

CHAPTER THREE

STATE, CURRICULUM AND IDENTITY IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES

Introduction

This chapter assembles and assesses the current research on state, memory, identity and curriculum in post-conflict societies. My objective is to understand how societies emerging from a violent and traumatic past, attempt to re-imagine themselves through the powerful medium of curriculum. For the purposes of this study, curriculum is considered to be a product or set of government curriculum policy documents containing official intentions and policy-in-practice, as practitioners and pupils engage with and make meaning of curriculum in the history classroom.

There are few studies relevant to the construction of memory and identity in curriculum in post-conflict studies, particularly in Africa, that examine the intersection between the political and educational processes of change. In the course of assembling and organising these fragments, I identify discourses about the processes through which societies re-invent themselves after conflict, particularly in relation to the politics of memory that attempt to shape national memory and identity and ultimately the nature and content of the school history curriculum. I also identify several silences, gaps and contestations about these politically driven and determined processes.

The sample of literature selected for this review focuses on the following exemplar countries that have had comparable experiences of conflict, trauma and transition: Northern Ireland and Israel as societies in conflict in which the history curriculum is treated as a dimension of political education and related directly to ongoing sectarian conflict; former Soviet controlled east European countries and the Russian federation where the focus is providing new narratives in school textbooks to support new national identities, replacing the old Soviet-determined socialist narratives; Germany, not only because the Holocaust has now become accepted as part of global memory, but because the processes Germany has gone through in attempting to come to terms

with their Nazi past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*: confronting/coming to terms with the past), provides insight into both countries under study in this research. These case studies are broadly representative of the research that has been conducted on education and conflict, and more particularly, the history curriculum and the perceived role that school history has played and continues to play in fuelling ethnic and sectarian division and conflict; as well as its role in constructing new interpretive frameworks that relate to a politically determined master narrative mediated via the curriculum and curricular materials.

Because of the political and ideological nature of education policy particularly in states in transition from violent conflict, the central question that becomes relevant to this research arising from the literature review is: who attempts to assert power and control over the conflict narrative as a society emerges from conflict, and for what purpose?

This review ends by demonstrating how my research will address these concerns by raising questions about power, ideology and competing interests in transitional societies (Rwanda and South Africa), and about how these interests attempt to shape emerging education policy in the post-conflict reconstruction of the state and in particular, the nature and content of school history. The particular national context in this research is the legacy of trauma resulting from violent internecine conflict, involving repression and even genocide. This is a critical aspect of transitional states that has received little attention in debates (or lack of them) in relation to what should, or should not, become part of a new history curriculum. This research will draw on inter-disciplinary literature in an attempt to address this gap in education research.

Limitations of existing knowledge on the construction of memory and identity in curriculum in post-conflict societies

There is a gap in the literature surveyed that makes links between memory (including traumatic memory), identity, history and construction of curriculum and of the competing interests of those who would shape memory and identity in creating a new society after violent conflict. There is also little focus, in the literature surveyed, on

the ways in which the intersection of political power, ideology and identity informed or determined which knowledge in terms of the history curriculum, is considered to be of most worth. In other words, few questions have been raised about power, ideology and competing interests and how these attempt to shape the emerging collective memory and national identity in post-conflict reconstruction. These questions are crucial to understanding the nature of education policy in transition and post-conflict societies, and are central to this dissertation. Even when a political consensus emerges from the period following trauma and transition, the ideological control that this consensus exerts in the educational arena, can be fiercely contested or subverted on a number of levels, particularly when the new state has an inherited bureaucracy with a strong institutional memory that reflects the previous ‘conventional wisdom’ that was shaped and sharpened during the period of conflict. Here the framers of the new consensus face entrenched values, attitudes and beliefs in the medium’s existing dominant ‘culture’ (the entrenched bureaucracy) for transforming consensus into policy and practice.

Furthermore, most of the case studies of trauma and transition with a research base are outside of the African context, as indicated by the representative sample in this chapter. If the critical theorists are correct that the creation of education policy is historically situated and cannot be divorced from the current political interests, conflict and domination, then the case studies provide analogical evidence or data from other continents which is useful, but cannot be applied out of context to Africa. The formulation and implementation of educational policy, it could be argued, can only be understood in relation to the political debates and negotiations that take place after conflict within particular societal contexts.

What we already know

This section attempts to construct a picture, from the evidence in the current research, of the ways in which power and control is exercised over history education in societies in transition from violent conflict. It begins with an examination of history education in Israel, a society still in conflict, in particular the barriers to developing a common narrative of the past. This provides insight into the dynamics of an

authoritarian society as South Africa was, under apartheid that brooks no challenges to the master narrative. The review continues with research in Northern Ireland that engages with the intersection of vernacular and official history in the history classroom, and the way in which pupil identities serve to filter the official narrative that is embedded in the curriculum. As the concept, traumatic memory, is most recently associated with former eastern bloc countries emerging from Soviet domination, the next section examines the ways in which a number of these countries dealt with the conflict narrative after 1989. Finally, the processes followed in post-Nazi Germany brings the literature review to a conclusion. All these articles bring particular understandings to the processes of change in societies emerging from conflict, which taken together, provide a basis from which to examine the trajectories of transition after violent conflict in South Africa and Rwanda.

- **Memory and identity in divided societies – Israel**

Israel emerged as a ‘nation’ after the Second World War, a state created after conquest of Arab territory and with a national identity to a large extent forged in the traumatic crucible of the Holocaust. The Jewish and Palestinian narratives of the 1948 war are diametrically opposed and, as the PRIME project outlined below revealed, these opposing narratives continue to be an almost insurmountable stumbling block to developing an historical account of the region’s past that both sides can accept. A simple example illuminates the problem: what is known as the War of Independence in Israeli narratives is, in the Palestinian accounts, *El Nakba*, the Catastrophe.¹

It has been argued that both Israelis and Palestinians define themselves in large part by their historical traumas.² The legacy of the Arab-Israeli wars in terms of the occupation of Palestinian territory by Israel, the ongoing Palestinian-Jewish conflict and the traumatic memory of the Holocaust, provide a complicated context for history

