

1996

"If You Can Educate the Native Woman...": Debates over the Schooling and Education of Girls and Women in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1934

Carol Summers

University of Richmond, lsummers@richmond.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/history-faculty-publications>



Part of the [African History Commons](#), and the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Summers, Carol. "If You Can Educate the Native Woman...": Debates over the Schooling and Education of Girls and Women in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1934." *History of Education Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (1996): 449-471.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the History at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

“If you can educate the Native woman . . .”: Debates over the Schooling and Education of Girls and Women in Southern Rhodesia, 1900–1934

Carol Summers

At the turn of the century, European settlers, officials, and missionaries in Southern Rhodesia were apathetic about promoting African girls' schooling. By the late 1920s, however, all sectors of the European community—settlers, officials, and missionaries—were debating whether, and for what reasons, girls should attend mission schools.¹ Europeans discussed girls' and women's schooling as a strategy for coping with problems in the social and economic development of the region. Some Native Commissioners hoped that disciplined moral education would encourage women to remain in rural areas and take responsibility for their families, supporting the system of migrant labor. Many missionaries hoped that domestic education could train women to build peasant households in rural areas and Christian havens for educated African men. Some settlers called for servant-training programs as ways of enlisting African women's support of European society. These educational strategies for coping with tensions caused by social change proved highly contradictory, however. Ultimately, the rhetoric of social engineering was more prominent than the results in the education of girls and women in Southern Rhodesia.

Carol Summers is an assistant professor of history at the University of Richmond. Her research and writing were supported by Faculty Research grants from the University of Richmond and by a National Academy of Education (Spencer Foundation) Post-Doctoral Fellowship.

The following abbreviations for archives appear in the notes: ABC—American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions Archives, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.; CWM—Council for World Mission Archives, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London, U.K.; JAH—Jesuit Archives, Prestage House, Mount Pleasant, Harare, Zimbabwe; NAZ—National Archives of Zimbabwe, Borrowdale, Harare, Zimbabwe; USPG—United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (Church of England) Archives, Rhodes House Library, Oxford University, Oxford, U.K.; WMMS—Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Archives, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London, U.K.

¹The quotation of the title is from Native Commissioner (NC) Gokwe to Superintendent of Natives (SoN) Gwelo, Feb. 1924, NAZ, S138/150. NCs and other officials are referred to by post rather than by name. Only mission schools were open to African girls.

Social and Historical Context

European settlers, officials, and missionaries historically showed an interest in the socialization and education of African boys and men. Men who were not socialized or disciplined to obey and defer to Europeans or to work for wages threatened both the military security and the potential economic profitability of the British South Africa Company administration. In 1890, the company had marched into part of the region, and in the Matabele War of 1893 it had acquired military authority over the whole, but in 1896–97 an uprising that involved much of the country brought expensive and destructive fighting and famine. The Boer War in South Africa, which temporarily disrupted markets and transportation, further proved the cost of war. In the economic reconstruction and development of the early twentieth century, all administration officials were fully aware of the need for peace and of settlers' fears of more uprisings.

Education was critical as a potential way to build a useful labor force. African men provided the labor essential for all European forms of economic activity in the region—agriculture, mining, and commerce. African men even provided the domestic labor that upheld European standards of civilization on this imperial “frontier”—washing the dishes, making the coffee, cleaning house, and caring for the children of white mothers. Thus, the training, education, and cultivation of African men were essential for the development of colonialism, despite popular rhetoric calling for European-led development and a larger white population in Rhodesia.

Many settlers and officials saw African women, on the other hand, primarily as threats to respectable European life, authority, economic activity, and homes. They understood African women not as people, but as dangers. During the 1896–97 uprisings, African concubines of company men were accused of stealing powder, ammunition, and guns to be used against soldiers. In at least one case, a European officer ordered that a woman carrying a baby on her back be shot (killing both woman and child) because the officer was afraid that she was spying on his troops' encampments. African women were perceived as dangers even when they were victims: officials feared that if Europeans or their African employees abused African women, African men would resist European rule. During settlement talks in Matabeleland during 1897, African leaders immediately demanded the removal of Native Police who had raped and kidnapped local women. From the beginning of the century through the 1930s, whenever African men complained about the quality of the Native Department's administration, schools, mission activity, or police abuse, they mentioned problems with women.²

²See, for example, Olive Schreiner's novel, *Trooper Peter Halkett of Mashonaland* (1897), and H. Marshall Hole, cited in D. N. Beach, *War and Politics in Zimbabwe, 1840–1900*

Dominant Rhodesian images of African women portrayed women as economic actors who were either peripheral or dangerous to European-sponsored economic development. Women did not directly provide labor for Europeans, as farmworkers, miners, or domestic servants. Instead, as Elizabeth Schmidt has shown, most women remained at home, on their farms, expanding and intensifying agricultural production by working with their husbands to grow crops to feed their families and provide a surplus which, sold, would sharply diminish the need for their husbands to go off to work for European farmers or miners. Early colonial images portray women as hardy workers, or drudges, supporting their husbands with food, beer, and sex, and selling each of these as necessary to earn their men's tax money, which allowed men a leisure that incapacitated them for proper economic activities, such as wage labor.³

Subsistence production and the raising of tax money were not, however, the only ways in which officials and settlers feared these women threatened the labor supply. Diana Jeater has explored how colonial officials also saw African women as strong, independent, and sexually aggressive in ways that forced husbands to remain with them, rather than go out to work. These women reportedly abandoned, or at least cuckolded, husbands who left them and did not always bother to return the bridewealth that had been paid for them. Worse yet, as the early hopes of mining faded and Europeans and Africans alike turned their attention to maize as a cash crop, African families that relied heavily on the labor of women and children sold their maize and competed with less efficient European growers for the limited internal maize market. This competition, particularly during the depression of the late 1920s and early 1930s, forced producer prices down, damaging the profitability, and indeed the viability, of the entire European agricultural sector.⁴

(Gweru, 1986), 122–24. On spying, see Rosmead to Joseph Chamberlain, Court of Inquiry into Shooting of Woman and Child, 6 Sept. 1896 (inquiry date), Public Records Office CO879/520/2222. For accounts of Cecil Rhodes's meeting with Ndebele leaders, see Frank W. Sykes, *With Plumer in Matabeleland: An Account of the Operations of the Matabeleland Relief Force during the Rebellion of 1896* (New York, 1897; 1969). For a later example, see the enquiry into the conduct of the NC Belingwe (de Laessoe). Depositions [Nkombri?], [Nohlala?], 25 Nov. 1906, NAZ, A3/18/13.

³Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870–1939* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1992), ch. 2; and NC Gutu, Annual Report (1920) NAZ, S2076, and idem, Annual Report (1908) NAZ, N9/1/11. For examples of early colonial images of women, see Fr. O'Neill, *Zambesi Mission Record 4* (1910): 77–79; Col. Heyman, "The Labour Problem," *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 20 Oct. 1911.

