

## The folly of Bantu Education

Written by Anton Barnard

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South Africa's matriculation results were released today. Predictably, the best (read "white") schools did better, but the rest of the schools fared worse than in previous years. The failures can largely be ascribed to the politically driven implementation of a piece of left-wing folly, Outcomes-based Education (OBE). The usual suspects have already been trundled out and blamed for the disastrous results in some schools. "It was apartheid. The legacy of Bantu Education is to blame."

"Bantu" is the collective name for black Africans. It literally means "people." In apartheid South Africa, Bantu Education was the name for the educational system to which black people were subjected, from more or less 1953 onwards.

Everybody obviously "knows" Bantu Education was an "injustice / crime against humanity / evil", don't they? The loony left becomes apoplectic by just thinking about those dastardly whites subjecting those poor people to an inferior educational system, segregated schools and even segregated universities. How could those evil whites perpetrate such a diabolical scheme?

(Isn't the deliberate phrase "segregated universities" interesting? Listen to the left-wing bilge spewing forth from the PC brigade these days, you'd have thought no black could go to university in the old days. The facts and reality are different. Nelson Mandela became a lawyer in apartheid South Africa. He went to university, in other words. He was allowed to practice law in Johannesburg.)

Bantu Education was just plain wrong, wasn't it?

I agree with the last statement. Bantu Education was wrong, but not in the sense that the politically correct brigade perceives it to be.

If somebody wants to maintain Bantu Education was inferior, I am going to ask the obvious question, that the PC brigade is too afraid to ask: inferior compared to what? To the advanced, enlightened educational system to be found in Sub-Saharan Africa before Arabic or European

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colonizers arrived? You know – the same one that brought forth literary giants such as, ahem.... Or wait: weren't there those brilliant black scientists, schooled in the idyllic and sophisticated educational system that was in existence in what is now the Transkei or Kwazulu-Natal in, say, 1700? What were their names? Strangely I can't remember right now...

Of course I'm being facetious above. In all of recorded history, prior to Arabic or European settlement, there was no tradition of the written word, no science in the Arabic or Western sense of the word, and therefore no notion of anything even approaching, say, Plato's Academy, except for an Islamic (i.e. Arab-inspired) university in Timbuktu, far to the north of South Africa.

All the black tribes, every single one of them, encountered by South Africa's European colonizers, were in a pre-civilized, pre-literate, pre-technological state. There were no schools as Westerners would understand them.

I ask again: is anybody still maintaining Bantu Education was inferior when compared to a complete lack of education?

Yet Bantu Education was wrong. It was lunacy. It was stupid. It was unsustainable. South Africa's whites, the Afrikaners, did an almost insanely stupid thing by even implementing such a system in the first place. By doing so we (I am an Afrikaner) assumed responsibility for the education of millions of denizens of other nations – Zulus, Xhosas, Vendas and Tswanas – the different black nations that inhabited the Southern African subcontinent.

Consider this for a moment. Whites have never been a majority in South Africa, but our ancestors took it upon ourselves to educate millions of others, who at present outnumber us by at least 10 to 1 in South Africa, and by 150 to 1 in the rest of Africa. It was the equivalent of the white population of, say, the United States, taking it upon themselves to educate everybody in Central and South America. Think of the language barrier. Think of the logistics.

Think of the obvious question: why should the education of millions of South Americans become white Americans' problem? Why would Americans agree to such a thing?

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It would be lunacy. And it was. Bantu Education was lunacy. White South Africans ignored the example set by the monumentally callous British colonizers, whose indifference to their colonial subjects in Africa and India was breathtaking. Whites took it upon themselves to educate millions of people from other nations, an endeavour funded by white tax money.

We made other people's and nations' problems, our problem. This was an almost unbelievable act of generosity, although it was sadly misguided. Why could Koreans, whose country was poorer than Zambia in 1960, educate themselves out of poverty within 30 years? What's wrong with Africans if Koreans could do it for and by themselves? The left keeps telling us how all people are supposedly equal. Why then point fingers at whites for trying to educate blacks, by endlessly harping on about the so-called inferiority of Bantu Education?

Sure, Bantu Education had its problems. Compared to the alternative – no education at all – it was however an astounding though foolhardy piece of generosity on the part of white South Africans.