¹ Naveh, E. (2005) What is your Story? Learning Each Other’s Historical Narrative in an Israeli-Palestinian Textbook. Paper presented at a conference, *Unite or Divide? The Challenges of Teaching History in Societies emerging from violent conflict. An International, Inter-Professional Conference* organised by the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs and the United States Institute of Peace (November)

² Berger, J. (2008) Trauma Theories, Traumatic Histories, and the Middle East. *Tikkun Magazine* <http://www.tikkun.org/archive/backissues/xtik0301/culture/030154.html> Accessed 16 January, 2009.

education. Israel has been described as a non-liberal democracy³ and an ethnocratic regime⁴ in which the educational agenda is politically driven, promoting national identity through the school curriculum. Research on education in Israel provides an example of a country with strong official authoritarian intervention (Jewish and Palestinian) on a number of levels to ensure hegemonic national (Zionist) narratives in school texts used in Israeli-Jewish schools. Inevitably such texts foster suspicion and distrust towards Palestinians. Indications are that there is equally strong official control of Palestinian narratives in school texts with the same results.⁵

The interpretation of the Arab-Israeli conflict remains ‘a body in the middle of the room’⁶ that is a hurdle to any attempts by educators and NGOs to bring Jewish and Palestinian university students within Israel together in dialogue, or to construct a common narrative about the past. Elbaz-Luwish, in her article on teacher education in Israel, *How is Education Possible When There’s a Body in the Middle of the Room?*, graphically describes the difficulty of education in a society still in conflict that has at its core identity, the politics of memory. Her article engages with the culture of silence about the ‘body’ that divides Israel and Palestinians living in Israel, and of ‘proper’ discourse - of political correctness - when forced to mention the ‘body’. This is a deeply reflective article on her work, which includes a course on multiculturalism, with prospective and experienced teachers at the University of Haifa in Israel who reflect the diversity of Israeli society. The difficulties in setting up a genuine dialogue among the students led her to reflect on the power of emotion as a tool for understanding the way in which ‘personal expression of feeling is shaped by public discourse’. In the context of Israel, ‘it is apparent that one may come to experience the correct feelings appropriate for a good Israeli or Palestinian’.⁷ While her article does

³ Pedahzur, A. (2001) The paradox of civic education in non-liberal democracies: the case of Israel. *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol. 16, No.5: 413-430

⁴ Al-Haj, M. (2005) National Ethos, Multicultural Education, and the New History Textbooks in Israel. *Curriculum Inquiry*, Vol.35, No.1

⁵ See the discussion on the PRIME project below.

⁶ Elbaz-Luwisch, F. (2004) How is Education Possible When There’s a Body in the Middle of the Room? *Curriculum Inquiry*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Spring)

⁷ Elbaz-Luwisch (2004): 13. In her discussion she refers to Boler, M. (1999) *Feeling power: Emotions and education*. New York/London: Routledge, a work that also has relevance to my analysis of Rwanda and South Africa, and to Ribbens, J. (1998) Hearing my feeling voice? An autobiographical

not address memory and identity in relation to the history curriculum, it does provide a picture of the deep divisions that occur when identities are shaped by the use of versions of the past to fuel current conflict, the rational use of emotions to help shape identities, and the constraints experienced when trying to facilitate difficult dialogues.

Elbaz- Luwisch writes:

the more problematic disruption in an educational context is of the very possibility for ordinary people on both sides to continue to see that those on the other side are, like themselves, ordinary people. It is this disruption that forces me to question whether education is possible, whether it is still possible to speak about dialogue across cultural differences.⁸

The difficulties not only in setting up ‘real dialogue’ but in overcoming the perceptions of ‘the other’ ‘shaped by public discourse’ in countries in conflict are highlighted in Naveh’s report on the Peace Research Institute on Middle East or PRIME project.⁹ His report also provides insight into the lengths to which government in a democracy will go in order to ensure the dominance of governments’ politically controlled or mediated version of the past when the narrative serves as a legitimising foundational myth within a region that is in conflict. This includes counters to any potential challenges to that narrative. Although it is a report on the project, rather than an analysis of the political context or the discourses of power that occur in Israeli society, it does provide a window into the competing political interests and discourses that exist and that exert influence to shape memory and identity through school history.

The aim of the project was to attempt to find a meeting point for Israelis – Jewish and Palestinian - in the interpretation of the history of the region’s recent past. Two teams of history teachers were formed – one Jewish and one Palestinian – with an academic historian heading each group. History education in both Israel and Palestine is

discussion of motherhood, in Edwards, R. & Ribbens, J. (eds) *Feminist dilemmas in qualitative research*. London: Sage

⁸ Elbaz-Luwisch (2004): 15

⁹ Eyal Naveh (2005)

contentious with the Israeli government claiming that Palestinian textbooks incite hatred against the Jews and the existence of the state of Israel, and Palestinians claiming that they appear in the Israeli textbooks only as terrorists.¹⁰

While it has been considered legitimate for academic historians to engage with debates around various perspectives of Israel's past since the late 1980s, with revisionist historians in Israeli universities being 'allowed' to challenge a number of foundational pillars of Zionist historiography,¹¹ these debates are not considered appropriate for school history. Revisionist historians have criticised 'Zionist historians' for 'ideological scholarship' and misrepresenting the Arab-Israeli conflict. At that time, the challenge escalated into a public debate about national identity. This disjuncture between academic historiography and what is allowed in school texts is not unique to Israel, but is a reflection of a state under siege, whose very legitimacy could be called into question.¹² This is salient to the South African situation, where there is a need to develop pupil understanding based upon approaches to history education that develops skills, knowledge and understanding for citizens of a plural democracy.

The ongoing political situation in the region made a combined narrative of the Arab-Israeli conflict impossible, so the project proposed writing a school history textbook that carried parallel histories (narratives) of the conflict. As the political situation deteriorated after 2000, the project teachers continued to meet, but under enormous constraints and a number of meetings had to be held outside of the region.