⁴Diana Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power: The Construction of Moral Discourse in Southern Rhodesia, 1894–1930* (Oxford, Eng., 1993). For example, see Major Mundy, "A Higher Standard of Diet in Kraal Life," Southern Rhodesia Advisory Board for Native Development, 16 Dec. 1931, NAZ, S170/1160; Robin H. Palmer, *Land and Racial Domination in Rhodesia* (Berkeley, Calif., 1977); and Ian R. Phimister, *An Economic and Social History of Zimbabwe, 1890–1948: Capital Accumulation and Class Struggle* (London, 1988).

While African women who stayed home, deferred to their fathers and husbands, and raised maize offered an indirect threat to the economic dominance of Europeans, African women who challenged their fathers or husbands by wanting clothes, taking lovers, moving to towns or mines, or imitating Europeans were even more potentially dangerous. Such women threatened the social, racial, and cultural boundaries that the European community drew, with increasing vigor, during the 1910s, 1920s, and 1930s. These women were out of the control of fathers and husbands and even beyond the authority of missions or government officials. Girls who defied their fathers' choice of husband worried Native Department officials concerned about what would happen to old men deprived of bridewealth. Native Commissioners dreaded the rise of young African men as sexual, social, economic, and political rivals to the older "chiefs" or headmen to whom it paid salaries and whose cooperation made labor recruitment, taxation, and policing possible. Girls as demanding lovers or wives worried employers, a group which included nearly every European in the region, as many employers feared that women's demands for decent housing and male salaries capable of supporting a family would increase employers' expenses. Employers also worried that women and girls would play one lover off against another; brew beer; and promote fights, crime, and a discontented work force. Worse yet, according to many Europeans, was the possibility that well-dressed, clean, English-speaking African women might seduce European husbands and sons, undermining the unity of the white community.⁵ Central to African social and economic life, swept up by the rapid changes engulfing the region, and capable of showing far more volition than their relatives or the administration might wish, African women proved impossible to ignore.

Educational Background

From the 1890s, missionaries had opened their schools to African women and girls as well as boys and men. Mission schools, in the earliest years

⁵Charles van Onselen notes that at the beginning of the century, when firms in need of workers were debating whether to pursue South African styled migrant labor policies or work toward a settled, proletarianized labor force, a few important mining officials wanted settled labor and were willing to bring women into the areas of the mines. These settled labor advocates were a minority however. Charles van Onselen, *Chibaro: African Mine Labour in Southern Rhodesia, 1900-1933* (London, 1976), 76-77. See Terri Barnes, "African Female Labour and the Urban Economy of Colonial Zimbabwe, with Special Reference to Harare, 1920-39" (master's thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 1987), and Tsuneo Yoshikuni, "Black Migrants in a White City: A Social History of African Harare, 1890-1925" (Ph.D. diss., University of Zimbabwe, 1989) and idem, "The Origins and Development of the Salisbury Municipal Location: A Study of Municipal Control of African Workers in Colonial Harare, 1892-1923" (paper presented at the Henderson Seminar, History Department, University of Zimbabwe, 1984); Bishop Paget and Archdeacon Christelow, NAZ, S1561/48.

of the colony, were religious recruiting grounds rather than academic or industrial centers, and even the most conservative missionaries usually acknowledged, however reluctantly, that African women probably had souls. Yet women and girls were problems for early mission schools. At many schools, the first pupils were the workmen employed by the mission, who were expected to attend school as part of that work; these early schools in the 1890s had little to attract girls and women who were not paid to attend. By 1900, though, in the aftermath of war and famine, increasing numbers of both boys and girls went to school voluntarily, trying to understand and profit from new economic, political, and social possibilities as the economy slowly revived and the administration became more inescapable. Male missionaries sometimes felt uncomfortable being responsible for large numbers of young women. A few missionaries were accused of sexual misconduct, but how to deal with the girls who sometimes flooded the schools proved to be the bigger problem. The Jesuits occasionally turned women away from school, arguing that the classes would be too large to control if they allowed girls to remain. Other missionaries also worried about the number of girls flocking to facilities designed primarily for young men, whether pointing to the increasing number of girls who had moved into missionary houses and were sleeping on the kitchen floors for lack of dormitory space, or mentioning, obliquely, the effects on school discipline of courtship and liaisons between male and female students.⁶

But during the early years of the century, mission schools expanded and proliferated, filled with young African men who wanted access to information about European society, wanted to learn English and to read, and sought connections to acquire more remunerative work than would be available to a "raw native." After the administration's new Order D of 1907 introduced capitation grants-in-aid for African education, missions no longer excluded girls to save space for boys, but welcomed both as potential converts and revenue generators.⁷ Fathers frequently accepted their sons' desire to go to school. Daughters, however, were another matter. Daughters were precious sources of farm labor until they married, and with mar-

⁶For example, D. R. Pelly [Church of England], Letters, *Mashonaland Paper* 3 (Jan. 1893). This was true even in the school of Miss Nancy Jones, a black American missionary at Mount Selinda. G. Wilder to American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABC), 27 Apr. 1894, ABC, 15.4, vol. 20, item 277; the need to pay students to attend school effectively vanished by around 1900, however, when demand for education outstripped supply. *Zambesi Mission Record* 1 (1900): 301; H. Juliette Gilson to ABC, 3 Mar. 1900, ABC, 15.4, vol. 25, item 202; Thompson to ABC, 4 Sept. 1904, ABC, 15.4, vol. 28, item 58; Julia Winter to ABC, 31 Jan. 1905, ABC, 15.4, vol. 26, item 100; Wilder to ABC, 15 Feb. 1906, ABC, 15.4, vol. 28, item 255; Bradford to White, 18 May 1915, WMMS Women's Work, Rhodesia correspondence, microfilm box 3.

⁷See Carol Summers, "Educational Controversies: African Activism and Educational Strategies in Southern Rhodesia, 1920-1934," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20 (Mar. 1994): 3-25, esp. 9-11, 16, 21.

riage, their fathers received bridewealth. Tension between missions and the older men thus increased when mission schools were opened to daughters.

As government funding increased on a per capita basis, missions expanded more and more aggressively, making education mandatory for the children—boys and girls alike—of the families living on land formally allocated to the mission station and expanding into new regions further removed from direct mission oversight. At some of these schools, girls formed the majority of students, since, unlike boys, they did not need to leave school at age fourteen to earn tax money, and many outschools accepted young women who were married, pregnant, and had children for whom to care.⁸ Central mission schools also became increasingly attentive to educating girls as the first generation of male converts grew old enough to marry and needed wives. “We would have to despair,” pronounced the head of the Southern Rhodesian Anglican church in 1904, “[if we] married our Christian boys to *heathen* wives.”⁹ The Anglican mission, among others, opened up a special intensive training program for girls whose bridewealth had been paid by schoolboys and teacher/evangelists at the mission.

