

systems of mass schooling that appear poised to withstand, if in significantly modified form, the neo-liberal/neo-conservative reform “cocktail” that school systems around the globe are being forced to drink. The openness of debate in Nordic societies and the careful documentation and analysis provided in *Nordic Lights* can aid us all in seeking to maintain democratic ideals and practices into the new millenium.

HOUGHTON COLLEGE

MARK LACELLE-PETERSON

Simphiwe Hlatshwayo. *Education and Independence: Education in South Africa, 1658-1988*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000. 144pp. Cloth \$62.95.

Simphiwe Hlatshwayo's *Education and Independence* is concerned primarily with the relationship between formal education and the processes of social production and reproduction over the course of South African history. Arguing that education has been a site of “contested political terrain” in South Africa, Hlatshwayo asserts that western-style education was intended primarily to subordinate Africans to the interests of European settlers and capitalists, foster racial segregation, and legitimize white superiority. Conversely, he recounts how the South African education system was also at the center of the struggle for equality where students actively resisted a state-controlled curriculum that made schools “depots for the reproduction of labor power.” Hlatshwayo locates the roots of the mass activism that eventually brought down the apartheid regime in the growing student activism of the mid 1970s.

Certainly the most ambitious element of the book is Hlatshwayo's attempt to use educational history to construct a blueprint of a postapartheid school system. On the assumption that all education should be “futurist,” he argues that the success of efforts to undo the racist, sexist, and classist legacy of apartheid depends on a historical understanding of the development and implementation of Bantu Education. In concrete terms, his prescription for proper schooling in the “new” South Africa consists primarily of a state-funded, one-track education system that would integrate South Africans of all ethnic backgrounds. Hlatshwayo maintains that if done properly, the new schools have the potential to bring a “most glorious revolution” (p. 108) to South Africa.

Education and Independence is a slim book of just over one hundred pages. It begins with a theoretical chapter where the author reviews the literature on “human capital, modernization, dependency, and reproduction theories” within the context of South African education. The next four chapters follow the chronology of South African history beginning

with the Dutch settlement of Cape Town in the seventeenth century and concluding with the apartheid regime on the verge of collapse in the late 1980s. In covering so much time and territory in the limiting context of a short narrative history, Hlatshwayo relies primarily on secondary sources. In the last chapters he also draws on five interviews he conducted with African teachers. Although he does a good job laying out a concise overview of South African educational history, many of his sources are quite dated and stray geographically. For example, he bases his short characterization of "indigenous African education" on Barbara Castle's 1965 *Growing Up in East Africa*. His assessment of independent African schools is similarly drawn from John Anderson's 1971 Kenya-focused *The Struggle for the School*.

The book's methodological and historical limits are due primarily to the fact that it is based largely on Hlatshwayo's Ph.D. dissertation. The opening literature review has little direct relevance to the rest of the narrative and much of the text consists of large blocks of undigested quotations. There is an extract from the Eiselen Commission Report that covers an entire page. Yet one is reluctant to criticize this work too strongly for it belongs to a sad sub-genre of academic writing: the posthumously published monograph. The author's untimely death led his wife (a Ph.D. in chemical engineering) and a colleague to revise the manuscript for publication. The book's narrative of South African educational history stops several years short of the transfer of power in 1994, and so Hlatshwayo never had the opportunity to assess and critique the educational efforts of the African National Congress's new regime. He therefore also never engaged the critics of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission who charge that there can be no real change in South Africa without addressing the economic and material bases of apartheid, a view that would seem to conflict with Hlatshwayo's faith in the transformative power of schooling.

Nevertheless, the book will be useful to scholars of education who are not familiar with the South African case. Much of this material is better dealt with in more empirically based collected works on South African education, including A. Mugomba and M. Nyaggah's *Independence Without Freedom* (1980), Peter Kallaway's *Apartheid and Education* (1984) and Sandra Burman and Pamela Reynolds' *Growing Up in a Divided Society: The Contexts of Childhood in South Africa* (1986). On the other hand, this is a book that offers a quick and concise introduction to the historical development of segregated education in South Africa. It relies too heavily on extensive block quotations, but most of these cite key texts. Thus, it is a good starting place for scholars and general readers who are beginning their exploration of the history of South Africa and its schools.