When it came to the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, PRIME found that it was impossible for the teachers to agree on any 'undisputed historical and 'objective' events that could provide a common ground for different interpretations. Naveh notes this without comment, even though it provides fascinating insight into the extent to

¹⁰ Naveh (2005): 2

¹¹ Levy, D. (1999) *The Future of the Past: Historiographical Disputes and Competing Memories in Germany and Israel. History and Theory*, Vol.38, No. 1

¹² The same happened in South Africa under apartheid. Revisionist historians provided a wealth of alternative histories that clearly ran counter to the official Afrikaner narrative still being taught in the majority of schools.

which the teachers from both sides have accepted and internalised the hegemonic versions of history (Foucault's knowledge linked to power, not only assuming the authority of the truth, but making itself true thus creating a regime of truth) that they are required to teach in schools and clearly illustrates Elbaz-Luwish experience and reflection on the power of emotion and the way that personal expression of feeling is shaped by public discourse. To overcome this, it was decided to encourage each group to write its own version of national history, their own narrative as a basis for collective identity. By doing this it was hoped that pupils in the history classes could understand that there can be two interpretations of events – that opposing sides interpret historical events in the region very differently.

The development of the project revealed the extent to which a history curriculum transmits the official view of national identity that is rooted in the past. The Israeli teachers got unofficial permission from principals to use the material in extra-curricula sessions after school. However, when the Israeli Ministry of Education got to hear of the project, an official 'decree' was issued forbidding the use of the parallel texts in schools, and the teachers were personally threatened with dismissal by the Education Minister. This visceral response underscores the totalitarian side of a democracy when under threat of survival. It gives some indication of the lengths to which governments will go when a legitimating narrative, and therefore the legitimacy of the state, is questioned in times of conflict and contested territorial occupation. Palestinian principals could not allow the use of the materials in schools without official permission, so teachers took a group of pupils to their home and worked through the material. This experience revealed the importance of symbols: the Palestinian pupils reacted strongly against the use of flags to identify the narratives in the parallel text, refusing to use material containing the Israeli flag so both national flags were removed. Here we see the dominance of the vernacular curriculum: it indicates the extent to which Palestinian youth are politicised within their cultures.

While the paper comments on the attitudes of the teachers to their national pasts in relation to 'the other', either Palestine or Israel, and the processes of working together

to try to provide acceptable compromises to the most contentious areas, it would have been interesting to have had some discussion on whether the parallel texts had any impact on pupil attitudes and tolerance towards the other side of their history.

Textbook narratives, as induction to the adult world and its shared national consciousness, and therefore, potential contributors to conflict as well as vehicles for signalling new identities and social cohesion, have been widely researched in a number of countries around the world. This was the focus of a study by Majid Al-Haj¹³ who analysed a range of new history textbooks written for Jewish schools in Israel, according to new curriculum guidelines introduced in 1995. Written after the signing of the Oslo agreement in 1993, Education Ministry officials who proposed the reform saw a need to modify the goals and content of a curriculum written in early 1980s. Academic historians who spearheaded the change perceived the content as too closed, based on national myths and derived from a conservative Zionist historiography that presented a single narrative, closing down critical engagement with the past.¹⁴

The series indicates the level of detailed government intervention in ensuring that an official view of the nation and identity is transmitted via the educational system. Here we see how the government prioritises survival even at the expense of the democratic values that underpin its constitution. The government has de facto continued on a war footing. The series surveyed comprised five core textbooks, three for grade 9 and two for senior high school (interestingly one of the Grade 9 texts was written by Eyal Naveh of the PRIME project). One of the series, after being used for a year, was removed from the list of approved textbooks by the Minister of Education at the recommendation of the Knesset Education Committee. The reasons provided were that the book was not faithful to the classic Zionist narrative and that it overlooked central events in Zionist history. As Al-Haj pointed out, though cautiously, the withdrawal of the book ‘may’ exemplify the ‘problematic relationship between universal values of democracy and freedom of expression on the one hand, and the

¹³ Al-Haj (2005)

¹⁴ Ibid: 54-55

defense of the national ethos in an ethno-national state on the other.¹⁵ This begs the question whether Al-Haj's caution is the result of what may be a precarious position as an Arab-Israeli academic. The action of the Israeli Minister of Education in banning the text is in line with his actions reported in Naveh's paper on the PRIME project – both authors miss the opportunity of analysing the articulation between political processes and education and the shaping of personal expression of feeling by public (political) discourse alluded to by Ebaz-Luwish in her article.

Al-Haj made a detailed analysis of the content and perspectives in the remaining textbooks in the series. He came to the conclusion, that while the new texts to some extent have attempted to introduce a more complex version of recent history, in essence they, like the old, present a typical Zionist narrative that aims to safeguard national-Zionist values and crystallize the collective memory of Jewish pupils on an ethno-national basis. He clearly indicates that the narrative is exclusive leaving no room for acceptance that there could be any legitimacy in a Palestinian narrative.

Al-Haj limited his analysis to history textbooks used in Jewish-Israeli schools. A number of issues in his research indicate problems of top-down curriculum development that involves prescription at the classroom level. Firstly there is the policy gap between the government, the aims of the curriculum developers, the writers of textbooks and the reality of what gets taught in the classroom. His research has indicated that the textbook writers did not entirely fulfil the aims of the curriculum guidelines, returning to the Zionist narratives in instances where it would seem it mattered most. However, Al-Haj also seems to assume that the teachers will teach faithfully to the textbooks, whereas not only has research but personal experience has shown, that teachers will bring their own perspectives and interpretations to the history classroom. Here we see the teachers' own vernacular history interacting with the curricular history that they are required to teach.

¹⁵ Ibid. Again parallels could be drawn between Israel and apartheid South Africa. No history textbook that challenged the dominant Afrikaner nationalist narrative was approved for use in schools.

- **Memory and identity in divided societies – Northern Ireland**

Israel is unusual in that two, contradictory, official histories are taught in their segregated schools. Each narrative is highly nationalistic and emotional, attempting to shape very particular national identities – a potential clash of dangerous memories. Research in Northern Ireland provides a different perspective: that of the way in which vernacular cultures in a divided society shape group memories and identities and the way in which these memories and identities act as filters to the official school history. For example, the work of Barton and McCully with senior school pupils reveals how family and community or vernacular histories, compete with school history in the formation of identities within a politically and historically divided society.¹⁶ The vernacular tradition or element is arguably of equal or even greater importance in the South African and Rwandan contexts with stronger, non-literate oral traditions and cultures.

While there is a substantial body of research on education, including citizenship education, in Northern Ireland, Gallagher, Barton and McCully,¹⁷ focus on school history and individual and collective identity. Gallagher's analysis of the current political and educational situation is set in a broad historic overview, while Barton and McCully's work is based on research carried out with history pupils in the first three years of secondary school.