European settlers and officials who observed this expansion frequently argued that the content of mission education was dubious, especially in the rural outschools, because it included a heavy dose of religion and catechism and provided only sketchy academic or industrial teaching. With such condemnations, however, they overlooked the practical side of mission training, which not only taught that all people were children of God, but also introduced students to writing letters to people who could employ them, alter passes for them, or at least inform them of the actual contents of their letters of recommendation. African boys and men, knowing that they would spend at least a few years on the job market, used school as a way to try to find the best possible positions, and an elite few managed to parlay literacy, language skills, and devotion, into jobs as teachers, evangelists, or mission servants.¹⁰

⁸This was generally done under the provisions of the Private Locations Ordinance; for Jesuit and Dutch Reformed examples, see “Agreement under Section 5 of the Private Locations Ordinance, 1908,” (1912) JAH, box 126/5, and Orlandini to NC Gutu, 23 May 1921, NAZ, NVG 3/2/1; Inspector Gwelo (Mather) to Director of Native Development, 24 Sept. 1929, NAZ, S2307/1/1, and Mukiyo Esthinus, Deposition, 20 Apr. 1931, NAZ, S1542/M8. R. J. Challiss, “The Foundation of the Racially Segregated Educational System in Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1923, with Special Reference to the Education of Africans” (Ph.D. diss., University of Zimbabwe, 1982), 92.

⁹Bishop Gaul, *Mashonaland Quarterly* 47 (Feb. 1904): 3–5 (emphasis in text).

¹⁰For an example of the usefulness of education in the colony’s early years, see Jonas Hlatywayo to H. Gilson, 21 Mar. 1901, ABC, 15.4, vol. 25, item 221. For a detailed examination of one family’s rise, and the tensions involved, see Terence O. Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family and African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920–64* (Portsmouth, N.H., 1995).

Girls, however, sometimes found it difficult to take a mission education as seriously as male students did. Critics of girls in mission schools argued that for girls, both rural outschools and central schools were primarily an opportunity to escape restraint and responsibilities and to have fun. In school, one official observed, girls "enjoy[ed] a sense of relief and freedom." They were also, Father Sykes complained, "more giddy and less serious minded than the men," and as the mission tried harder to convert them, they only got worse, being "exceedingly frivolous, empty headed, fond of notice, hard of attention, wanting in seriousness of purpose."¹¹ Girls did not need passes or pay taxes, and they were not preparing to work for Europeans to earn the money to marry and begin farming. Furthermore, mission education preached chastity but offered girls new opportunities to associate with young men very different from the sometimes elderly or polygynous husbands their fathers told them to marry. Mission teachings offered contradictory messages. Missionaries preached meekness and obedience, but encouraged girls to take responsibility for their own souls and, by extrapolation, their own marriages. Missionaries condemned the institutions of polygyny and pawning. And at many central stations, missions offered a potential haven to girls and women unwilling to marry or upset with their husbands.

When girls and women did not take mission education seriously, they became the giggling, disobedient pupils who tried the missionaries' patience. They used mission schools as a means of acquiring an understanding of European culture and of making useful connections—precisely the reason so many young men wanted to study at school, but they were, at best, a distraction to young men. Worse, girls and women pursued their own social strategies: they sought educated husbands, sometimes aggressively following the men they wanted as those men were transferred from school to school. They also got pregnant by African teachers or their fellow students while attending mission sponsored events.¹²

When they took their studies seriously, however, women and girls could cause even more trouble. Much of the tension between missions and government officials, or missions and older African men, occurred when African women or girls announced a desire to study and left home, father,

¹¹F. W. Posselt, NC Marandellas, to Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) Salisbury, 5 June 1930, NAZ, S1561/64. The remainder of the above file consists of descriptions of cases of sexual misconduct arising in mission schools of their district. For a missionary's perspective, see G. Wilder, Report of the Chikore Station (1906) ABC, 15.4, vol. 23, item 100. Fr. Sykes, *Zambesi Mission Record* 2 (1902): 24-4 and 2 (1903): 181.

¹²The strongest images of African female students as sexual predators emerge in discussions in reports of NCs faced with irate fathers. For examples, see NC Gutu to SoN Victoria, 21 Oct. 1918, NAZ, NVG 3/2/1; F. W. Posselt (NC Marandellas) to CNC 5 June 1930, NAZ, S1561/64; and "Notes from the Different Stations: Driefontein," *Zambesi Mission Record* 8 (July 1927): 184.

or husband, for a central mission station. European settlers and officials frequently complained about the effects of education on African men: it unsettled them and prepared them to be clerks when the country needed more manual laborers. The situation was even more dire for women, however. Schooling prepared women neither for employment in the European-dominated economy, nor for the responsibilities and obedience of rural life.

There was no easy way in which a woman could legitimately turn her education into high-wage employment. Terri Barnes and Tsuneo Yoshikuni have explored how prostitution and beer brewing were, until the middle of the century, the most remunerative options for urban or compound women. And even the moderately paid jobs offered by the missions, as teachers and evangelists, were at least partly closed to them. From the earliest European presence, European and both white and black American and South African women had taught in Southern Rhodesian schools. But they did so with academic credentials that were far beyond the reach of local girls and women. European missionaries did not hire local women as evangelists, or for posts as teacher/evangelists (most teaching jobs) and would often refuse to hire even a highly qualified local female teacher for a one-teacher school (most outschools) if any male teachers were available. The first local women to acquire more than rudimentary education, who became conspicuous only in the 1920s, tended to be kept either in the central stations for a few years to teach infant classes, or established as junior teachers in two- or three-teacher schools, at least until they married.¹³

Most missionaries, or students, did not see even mission wage work as a rational or desirable career path for African girls and women. But girls who had spent years in boarding schools and who valued fancy clothing might be “spoiled” not only in the “traditional” meaning of premarital sex or pregnancy, but in terms of what they expected out of life. An educated girl might find intolerable the “traditional” female role as a productive wife and farmer. Uneducated women, one observer argued, lived happily with “a sense of what is becoming and proper in their relations with

¹³Barnes, “African Female Labour,” 13, 17–20, 29, 45–46, and Yoshikuni, “Black Migrants in a White City,” 138–39, 149. See Neville Jones, *Hope Fountain Annual Report* (1921) CWM, 6/1, and idem, (1926), CWM, 6/4. Mariya and Hester, with three years at the Anglican mission of St. Monica’s, went in 1908 to teach the lowest classes at, respectively, St. Faith’s and Epiphany missions. E. Lloyd, *Mashonaland Quarterly* 63 (Feb. 1908): 13. This is the first mention I have found of local African (as opposed to South African) female teachers. Female teachers did not become common until the 1920s. Ranger has challenged the notion that the missions marginalized women, pointing to the central role of elite women such as Grace Samkange in the Wesleyan women’s organization, Ruwadzano, but he also acknowledges that Samkange was highly exceptional. Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men?*, 32–62.

their elders, their relatives, their husbands, their husbands' other wives, their children, and in their relations with the world about them and with the opposite sex." Mission-educated girls, however, wanted clothes. Some refused to marry men who lacked plows. They married by Christian rites and opposed polygyny, bringing complex bigamy cases before the courts. Some fought for custody of their children after divorce, involving European courts in actions which officials and settlers perceived as antithetical to the order of customary African life. Some even demanded that the marriage officer write on the marriage certificate that the husband was required to go to school.¹⁴

During the years from 1900 to 1934, education for African men, and therefore the educational context of Southern Rhodesia, changed. Men went beyond the basic schooling of mission outschools to carefully designed industrial and vocational programs in building, carpentry, other crafts, and agriculture. Even academic education changed, from the simple literacy and religious training of the earliest evangelists, many of whom were employed as teacher/evangelists before passing even Standard I (approximately third grade in the United States), to the carefully graded programs which turned out students who had passed Standard VII and graduated from a three-year teacher training program with a government granted certificate.