Northern Ireland is a politically and religiously divided society with a 'fixation with history that characterises, perhaps bedevils, politics',¹⁸ with embedded ceremonial and ritual such as commemorative events, memorials and annual parades (politicised historical events) that are integral to the reinforcement of group identities. Catholics

¹⁶ Barton, K. & McCully, A. (2007) When History teaching really matters: Understanding the impact of school intervention on students' neighbourhood learning in Northern Ireland. A paper presented at the HEIRNET conference, Istanbul (September).

¹⁷ For example: Gallagher as above, also, Gallagher, T. (2005b) Balancing difference and the common good: Lessons from a post-conflict society. *Compare*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (December); Barton, K. (2005); Barton, K.D. & McCully, A.W. (2005) History, Identity and the school curriculum in Northern Ireland: an empirical study of secondary school students' ideas and perspectives. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (January-February); Barton, K.C., McCully, A.W. & Conway, M. (2003) History Education and National Identity in Northern Ireland. *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*, Vol.3, No. 1 (January)

¹⁸ Gallagher (2005a)

and Protestants with differing historical experiences use the past to justify and perpetuate discord.¹⁹ Schooling is largely segregated and, within such a system, both the formal and hidden curricula have the potential of becoming potent sources for promoting an exclusive group identity that continues to fuel conflict. School history and religion studies have been identified as key subjects that perpetuate group identities. According to Gallagher, history teaching in the past took on a ‘naked partisan character’, though this improved in the 1970s and 1980s with the development of more considered textbooks and better teacher training.²⁰

Though the literature reviewed provides no discussion of the processes of curriculum development in Northern Ireland, Barton states that because of the controversial history of the region, national history is completely avoided in the primary school curriculum as well as in most other settings in which primary-aged children learn about the past. It is only in secondary schools that pupils encounter national history.²¹ In primary school, therefore, the politicised accounts of the past children might receive from families and communities (the vernacular history curriculum) are not reinforced by school history,²² but then neither are they challenged. In secondary schools, the curriculum provides for options within the units dealing with the History of Northern Ireland. Generally, teachers in Protestant and Catholic secondary schools make different choices – ones that reinforce their own reading of history.²³ Pupils are left to draw from it selectively in support of historical identities that arise in their families and communities.²⁴ More recent research conducted by Barton and McCully indicates that although pupils are committed to ‘trying to look at both sides of the argument,’ they often have difficulty overcoming commitments to their own community’s historical perspectives.²⁵ These pupils just do not have the raw material to think about the history of the other community in relation to their own knowledge.

¹⁹ Barton & McCully (2005)

²⁰ Gallagher (2005b)

²¹ Barton (2005)

²² Ibid

²³ Gallagher (2005a); Barton and McCully (2005)

²⁴ Barton (2005)

²⁵ Barton & McCully (2007)

Barton and McCully's articles are based on a cross-sectional study of 253 pupils across the three years from different types of schools. Data was collected from open-ended interviews around a picture-sorting task in which pairs of pupils created groupings of a set of 28 historical images, choosing those with which they most identified. The aim of their research, in the context of a divided society with strong community identities grounded in conflicting versions of the past, was to find out how pupils in Northern Ireland connect history taught in schools to their own identities.²⁶ Their results of their survey indicated, that pupils neither reject school history outright, nor use it to replace prior, community-based historical narratives, but draw selectively from the school curriculum to support a range of developing historical identities.²⁷ They further found that community conflict is a strong influence, but that some 70% of the pupil responses involved identification with events other than those related to Protestant/Unionist or Catholic/Nationalist history and nearly as many responses indicated a general identification with Northern Ireland's Troubles.²⁸ At all of the schools, a large portion of pupils chose pictures that suggested identification with the community conflict that surrounded them, rather than the specific parties to that conflict.

What is not clear in their account is the political dimension, that is, to what extent the politically determined curriculum choices teachers made influenced the outcomes of the study. All three authors reviewed pointed out that teachers made choices in line with their own historical knowledge, including the interpretations of the substantive curricular content they were teaching. Where teachers draw upon a common cultural capital within the community to which they and their pupils belong, then the history curriculum is an extension of that community's vernacular curriculum.²⁹ If teachers are drawn from the same communities as their pupils, then it would seem probable that in the senior school, history education must, to some extent, reinforce community perceptions of the past. Furthermore, there is no indication of the processes by which

²⁶ Barton & McCully (2005); Barton, McCully & Conway (2003)

²⁷ Barton & McCully (2005) p.86

²⁸ Ibid p.107

²⁹ French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu developed the concept of cultural capital to explain disparities in educational attainment of children from different social classes. Cultural capital is acquired in the home and the school via exposure to a given set of cultural practices.

the pairs of students reached agreement about the choices of images; in other words, the extent of peer influence that there may have been (though this might have been balanced by the interviews). Indeed, the sectarian flavour of pupil responses strongly suggests that the teaching of history that they have experienced reflects the social and cultural background of the teaching community from which their teachers are drawn.

As members of their own sectarian community, teachers in Northern Ireland are reportedly reluctant to address the controversial issues in history relating to conflict and division³⁰, ‘seeming to believe that schools in general and the history curriculum in particular, were virtually powerless in the face of popular (vernacular) histories promoted within families and by political activists’.³¹ Gallagher argues that if schools don’t engage with history responsibly this will open the way for continuing influence of family, entrenching divisive views of the past within a continuing divided society,³² while Barton and McCully’s view is that that history teachers need to challenge more directly the beliefs and assumptions held by students, and provide clearer alternatives to the partisan histories that students imbibe.³³

What is interesting is that none of the researchers engage with the issue of teacher identities and the ways in which their identities, shaped by generations of religious and sectarian strife and strong family and community identities, may influence the way in which they engage with the past in their teaching. Teachers are not neutral in relation to the past – which is what Gallagher, Barton and McCully seem to imply. This is the missing vital dimension, because teachers are the medium for the transmission of the culturally determined history curriculum with its overt political messages. Questions need also to be asked about the teaching and learning culture within the schools and classrooms: is it open, discursive, secular or controlling, top-down, sectarian?