Girls' education had to change, too. But the changes did not entirely parallel the changes in boys' education since they were carried out reluctantly by missions and government officials forced into action for reasons quite different from the dual needs for labor and social control that had motivated the expansion and transformation of boys' education. Advocates of boys' education worked to fill niches in the colonial society of Southern Rhodesia. At various times, schools sought to provide evangelists and teachers for the mission stations; semi-skilled workers, especially in the building trades, for employers; and messengers, assistants, and helpers for government officials.

Most missionaries, though, specifically schooled girls to avoid individualism and careerism. Under the supervision of mission families, nuns, and unmarried European headmistresses, girls lived away from their own homes and their families' instruction in the basics of childcare, agriculture,

¹⁴Agnes Sloan, "The Black Woman," *Native Affairs Department Annual* (1923): 60–69. For a sampling of the complications, see *Reports and Decisions of the Court of Appeal for Native Civil Cases* (Salisbury, various dates), esp. Leah v. Joshua (18 Jan. 1932); Masawi v. Mzanenamu (1 Nov. 1932); Gatsi v. Dokasi (9 Dec. 1932); *Decisions of the High Court of Southern Rhodesia*, Dayimano v. Kgaribaitse (22 Oct. 1931); Rex v. Crispin Katsuwu (3 Nov. 1927); Ellen v. Jim (20 Aug. 1931); Rex v. Chenemata, Rex v. Mzanenamu (20 and 27 Apr. 1932); and Rex v. Machingura (4 Aug. 1932). For an example of female attempts to redefine marriage, see Assistant NC Mtetengwe to NC Gwanda, 5 Mar. 1924, NAZ, S138/150.

and cooking. Instead, they were taught to make new types of homes for the educated men. And some missionaries and settlers saw girls as possible helpers in the making of European homes. Missionaries, and those officials and settlers who eventually advocated girls' education, sought to produce Christian women who would marry Christian men and form Christian families, acting as a gradual, non-revolutionary leaven which would raise the domestic standards of African households without endangering the security and status of European homes.

Girls' education programs, though, were perhaps even less successful than boys' education programs in this social engineering initiative. Most girls attended rural outschools that were underfunded and extremely basic, rather than the more disciplined central schools. The graduates of the better central schools tended to remove themselves from rural culture, moving to town, or at least to a mission station, and associating with other members of an emerging African elite class, modeled more on European bourgeois norms than on early mission or later segregationist ideas of an improving peasantry.¹⁵

But when girls' education programs trained teachers and urban wives rather than farmwomen, few mourned. As discussed by the Legislative Assembly or by a commission on domestic work, girls' programs were often advocated not because they worked, but because they provided a conveniently nondisruptive way of spending money "for the Africans' benefit," to satisfy missionaries and British oversight. Money spent on boys' education might allow African boys to compete with European boys for entry level, semi-skilled, and clerical jobs. Girls, though, were seen as unlikely to compete. Educated, non-working wives might even raise the cost of African labor high enough to keep it from undercutting European wages so dramatically.¹⁶

In this context, girls' education in Southern Rhodesia during the 1920s and 1930s addressed three contradictory sets of issues. First, some Native Department officials advocated schooling as a cheap solution to conditions in African farming areas where African men, some missionaries, and some settlers were complaining of immoral, backward, and disintegrating communities that were plagued by fleeing women. Schooled in Christian morality, girls might be encouraged to remain and take responsibility for their communities. Second, as segregationist ideas became increasingly powerful during the late 1920s and early 1930s, some mis-

¹⁵Yoshikuni "Black Migrants in a White City," 81–82, 138–39. For settler concepts of peasantry, see Gilchrist, *Legislative Assembly Debates* 6 (1927): 151–55.

¹⁶Carol Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation: Social Ideals and Social Control in Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1934* (Athens, Ohio, 1994), ch. 5. For examples of native development, see the *Legislative Assembly Debates* 13 (1933), esp. speeches by Davies (p. 973); Cowden (pp. 982–83); and Huggins (p. 995).

sionaries and Native Development department officials believed that domestic education, to train the wives of teachers, evangelists, builders, clerks, and interpreters, could become a mechanism to produce a new type of African elite through wives and mothers who could both establish homes to tie African men to the African community and raise elite children without threatening European control through integration. Third, a minority of officials, settlers, and missionaries saw the education of African girls as a way of securing European families by encouraging African women to become servants and retainers in European households, safeguarding European women and girls from the constant presence of African men as domestic servants.

As settlers, officials, and missionaries gradually developed and sought to implement increasingly elaborate theories of segregation and appropriate development—theories that required planners to consider not just present but future generations—education for girls and women gradually ceased to be a mere accident of the expansion of coeducational religious education and became subject to major debates over social planning and goals. These debates revolved around perceived practical contradictions between the three major social objectives of girls' education: moral control, domesticity, and wage work as servants. By the 1930s, vocal European and African inhabitants of Southern Rhodesia increasingly viewed girls' education, like boys' education, as a critical tool for controlled development. But while women were discussed constantly, as features of the region who could not be ignored, the missionaries, officials, and settlers continued to be reluctant to invest in mass female education. As missionary societies tottered on the verge of bankruptcy, the government instituted austerity measures, and settlers watched producer prices for both maize and tobacco plunge, the debates over girls' education became larger than the actual programs.

Moral Education

Women and girls eluded the formal administrative structures of Southern Rhodesia. Women were assessed for neither hut taxes nor poll taxes. Unlikely to own or pay taxes on dogs, they did not find themselves liable for any of the forms of the direct taxation that Native Commissioners collected as critical signs of acquiescence to the colonial state. Women and girls could move about the colony without the passes required by men. And legally women were minors, or children; regardless of chronological age, they were represented in all legal matters by men. This made it difficult for a woman to own any property, whether cattle, a plot of land, or the cash from her agricultural labor or wage work. This minority status did not make life especially easy for women, tied as they were to male guardians. But it also made it extremely difficult for African men, Native

Department officials, missionaries, or settlers to hold African women legally accountable for their actions. As beatings were outlawed, and fathers and guardians lost the legal authority to force daughters and wards to marry regardless of the women's wishes, both African men and Native Department officials complained that women were becoming uncontrollable. When women could flee, "tradition" lost its effectiveness. As an unwieldy alliance of fathers, Native Department officials, and some settlers and missionaries called for new legal constraints on women as an ineffectual emergency measure, debates raged over how best to ensure that women could be kept "moral" over the long term.

By 1924, many Native Department officials were beginning to conclude that despite the lawsuits, complications, and confusion that educated women brought to rural communities, a slow movement toward women's education was a potentially useful tool for the salvation of African communities that might otherwise disintegrate under the pressure from European neighbors, migrant labor, and economic change. At the end of 1923, all Native Commissioners (NCs) were sent a copy of a memo by the NC of Marandellas, F. W. Posselt, who advocated legislating radical change in the legal status of African women: "With the changed and changing conditions of native life it appears to me a matter of importance that consideration be given to the position of the woman and to remove some of the disabilities under which she lives. I feel that unless this is done, Native family life may develop features that will hinder healthy progress." Posselt did not advocate education, but rather the legal emancipation of women (along the lines of the Legal Age of Majority Act finally passed as one of the first measures of the new state of Zimbabwe in 1981). Posselt argued that legal changes were necessary to give African women the ability and incentive to take responsibility for themselves and their community. Women needed to come under the law as full adults, he argued, not for humanitarian reasons, or because they were totally powerless, but because they had all too much—negative—influence.¹⁷

In making this argument, Posselt drew on decades of experience of exasperated missionaries and NCs who had pronounced themselves unable to understand the powerful influence African women had in a community that was, they repeatedly assured themselves, run by men. Wives, one Catholic priest grumbled, tended to go on strike against husbands who beat them, or even complained about their cooking. The Anglican mission, another asserted, must not allow girls and women to flock to the station,

¹⁷NC Marandellas (F. W. Posselt), "Native marriage and the status of the woman," 30 Nov. 1923, NAZ, S138/150. Until the Legal Age of Majority Act, African women in Southern Rhodesia, Rhodesia, and Zimbabwe were jural minors, unable ever to become legal adults, regardless of age.

but should support parental authority and "uphold the duties of wives to their husbands, even in polygamy. We must not handicap the Church's discipline in the future." NCs were even more vehement in describing women's power and influence. Some viewed women's authority as a long-standing reality, pointing out that women had long been "wielding immense power over the men . . . [though] their instincts are almost purely animal." Others argued that the position of women had been changing, as women used all new tools that came to hand. "It would be suicidal policy," one NC wrote, "to vest the Native Karanga woman . . . with more power than she has at present. . . . [T]he Karanga female given an inch will take an ell without fail." Women were already learning enough in school to make them more difficult to restrain; some NCs pointed out that over half the children in some outschools were female, and, whether for good or ill, "The education of native girls at Mission schools is opening their eyes, and they are no longer the mere chattel or slave of the man that they were say 30 years ago."¹⁸

Few NCs argued against Posselt's assertion that African women were more backward than men, less exposed to European life, and inferior in the qualities associated with civilization to husbands who had spent time working in European towns, farms, and mines. "The male goes about and attains some advance in contact with civilised life," noted one NC who argued for education, "but he goes back to the kraal life, and with association with the backward female, it is not long before he falls back to the standard of home life, and forgets for example the habits of cleanliness learned in employment. Until the education of the native woman introduces a new standard of home life I feel that no real progress will be made."¹⁹ Instead, these NCs attacked Posselt's idea of an instant solution to the problem. Many NCs advocated education and evolution, arguing that legal change should follow, not lead, education. These men argued for education reluctantly, as a *delaying* tactic, rather than as a policy for the active promotion of change. Posselt, upon reading these vague suggestions for education and gradual changes in public opinion, came back with a scathing rebuttal, arguing that since no specific proposals were provided, discussion of education, civilization, and missionaries was "used merely in the sense of convenient slogans." Education in the abstract might be a good idea, but "our present disjointed native edu-

¹⁸Fr. O'Neill, *Zambesi Mission Record* 4 (1911): 267–74; Brotherhood Diary, *Mashonaland Quarterly* 35 (Feb. 1901): 18–20; Upcher, *Mashonaland Quarterly* 40 (May 1902): 7–9; Bishop to Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 28 June 1899, USPG/CLR 142; NC Sinoia to SoN Salisbury, 23 Feb. 1924, NAZ, S138/150; NC Chilimanzi to SoN Victoria, 10 Mar. 1924, NAZ, S138/150; NC Fort Rixon to SoN Bulawayo, 20 Mar. 1924, NAZ, S138/150.

¹⁹NC Gwanda to SoN Bulawayo, 27 Feb. 1924, NAZ, S138/150.

cation . . . amounts to this: missionary teaching is mainly confined to barren dogma and sterile theological speculation; ethics play but a small part and are indifferently inculcated. Then we have a form of elementary literary instruction, and in a few centres some industrial training. There is scant evidence of systematic effort to harmonize and coordinate these various elements.”²⁰

When Posselt advocated a comprehensive scheme of native education, or another NC suggested the education of the “rising generation of native girls” in domestic education, they were hinting at a possible strategy for the radical reorganization of economic and social roles within African society. “All our efforts,” Posselt argued, “must in the first place be directed towards the most progressive spirits and the stronger characters.” Posselt’s emancipation ideas were aimed precisely at the most elite and well educated of African women, using a theory of change in which these women, helped by legislation, would do what a remote European government was incapable of doing—changing the life of the average woman. Yet other NCs remained deeply suspicious of regulations designed to allow the most “advanced” and educated African women to determine their own futures: “The natives generally do feel that their women have not arrived at that age where they should be given absolute freedom. . . . They know their own women as well as we do, if not better. They know that they are not fit for freedom.”²¹

The most extreme debate over the “emancipation” of women through law, education, or other intervention, concerned women who were widely acknowledged to be far from the mean—girls who, after years in Catholic schools, wanted to become nuns even in the face of their father’s or guardian’s opposition. Could there not be some exception, the Catholic church asked, to the rule that a woman was considered a child and was under the jurisdiction of her father until married and of her husband thereafter? Educated, dedicated women, having rejected husbands proposed by their family, should, they argued, be considered adult enough to decide for themselves.

Responses from NCs were vitriolic. Some were specifically anti-Catholic. But more considered the would-be nuns an extreme case of the educated career woman. Posselt himself opposed allowing girls to become nuns because “The native female, in whom the maternal instinct is distinctly very strongly developed, can hardly be expected to understand what she is doing.” African women, these men concluded, could not be trusted to decide for themselves about something—such as the foreswearing of mar-

²⁰NC Marandellas to CNC, 12 May 1924, NAZ, S138/150.