³⁰ Barton & McCully (2005); also Gallagher (2005a) in which he states that there is ‘evidence that teachers in Northern Ireland are reluctant to embrace a social purpose to the teaching of history’:6

³¹ Gallagher (2005a): 6

³² Ibid

³³ Barton and McCully (2005)

Furthermore, although they raise the issue of the use of history for political ends, none has attempted to analyse the discourses of power and contesting interests within the creation of education policy and the history curriculum. While the political context is acknowledged, the research does not locate education policy creation clearly within the political processes – for example, the way in which the negotiations of the 1998 Peace Settlement may or may not have shaped the new history curriculum set to be introduced in 2007 - although Gallagher does articulate his hopes that the peace settlement will enable a curriculum review that will result in a curriculum that can contribute to the promotion of reconciliation and tolerance.³⁴ This, he hopes, will be achieved through a review of history teaching and religious education and proposals for citizenship education. He also cautions, however, that the nature of the peace settlement could result in further segregation and continuing division by privileging difference. What would be critical here is not so much the content that would be taught, but how it is taught.

These articles also do not engage with political processes of re-imagining the nation after conflict. In fact Northern Ireland, though not expressly stated, has in effect, placed a moratorium on the teaching of national history in the primary school – the route taken by Rwanda in 1994. In Northern Ireland there is neither common identity, nor common trauma as Catholics and Protestants would choose different moments and martyrs from the past. Therefore the lack of an official narrative, even in the senior school, does avoid the clash of ‘martyrological memories’.³⁵ Similarities can be found in South Africa after 1994. However, unlike South Africa where the new constitution provides a set of shared values for the new society, the Good Friday or Belfast Agreement has not done the same for Northern Ireland.³⁶

- **Post-communist states**

The legacy of trauma is a critical context for political and educational change in both Rwanda and South Africa. None of the articles reviewed so far have engaged with

³⁴ Gallagher (2005b)

³⁵ A phrase used by Hoffman in her book, *After Such Knowledge*.

³⁶ The Agreement (also known as the Good Friday Agreement or Belfast Agreement) was reached in Belfast on Friday, April 10 1998. It set up the process for joint rule under a devolved government.

trauma resulting from the conflict. The research in memory and identity alluded to in Chapter One, argued that recently the notion of traumatic memory has been most associated with the countries emerging from Soviet control. It was logical, therefore, to examine a representative sample of the literature relating to eastern European countries after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent collapse of communism and the disintegration of the Soviet Union.

During the period of Soviet control, governments openly controlled the history curriculum as a key element in political education. With the fall of the communist regimes, there was urgent need in the new polities to re-evaluate the national narratives in school textbooks, breaking down the varying degrees of ideological control that the USSR had had on history narratives in communist bloc countries.

Research has focussed on the debates generated by the conflicting national narratives between eastern European countries and Russia and the moves towards reconciling the histories within school texts,³⁷ rather than locating these debates within a wider context of curriculum change in transition societies.³⁸ This is about the recovery of memory, of the national narratives suppressed under the rewriting of histories during the Soviet era to bring them in line with Soviet ideology.³⁹ The literature reviewed here includes examples from countries in Eastern Europe formerly under Soviet control, as well as republics within the former Soviet Union. The focus of most of the literature relating to history education in post-Communist Eastern Europe has been on the narratives contained in history textbooks and the extent to which they assert new national identities⁴⁰ in contrast to the previously hegemonic Soviet narrative of the

³⁷ Kujawska, M. & Skórzynska, I. (2000) Truth - Memory - Reconciliation: On the Cultural Context of the Activities of the Polish-Eastern-Central Europe Secondary School Textbook Commissions. A paper presented at a conference, *Memory and History: Remembering, Forgetting and Forgiving in the life of the Nation and the Community*, Cape Town, 9 - 11 August

³⁸ Kujawska & Skórzynska (2000)

³⁹ Kissane, C. (2005) History education in transit: where to for Kazakhstan? *Comparative Education*, Vol. 41 No. 1 (February): 45-69

⁴⁰ Ahonen, S. (2001) Politics of identity through history curriculum: narratives of the past for social exclusion – or inclusion. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 33 No.2: 179-194; Kissane, C. (2005) History education in transit: where to for Kazakhstan? *Comparative Education*, Vol. 41 No. 1 (February): 45-69; Pingel, F. (2005) Textbook revision in Bosnia. A paper presented at a conference, *Unite or Divide? The Challenges of Teaching History in Societies emerging from violent conflict. An International, Inter-Professional Conference* organised by the Carnegie Council on Ethics and

past. While each study focussed on slightly different perspectives, all analysed the content of a variety of textbooks in each country under review.

The study by Kissane of changes in education policy in Kazakhstan after 1990⁴¹ introduces a number of issues that are reflected to varying degrees in the other articles in this section: replacing the Soviet narrative with a new national narrative; the search for founding myths and heroes in history to support the new state; education for nation building. But unlike the studies which follow, Kissane locates the changes more firmly in education policy in transition states as she examines the post-socialist transition in the secondary education history programme in Kazakhstan.

Kissane's interest is in the nature of the policy discourses that affected the development of new educational policy in the subject area of history, with a primary focus on the influence of policy discourse on official educational policy. For her, discovering national discourses through history education provides insights into relations within society, particularly when this is linked to efforts to re-fashion a national identity through the teaching of history. This study is based on 10 months of in-country fieldwork encompassing document review, interviews and classroom observations in Kazakh and Russian medium of instruction schools

The disintegration of the former Soviet Union compelled authorities to rethink Soviet-inspired economic, political and educational systems. This resulted in 1991 in an upswelling of curricula and pedagogical reform fervour, including questioning past interpretations of historical events and more Kazakh language and history teaching in the general secondary school. In line with a general trend in Eastern Europe, the first phase of changes to history teaching included a list of corrections to existing materials and changes to the old syllabi. This was followed by a shift towards the revision of

International Affairs and the United States Institute of Peace (November); Torsti, P. (2007) How do deal with a difficult past? History textbooks supporting enemy images in post-War Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Journal of Curriculum Studies* Vol.39, No. 1: 77-96; Zajda, J. (2007) The new history school textbooks in the Russian Federation: 1992-2004. *Compare* Vol. 37, No. 3 (June): 291-306; Janmaat, J.G. (2007) The ethnic 'other' in Ukrainian history textbooks: the case of Russia and the Russians. *Compare* Vol. 37, No. 3 (June): 307-324.

⁴¹ Kissane (2005)

content, providing a critical opportunity for historians to re-evaluate soviet history and re-interpret the way in which Kazakhstan's history was portrayed in textbooks and classrooms. This was accompanied by criticism and debates around the nation building strategy and the focus of nationalism, whether to be exclusive or have an inclusive, multi-ethnic view in refashioning national identity.

Educational reform entailed a process of de-Sovietisation (removing symbols and political institutions and representatives of Soviet power), de-Russification (removing Russian language and the focus on Russian history) and the 'mining' of the past for a foundational myth. This resulted in explicit links being made between modern Kazakhstan and the nomadic empires and individual khanates, 'which have existed on the territory of Kazakhstan since antiquity' mandating the 'primordial and perennial bond of the Kazakhs to the territory of the state'.⁴² De-Russifying the content and historical interpretations and restoring ancient heroes in the service of nationalism and patriotism reflects, according to Kissane, the ongoing potential of history to be subjected to strong ideological pressures and influences. This is nothing new, however, and the understanding of history as ideological underpins this thesis.

The transformation in history teaching in Kazakhstan involved four areas of reform: content revision with new textbooks, teaching programmes and new classroom materials; changing methodology; new government standards for teachers and students of history; the need to foster a national feeling of patriotism for Kazakhstan. This is one of the few studies that outline the process of the construction of education policy after conflict, providing some insight into the structures of power and influence. Policy proposals originate from the Director of the History Programme rather than the Ministry of Education. They are then sent for official government approval. The Director also supervises the rewriting of textbooks, overseeing the selection of authors, identifying content requirements and approving official texts and programmes. This, then, is a powerful position with the potential of shaping memory and identity in Kazakhstan – remembering too, that the Director of History, together with other top education officials, was communist trained, raising questions of

⁴² Ibid: 52

possible conflicting interests between political players and bureaucrats. This is not, however, addressed in this study.

In 1994 after revisions, reinterpretations, and debates regarding the ‘new history’, students returned to school to encounter new history texts. Historical narratives in textbooks had changed from Soviet-Russian dominated ones, to narratives with a more Kazakh oriented perspective. The writing and publication of new textbooks was one of the chief vehicles for communicating and delivering Kazakhstan’s new curriculum. A small group of four to five historians from the two national universities, one or two officials from the Academy of Education, and a selected group of two to three teachers, have control over policy design and the preparation of textbooks.⁴³ Financial constraints, in publishing and in particularly in rural schools, limit the use of the few independently-produced teaching materials.

Without orientation or training, teachers trained under the communist system were expected to internalise and deliver a curriculum with a completely new interpretation of history and new classroom approaches. They were asked to develop in their pupils an interest in the study of history, to teach in a democratic and humanistic way, and to revise the way they taught the past to acknowledge crimes against Kazakhstan and to support Kazakhstan’s new position as an independent republic. In a society that appeared to be rapidly changing, teachers were asked to be innovative in their teaching, to adapt to modern methods of pedagogy, teach democratic concepts and develop nationalism and patriotism in their pupils.⁴⁴ This was no mean task for teachers working without salaries (and often without texts) for months at a time and struggling to stay afloat in a society where everything seemed to be changing around them.

⁴³ Ibid: 59

⁴⁴ The enormity of what was being asked of the Kazakhstan teachers can, perhaps, only be appreciated by those who have faced similar demands. In South Africa in the first phase of curriculum reform after apartheid, teachers were expected to throw out everything that they had done, and to introduce a totally new approach to content and methodology. This disempowered them to an extent that almost irreparable damage was done to the education system.

Ahonen continues the theme of changing narratives in textbooks in the early transition from conflict, but broadens the interest in history textbooks in Estonia and the former German Democratic Republic (DDR) to include the extent to which the history curricula are forms of identity politics.⁴⁵ Ahonen alludes to different sites of memory and suggests that controversies around the relationship between school history and a collective memory, be this family or group memory (the issue of vernacular history raised in relation to Northern Ireland), may result in the fading of either or in a double-consciousness of history.⁴⁶ With minorities tending to be left out of the master narrative, the question is then raised: how far can a curriculum be socially inclusive? She maintains that national curricula convey narratives that are never inclusive of whole communities, and history curricula in particular need their role in supporting identity politics examined. The choice of Estonia and the DDR provided contrasting examples of the processes of engaging with school history during transition.

In both Estonia and the former DDR the grand narrative of communism formed the core of the history curriculum. When in 1990 the narrative abruptly lost its credibility, the quest began for new narratives. In Estonia where history was explicitly regarded as necessary for nation-building, the new narrative was framed within the grand narrative of nationalism. Estonians wanted a ‘true’ history, framed in a new ideology, with a foundational myth that could provide the genesis of the progress towards the nation-state. One master narrative was replaced by another, with the new history textbooks repeating ‘the history of the imagined national past’ derived from the nationalism of the 19th century.⁴⁷

In former East Germany, however, the first attempt at curriculum review produced a school history that aimed at critical engagement which, Ahonen suggests, was attempting to make school history into a Habermasian open space for critical communication. Curriculum development in the DDR was decentralised soon after 1989. In a reaction against the past imposed history, some *Länder* (states) denied the

⁴⁵ Ahonen, S. (2001)

⁴⁶ Ibid: 181

⁴⁷ Hvostov, A. (1999) *Mot'teline Eesti* (Vagabond: Tartu, Estonia) a young Estonian scholar cited by Ahonen (2005).

uniform collective identity of an historical community, emphasising individual, critical thinking.⁴⁸ Unusually in the eastern European context, the former DDR did not replace one grand narrative with another. However, with the reunification with West Germany, the Western view of the period of the DDR (1949-1989) marginalised the former DDR's interpretation of its own past.