²¹NC Marandellas (F. W. Posselt), 12 May 1924, NAZ, S138/150; Howman, Native Advisory Committee Documents (1921? 1931?) NAZ, S235/486.

riage and the promise of celibacy—that promised to affect not just their immediate present, but also their natures. Adapting rules to allow such women to take vows, one NC argued, would be ridiculous: "I do not care whether a native woman is under 21 years of age or over 21 years. She is merely a child. The native men in this country are very backward, although there are a few who are just emerging out of the pool of backwardness and have their heads above water, but the native women, with hardly an exception, are 500 years behind the men in the matter of civilisation and almost everything else." Freeing women to make decisions for themselves struck these NCs as making it possible for others—missionaries in particular—to enslave them. Neither legal emancipation nor extensive education could, these NCs contended, solve the problems of these women's immaturity, ignorance, and influence.²²

The idea of legally emancipating women, allowing them to own property and become adults, subject to legal, rather than customary or "traditional," constraints, died a quick death. Officials listened to their African male counterparts and worried about legislating for the educated minority rather than the uneducated masses of women; they feared the possibility that women, educated or not, might acquire enough legal status to make their own choices. Education, aimed at teaching morality first and keeping change under male control, was slower than legal change as a way of addressing the region's urban migration, development of a cash economy, and the changing lives of women. Although Native Department officials initially mistrusted education because it unsettled young girls, they increasingly perceived education as a safe, slow alternative to revolution.

Domestic Education

In 1916, Neville Jones and Rachel Masinga founded, almost accidentally, the girls' school of Hope Fountain. It was by no means the earliest educational venture involving girls. From the beginning, the London Missionary Society (LMS) and other mission societies had taught girls, sometimes even offering special sewing classes as an accessible and useful form of domestic education. By 1908, girls were becoming increasingly central to the educational strategies of the LMS, as boys limited their schooling in favor of going to work for tax money, and the schools grew to have a majority of girls.²³ The mission had not wanted to concentrate on educating girls; it needed to train teachers and evangelists and presumed that such people must be male. From 1906 through 1909, the LMS tried, ineffec-

²²F. W. T. Posselt, Native Affairs Advisory Committee, Minutes (1931) [cover says 1921, apparently a mistake], 79–80, NAZ, S235/484; Howman, Native Advisory Committee Documents, 46–48. See Summers, *From Civilization to Segregation*, chs. 3, 4, and 6.

²³For example, Wilkerson, Industrial Institute Annual Report (1908), CWM, 4/2.

tually, to establish a boys' training school at Hope Fountain. By 1909, however, the effort collapsed due to lack of funds and extreme personality conflicts between the school's headmaster and other missionaries. Because the mission's ongoing program for training apprentices remained small and faltered, the mission found itself reduced to having nothing but third class schools that offered only unappealing, rudimentary education.

Having failed to make its mark with boys' education, the LMS began girls' education as an inexpensive and distinctive way of expanding the mission's influence. The girls' school opened under Masinga initially had no European teachers (whose salaries would have been prohibitive). But Masinga was a charismatic teacher, trained at the American Zulu Mission in South Africa. During her first year, she added needlework, dressmaking, laundry, and gardening to the standard literary curriculum. She was regarded throughout the district as an effective, strict disciplinarian who could teach. By the end of the year, Jones claimed, "parents became anxious that their daughters should be taught by her," and students arrived willing to pay substantial tuition fees of £5 per year. By 1917 Jones expanded Hope Fountain to a boarding school with fifteen boarders.²⁴

The school continued to grow in subsequent years, adding teachers, students, and buildings and paying for them from tuition and government capitation grants, with little or no mission input. Hope Fountain became a flagship school. By the time Masinga left the school to marry in 1922, the school had fifty-four boarders.²⁵ Hope Fountain was not, however, ever regarded as a model school for the education of the average girl. The high tuition would have kept out many potential scholars. Five pounds per year—raised to £6 per year in 1921—was even higher than tuition at some of the region's most prominent boys' schools. And unlike boys' schools, Hope Fountain did not presume to teach women skills that they would be able to sell in the labor marketplace. Of the first two girls to pass Standard VI at the school, one was sent down to Tiger Kloof (in South Africa) for further training, and the other was employed at the school itself, not a tenable strategy over the long term. Girls who became teachers were expected, after a few years, to marry and quit teaching. By 1926, the annual report listed how the school had lost teachers who left to go home or to marry and, while indicating that they would be missed, accepted the departures as inevitable. The girls were *not* trained to become servants to Europeans. They were *not* trained to open their own sewing or tailoring businesses, and they were *not* trained to become prosperous, independent market gardeners. Instead, their training focused on making them into suitable, educated wives for educated husbands and into moth-

²⁴Jones, Hope Fountain Annual Report (1916), CWM, 5/2.

²⁵Jones, Hope Fountain Girls' School Annual Report (1922), CWM, 6/2.

ers of elite children. Hope Fountain's curriculum and structure made sense only in the context of the formation of a new class of educated Africans, with men potentially able and willing to support wives who had expensive tastes in clothing, cooking utensils, housing, and so on. Sending a daughter to Hope Fountain, or marrying a woman trained at Hope Fountain, became a clear form of conspicuous consumption.

After Masinga left, and as pressure from government officials for industrial education mounted, the school increasingly discussed how to make girls' education more practical. In 1925, the school attempted to institute a "domestic science" track for girls who had passed Standard III. The new headmistress considered this to be practical. Students, however, and even more, their parents, rejected this idea. Of the twenty-seven girls above Standard III, only nine chose the domestic track, and of these, three had to switch back to the academic track under parental pressure. The government, too, chastised the training the school offered, as inspectors labeled it as "proceeding too far beyond the simple needs of native life."²⁶

The school's proprietors might have prided themselves on the home-like atmosphere and on teaching girls to pass European Standards by keeping them for two years in each Standard. Outsiders, however, saw young ladies emerging from Hope Fountain, young ladies who might be reasonably innocuous under mission discipline as teachers, but who vanished after five years or so into marriage, no longer fitting into customary African life, lacking the skills for rural life, demanding high standards from their husbands, and potentially being a destabilizing force for the future. These were not women who had accepted training in domesticity; they had chosen an academic track. They were far too unpredictable for most European observers.

The government had its own ideas about what girls should be learning in school. Inspectors commended the Anglican mission of St. Faith's Rusape for work that incorporated African traditions and materials into new art forms, without distancing women from rural life. They approved of the American Methodists' agricultural programs at Mutambara which encouraged women to work in the fields and grow garden crops. And it was under the influence of the government that the program at Hope Fountain gradually changed from one which centered on academics and turned out qualified teachers to one which turned out home demonstrators to work for the government as model mothers, housekeepers, and midwives.