Ahonen contrasts Foucault's thesis of ubiquitous power-knowledge that cannot be credited to any single agency, with the Habermasian view that assumes a recognisable personal agency behind curricular power. In her view, Foucault suggests that institutions like the school are simply embodiments and mediators of power-knowledge. In schools, rhetorical power is identifiable with the curriculum: curriculum is power with a potential to create unity of thought and action and a tendency to exclude individuals and groups who hold to an alternative knowledge, with no way out of the grip of power.⁴⁹ However, I would suggest that recognising and deconstructing the power relations operating within curriculum and schools, is the first step towards emancipation from the 'grip of power'. Moreover, far from suggesting that there is no way out of the grip of power, for Foucault resistance is the irreducible opposite in relations of power, a fundamental element that co-exists with power. In terms of history, Foucault's 'counter-memory' is 'an insurrection of subjugated knowledges', the blocks of historical knowledge that in the former communist bloc could be regarded as the subjugated histories of eastern European countries.⁵⁰ While not detracting from the analysis of the curriculum revision of the former DDR within the Habermasian open space (though I would suggest that power is exercised even in critical communication), Ahonen's analysis of Estonia's curriculum revision would have benefited from a deeper analysis of Foucault's understanding of the exercise of power within education.

⁴⁸ Ahonen (2005): 188

⁴⁹ Ibid: 190

⁵⁰ Wang, C-L. (n.d.) *Power/knowledge in curriculum theory: Henry Giroux and the misinterpretation of Michel Foucault*,
<http://www.philosophy-of-education.org/conferences/pdf/Wang%20PESGB%202007.pdf>

The next article changes the focus from replacing national narratives and changing textbooks, to an investigation of textbooks as a means of contributing to nationalism by defining the new ‘nation’ in contrast to ‘the other’. Janmaat’s analysis of textbooks in the Ukraine focuses on the construction of the ‘other’ in school history, in this particular instance, the portrayals of Russia and the Russians in two generations of Ukrainian history textbooks.⁵¹ He suggests that the highly negative portrayal of the ‘ethnic other’ in textbooks is a general trend in states with nation-building agendas. Ukraine is a new state emerging from the disintegration of the former Soviet Union and is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual state. As a result of the past subordinate relationship with Russia and the Soviet Union, Russians became a natural target as the ethnic other in the process of identity construction in the Ukraine, universally condemned as the foreign ruler in the two generations of history textbooks analysed in this survey. This is seen as a critical element for fostering a strong sense of patriotism in Ukrainian youth. The danger, of course, as Janmaat points out, is that the same narratives may well produce strong feelings of alienation among Russians and other minorities within Ukraine.

While this article does not analyse power structures and influence on curriculum construction, Janmaat does end with comments that provide some insight into this in the Ukrainian context. Recently, the Ministry of Education has published recommendations for the history curriculum for the new school system that incorporates the cultivation of tolerance, respect for other nations, crucial thinking, responsibility, independent judgment. However, Janmaat raises questions about whether the academics who will write the new curriculum and textbooks, are in fact supportive of a major reform of the history education, as typically these academics belong to the Ukrainian intelligentsia and consider it their lifework to expose the tsarist and Soviet ‘crimes’ against the Ukrainian nation. He also alludes to the different arenas of action pressing for education renewal in the Ukraine. It is not only the civil servants at the Ministry who are pressing for changes. There are grassroots-level movements which suggest a broad support for reform. History and civics teachers, who participated in a survey conducted in 2001, identified making myths of

⁵¹ Janmaat (2007)

past events and outdated approaches to the selection of facts and their interpretations, as key problems in the current history curricula.⁵²

In contrast to the research on transition in the former republics within the Soviet Union, Zajda's study focuses on history school textbooks in the Russian Federation itself between 1992 and 2004.⁵³ He analyses the new content of post-Soviet history textbooks used in Russian secondary schools in Grades 9, 10 and 11, examining the 'ideologically-driven shifts and images of transformation' and the use of school history texts in the nation-building process. He discusses the shift from the early phase of rethinking the history curriculum which included ideas of 'competing discourses in historiography, diversity in interpretations of events and a more analytical approach to the process and content of history in school textbooks',⁵⁴ to 2004 by which time the 'new history textbooks have returned to traditional symbols of nation-building and patriotism'. A major goal of history teaching in Russian schools is values education and patriotism. According to Zajda, the texts are intended to redefine Russia's identity and inculcate a spirit of patriotism and nationalism, by mining the past for suitable heroes and symbols that will portray a new, post-Soviet national identity, signalling a radical ideological repositioning and a redefinition of what are seen as 'legitimate' culture and values in Russia. The history textbooks, he maintains, have an officially defined status as instruments in the Russian process of ideological transformation and nation building, which is currently closely monitored by the State.⁵⁵

A weakness in this analysis is that there is no attempt to locate these changes within the shifting political context in the Russian Federation, which means the reader has no concept of the articulation between education policy and political shifts, being left to

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Zajda, J. (2007)

⁵⁴ Ibid: 295

⁵⁵ Control of historical narratives is nothing new in Russia. For example, apart from the control of history mentioned in the articles reviewed in relation to former Soviet republics and states in Eastern Europe prior to 1990, see Lucy Dawidowicz (1981): 86 - in *The Holocaust and the Historians* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge & London). In her discussion about the Soviet Union she notes that in 1971 at the height of the Cold War 'the Soviet dictatorship ordered that the new anti-Zionist line be introduced also into scholarly literature...The Soviet Academy of Sciences was told to establish an Israeli Studies Section and managed to do so by appointing academics who knew no Hebrew'.

make assumptions about these. He makes reference to the texts as instruments in a government-driven process of ideological transformation and nation-building, repositioning and redefining of what is considered ‘legitimate’ culture and values in Russia, but again does not locate this within a theoretical context of the exercise of power within politics, culture and values. An example of the exercise of political power within education is given but without further comment: the policy directive from Vladimir Putin in 2003 to the Russian Academy of Science to examine all history textbooks used in schools throughout Russia, which resulted in some history textbooks being withdrawn and even pulped because it was felt that they portrayed some negative images of the Soviet Union.

The disintegration of the former Yugoslavia after 1989 resulted in a severely fragmented territory of competing national identities and resurrected histories, including the memories of ‘ancient’ hatreds (the ‘chosen traumas’), that in the case of Serbia and Bosnia resulted in genocide in 1994. Since 1995 Bosnia has remained deeply divided. This is a clear example of a peace treaty not ending identity-based conflict, nor the fears and distrust that were generated during the conflict.