By 1928, Hope Fountain Girls' School, despite chronic staffing problems, had become a success. It was pushing its maximum of one hundred

²⁶Simmonite, Hope Fountain Girls' School Annual Report (1925), CWM, 6/3; Cowling, Inspector's Report, Hope Fountain Girls' School (1927), CWM, 7/1.

students and had more applicants than it could accept. Furthermore, under government sponsorship, it was chosen as the site for training Jeanes women, also known as home demonstrators. Male Jeanes teachers, trained at Domboshawa government school, supervised teaching at rural schools, worked on community development, and frequently came into direct and serious conflict with NCs. Home demonstrators, however, focused on domestic concerns, with which the NCs had no intention of coping and which were widely regarded as innocuous. These women took a two-year course in first aid, midwifery, child welfare, hygiene, cooking, gardening, dressmaking, housecraft, letter reading and writing, simple arithmetic, civics, and scripture. After this training period, they were to work out of their homes, rather than traveling as male Jeanes teachers did, to transmit these basics of civilization to the masses by example rather than by ordering or directing the public works projects, which made male Jeanes teachers highly controversial. The program was tied closely and explicitly to the growth of segregation throughout the region. As families moved into reserves, where the home demonstrators might well be the only source of medical aid, the demonstrator eased the transition and provided contact with civilization even in the most remote regions. This was a small program. In 1930, the first ten of the eleven initial students graduated, five married, five single. They were the "right sort" of people, Jones asserted, but their training had already begun to mutate beyond the simple ideas of the government sponsors. Because the students were from widely disparate regions, the courses had been taught in English, forcing students to spend much of their time learning the language. And the program produced women who were more than English-speaking housewives. For instance, Priscilla Moyo gave lectures on sexual purity; some demonstrators dispensed drugs from pharmacies, while others specialized in midwifery.²⁷ Nevertheless, female students watched the program skeptically during the late 1920s and early 1930s, concerned about its limitations. By 1930, there were few applicants.

By the mid-1930s, however, because of the depression, life was becoming increasingly difficult for the educated woman who wanted to maintain certain standards. In 1936, it was once again possible to recruit ten women with Standard VI (at least eight years of mission schooling) to apply for training as home demonstrators. And for once there was no

²⁷For examples of conflict, see the correspondence in NAZ, S1542/J1, vol. 2. See documents in NAZ, S170/1171; Jones to LMS, 16 Dec. 1927, CWM, 91/Jones; Jones, Hope Fountain Report on Jeanes Work (1930), CWM, 7/2. See the speeches of Mary Mutuludzi, Rachel Hlazo, Elizabeth Mkombochota, Priscilla Moyo, and Rebecca Ncube, *Report of the Inter-Territorial 'Jeanes' Conference* (Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, 27 May–6 June 1935 [(Lovedale, 1935): 97–110]).

shortage of teaching applicants, though missionaries might complain that these teachers were grim and lacked enthusiasm, teaching because they had few options.²⁸

The government, and to some extent the mission, pushed domesticity. The girls of Hope Fountain were, despite their social status and ambitions, consistently described as a family, with the missionary Neville Jones as the overseeing patriarch. Students, however, were thinking politically and ambitiously about their place in Rhodesian society. The discipline which observers so greatly admired at Hope Fountain was administered through a system of student government as developed as any at the various boys' schools, and the school was run almost entirely by female African teachers, providing pupils with clear role models of what they too might become. These women accepted neither the idea of going off to the rural areas to hoe nor the idea that they should abandon academic training for domestic skills. When they did receive domestic training, they pursued and implemented it as a career, or at the very least as a specialty which would prove useful in delineating themselves—the educated women—from the mass of less-privileged cousins. When Priscilla Moyo lectured (by popular demand) to the Dombodema Christian Conference on "keeping [oneself] pure," or was credited with "playing a very important part in the uplifting of the whole of the local community" of Hope Fountain, she was clearly a public figure, rather than a housewife, and was developing new community standards rather than merely obeying men or even saving babies.²⁹

African women may have had little voice in the design of curricula or educational goals, but they did have feet. And they used their feet to leave home for missions, to choose specific educational programs, to move to a city, or to enter a domestic training program—moving as best they could between options which were never as limited as many Europeans and African men would have wished.

²⁸Isabel Ross to LMS, 4 Feb. 1936, CWM, 99; J. Anderson (Hope Fountain) to LMS, 13 Apr. 1936, CWM, 99.

²⁹For example, Jones, Hope Fountain Girls' School Annual Report (1926), CWM, 6/4. R. MacIntosh, Government Inspector's report on Hope Fountain (1922), CWM, 84/5, and H. Page, Hope Fountain Headmistress's report (1929), CWM, 7/1. The use of domesticity as a career was not unique to Southern Rhodesia. For the Belgian colonies, see Nancy Rose Hunt, "Domesticity and Colonialism in Belgian Africa: Usumbura's *Foyer Social*, 1946–1960," *Signs* 15 (spring 1990): 447–74. Note, however, that the best evidence available for the professionalization of domesticity in Africa tends to be after the mid-1930s. See also Timothy J. Burke, "Lifebuoy Men, Lux Women: Commodification, Consumption, and Cleanliness in Colonial Zimbabwe" (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1993), esp. chs. 2 and 5; Priscilla Moyo (1931), and W. W. Anderson, Shangani Report (1931), CWM, 7/3, and Jeanes School Hope Fountain Report (1932), CWM, 8/1.

Servants' Education

From the earliest years of settlement, training girls as servants was one of the possible uses for girls' education. In South Africa, with which many Southern Rhodesian whites were familiar, African female servants were unexceptional. But in Southern Rhodesia, girls and women were often perceived initially by settlers as not very bright and less suited to service—even domestic service such as childcare—than African men. Education, some missionaries believed, might change this. Service was a secondary objective. To missionaries, it was still most critical to train girls as wives of Christian husbands and mothers in Christian homes, but it might also be useful “to furnish native Christian girls to act as nurses for the little white children.”³⁰ Even as girls flocked to mission schools, though, missionaries found that any substantial training of girls for domestic service in the European community was simply impossible. Fathers would not permit it out of concern for daughters' morality and traditional economic value, and even the male students in mission schools, who missionaries had hoped would applaud such an initiative, opposed it.³¹

In 1932, when the government empaneled a committee to look into the possibility of recruiting more girls for service in European homes, there were few female African servants in the region, and witnesses were divided over whether the government should introduce initiatives to recruit more. Several European witnesses argued that domestic service should be handed over to female servants. Their reasons varied. Some argued that the presence of men in the home kept European girls and women from fulfilling any domestic responsibilities, referring to the “constant repression induced by the presence of male servants.”³² Jones argued that despite difficulties, women should do the domestic work because “house work is [not] boys' labor; it is work more essentially done by women.” Less discussed, but probably more critical, was the feeling that European women were in danger of rape, sexual assault, or at least a loss of dignity before African men who took care of daily tasks which could include bringing women morning tea in bed and washing women's underwear. While European concepts of sex roles, and fears that European women were endangered by the domestic presence of African men, might make African women look like attractive potential workers, many critics argued that such self-interested arguments took no account of the nature of African women,

³⁰Roxburgh, *Mashonaland Quarterly* 46 (Nov. 1903): 12–13. See also Elizabeth Schmidt, “Race, Sex, and Domestic Labor: The Question of African Female Servants in Southern Rhodesia, 1900–1939,” in *African Encounters with Domesticity*, ed. Karen Tranberg Hansen (New Brunswick, N.J., 1992), 221–41.

³¹For example, Mother Annie, *Mashonaland Quarterly* 60 (May 1907): 16–17.

³²Personal views of Mrs. Fripp (expressed apart from her position in the Federation of Women's Institutes), Commission on Female Domestic Service (1932), NAZ, S1561/48.

the state of African women's progress, the position of African women in African society, or the potential dangers of African women in European homes.³³

As one of the leading institutions for girls in the country, Hope Fountain was seen by some commissioners as a potential site for training women and girls to become efficient and cheap servants. As quickly as the proposal could be suggested, however, it became complicated. As the head of Hope Fountain, Jones advocated female domestic servants, but nevertheless contended that "As far as we are concerned the idea is for them to have better homes of their own. This type of training would not be of use in a European house." Furthermore, he suggested that a new domestic-servant training program require an entry level of at least Standard III and be held somewhere other than Hope Fountain. Jones's argument for Standard III—a level of education unusual among girls and women in Southern Rhodesia in 1932—flew in the face of an argument by a woman who had employed African girls as servants and contended that "Mission girls are a most degenerate lot. I had two or three mission girls. My first girl came as a raw girl and she was the only excellent girl I have had." Jones's argument, though, directly paralleled an argument made by the missionaries in 1919 when the first government school (for boys) was being planned.³⁴ At that time, missionaries had argued that students should be required to have passed a high standard in the mission schools before entering the government's school since they would otherwise lack appropriately Christian training. Missionaries who approved of educating girls as domestic servants believed that the experience of domestic training, combined with the discipline of service within a European household, could teach African women how to set up good, Christian, civilized homes of their own at some future date. They therefore worried about servants' protection, morality, and ideology. European settlers and officials, on the other hand, tended to worry more that the servants would indeed leave. They wanted dependability and permanent subordination.

³³Jones, Evidence Taken at Bulawayo, NAZ, S1561/48. See John Pape, "Black and White: The 'Perils of Sex' in Colonial Zimbabwe," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 16 (Dec. 1990): 699–720; Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives*, 155–79; Diana Jeater, *Marriage, Perversion, and Power*; and Dane Keith Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia, 1890–1939* (Durham, N.C., 1987). One witness argued that "native women [are] not nearly developed in any way educationally or morally" that might provide the self-control to allow them to come safely into town and service. Mrs. L. Chataway, 14 Sept. 1932, NAZ, S1561/48. Archdeacon Christalowe and Bishop Paget, NAZ, S1561/48.

³⁴Jones, Evidence Taken at Bulawayo, NAZ, S1561/48; Mrs. C. Jacobs, 29 Aug. 1932, NAZ, S1561/48. See also "Educating the Native," *Bulawayo Chronicle*, 21 July 1906; and Ethel Maud Cookson Colquhoun (Tawse-Jollie), *The Real Rhodesia* (London, 1924), 265–66. Domboshawa, the first government school for boys, opened in 1920. H. S. Keigwin to CNC, Report on Domboshawa's first six months, 5 Jan. 1921, NAZ, S840/1/33.

African girls and women did not flock to domestic service positions. Elizabeth Schmidt, Terri Barnes, and Tsuneo Yoshikuni have argued that they could make more money, with less subordination, by brewing beer, taking temporary husbands, selling domestic services such as cooking and laundry, or possibly even market gardening and hawking. Those who did accept domestic service positions did not tend to stay long. And they did tend to reject the agendas of both the missionaries, who hoped service would train African women to eventually manage their own Christian households, and the settlers, who sought safe and loyal retainers. Instead, African women who worked as servants negotiated for higher wages rather than merely accepting what their employer wanted to pay, refused certain tasks, sought to send money home to the rural areas, and maintained their connections with the African society of both the townships and the rural areas.³⁵ What scanty education and socialization programs existed did not change this position of relative power during the years up to 1934.

* * * * *

In the history of boys' and men's education in Southern Rhodesia, it is possible to see a clear pattern of social planning and ideological change—struggled over, but consistently moving toward segregation during the years from 1900 to 1934. Boys and men were, at least in theory, educated to play a role in the economic and social development of Southern Rhodesia and to stay away from European politics. Women's education was more complicated. Officials, settlers, and even missionaries did not see it as a way to further the region's development, but as a way to solve problems in that development and to address concerns raised by critics of the developing settler state and society. The rationales were frequently contradictory as missionaries, settlers, administration officials, fathers, or African girls themselves fought over plans or found specific proposals too expensive to the missions, the government exchequer, or African individuals and communities. Education, particularly education beyond Standard I, remained difficult for girls to acquire in a region with a teacher shortage, limited numbers of schools, and parents who wanted daughters working at home. By the 1930s, when schools were shutting down due to budgetary stringency, educators, officials, and Africans sought to justify, alter, or oppose girls' education on a variety of grounds, but none of the grounds proved secure enough for major systematic investment.

³⁵See Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives*, 160–61, 165–66; Barnes, "African Female Labour," and Yoshikuni, "The Origins and Development of the Salisbury Municipal Location" and "Black Migrants in a White City."

A few schools that offered agricultural training for boys also provided gardening lessons for girls, on the grounds that this would build on women's agricultural strengths. Such schools also emphasized evangelism and Christianity, attempting to provide a new position for women in an African society which built on its strengths rather than blindly relegating women to needlework and men to maize.³⁶ Most, though, recognized that education, Christianity, and contact with the European values of the towns and markets had the potential to alter African family life radically. Faced with disintegration and with pleas from many African men for the government to restrain African women more strongly, many Native Department officials argued that rather than legislating immediate legal adulthood for African women, there needed to be a slow educational process—perhaps the slower the better. Many of the domestic education programs of the 1920s, therefore, were developed with the dual aim of first pacifying fathers and husbands by keeping girls under strict control and emphasizing home values, and second, providing wives for the increasingly mobile and independent educated African men—wives who, through their adherence to home life, would keep these men's attention on the Reserves rather than on the multiracial towns. Finally, attempts to develop an education and socialization program to turn African girls into servants failed dramatically before even emerging from the planning stages, as the conflicting agendas and motivations of African men, missionaries, officials, settlers, and African women proved fundamentally incompatible.

Female education policies in Southern Rhodesia during the early twentieth century were more consistently incoherent than programs aimed at men. Schools removed girls from home to teach them about domesticity and home life, aiming not merely to inculcate new European concepts, but to teach an appropriate African domesticity. Girls were trained to further the capitalist economic development of the region by excluding themselves from the market and binding themselves to the reserves as wives, demonstrators, and good churchwomen—even, in the most elite cases of the wives of agricultural demonstrators, facing limits on their participation in cash crop production. Female education was, to the extent that it constituted a program, a program which was designed not to work to promote change and development, but to soften development and promote harmony and order.

³⁶For example, see H. Marshall Taylor, agricultural missionary at Mutambara mission (1925), NAZ, S840/4/41.