A study by Torsti highlights the ongoing divisions that have complicated history teaching and curriculum in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵⁶ Since the war (1992-1995) the three major national groups of the country, Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks), have used different textbooks and followed different curricula. Torsti’s analysis of history textbooks concentrating on the presentation of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in the textbooks used in Grade 8, the last year of compulsory schooling, found that ‘the others’, the members of other national groups of the country, are typically presented through enemy images. This is occurring in the context of an education system that has continued to deepen intra-national divisions, and aims to create or consolidate ethnically-nationalised groups.⁵⁷ Segregation is to a large extent supported by

⁵⁶ Torsti (2007)

⁵⁷ Ibid: 79

students, teachers and parents of the different ethnic groups in the region.⁵⁸ Based on discussions with teachers in 30-40 schools, it also became clear that the history textbooks carry the role of curricula for history teaching, as teachers typically do not receive any other instruction or information.⁵⁹ This potentially gives enormous power to textbook writers to shape group memory and identities.

Bosnia provides an example of a country driven to change because of external imperatives, in this case a desire for recognition of national independence. A minimum requirement in 1999 for Bosnia and Herzegovina's recognition by the Council of Europe was the withdrawal of potentially offensive material from textbooks before the start of the 1999-2000 school year. The need to change could not, however, be matched with real transformation of the history curriculum. As there was no time to produce new textbooks, removal of objectionable material was done by blackening text and annotating it with a stamp – 'the following passage contains material of which the truth has not been established, or that may be offensive or misleading: the material is currently under review'. New books were only partly printed in 2000-2001; consequently the old books were still in use in two of the three schools visited by the researcher in 2002-2003. The analysis of the history texts focused on the representations of 'them', the 'hetero-stereotypes', the most powerful of these being the enemy images used to legitimise and provoke hostilities among groups.⁶⁰ Torsti found that representations of other national groups are central in 8th grade history textbooks used by the three national communities, though the intensity differed. The national groups that had been enemies in the recent past were portrayed negatively through their actions in history, reinforcing stereotypes which serve to maintain and justify the hostile attitude towards the others. Furthermore, history education in the former Yugoslavia has continued to be as dogmatic as in the Tito era, offering no alternatives for pupils, supplying political elites with legitimacy and

⁵⁸ Freedman, et. al (2004) Public education and social reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, in Stover, E. and Weinstein, H. (eds) *My Neighbor, My Enemy* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press: 226-247

⁵⁹ Torsti (2007)

⁶⁰ Ahonen, S. (2001) Stereotypes of peoples and politics in Estonian and Finnish history textbooks. *Euroclio Bulletin*, 14 (1): 25-28. Quoted in Torsti (2007): 89

seeming to pave the way for future conflict.⁶¹ While school history is not the only means through which memory and identity is shaped, in the Bosnian post-war situation, textbooks and other channels of influence such as the media or vernacular history, reinforce and enhance one another's interpretations and presentations of the 'enemy'.⁶²

Torsti situates the curriculum for and teaching of history in Bosnia in 'identity politics', defined as 'movements mobilising around ethnic, racial or religious identity for the purpose of claiming state power'.⁶³ Such politics are based on the reconstruction of heroic pasts, the memory of injustices and sometimes psychological discrimination against those labelled differently from 'us'. In noting that in Bosnia, the divisions created by the politics of history education (divided schooling and history teaching), contribute to mental barriers and hatred, this is the only article reviewed that indicates the trauma and possible traumatic legacy resulting from the conflict. Torsti notes that the mental barriers and hatred engendered by a continued divided history, has inhibited the return of refugees to Bosnia.

- **Facing the past in Germany**

Post-war Germany provides a complex case study of the politics of memory in a society that not only had to confront the legacy of the Holocaust, but of physical and political division during the Cold War. While there are major differences between the post-Nazi German society and the post-conflict societies in South Africa and Rwanda, there is extensive research into stages that the German people moved through as they grappled with the traumatic knowledge of an abusive past, which can provide valuable insights for South Africa and Rwanda.

The literature falls into two broad categories: studies of the politics of memory relating to the Holocaust, mostly in West Germany but more recently in the two

⁶¹ Höpken, W. (1997) History education and Yugoslav (dis-)integration. In Bokovoy, M., Irvine, J.A. and Cole, L. (eds) *State-Society Relations in Yugoslavia 1945-1992* London: Macmillan. Quoted in Torsti (2007): 90-91

⁶² Torsti (2007): 91

⁶³ Kaldor, M. (1999) *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in the Global Era* Oxford: Polity Press: 78. Quoted in Torsti (2007): 91

Germany's after re-unification, particularly after the opening up of archives in the former East Germany; and studies of curriculum and the place of the Holocaust in the school curriculum. However, links are seldom made in the literature between the political processes and education policy. The primary focus in this section will be on the politics of memory and remembering. The literature reviewed, while it may not address the interaction between political processes and education policy, does engage with questions of political control of memory and identity in coming to terms with a traumatic and violent past. The complexities of the politics of memory in Germany addressed in this section, have relevance to both South Africa and Rwanda, though there is, however, a significant difference between post-Nazi Germany and South Africa and Rwanda in transition: South Africa and Rwanda have a post-conflict situation in which victims and perpetrators interact daily, while in Germany the victims were removed from society and very few remained living in Germany after the end of the Third Reich.

The shaping of post-war memories regarding Nazi Germany and the Holocaust in a divided Germany, was influenced by international pressures - East Germany's desire to be accepted as a loyal member of the Warsaw Pact and West Germany's acceptance in Western Europe – as well as internal 'interpretative frameworks' that were rooted in pre-Nazi Germany.⁶⁴

For East Germany, this resulted in official 'forgetting' when it came to the Holocaust. The German Communists and the Soviet occupation authorities regarded Soviet suffering and triumph and the narrative of Communist martyrdom as the core of post-war memory. The communist narrative of Soviet suffering and redemption became the dominant post-war narrative in school texts. In the German Democratic Republic (GDR) politicians focused on Russians as victims, picking and choosing from the past in order to emphasise non-Jewish, non-homosexual victims, and particularly

⁶⁴ Herf, J. (1997) *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press: 384

highlighting the communist opposition to the Nazis. The latter was emphasized beyond all proportion to the actual scale of resistance.⁶⁵

In contrast, the conditions for international recognition for West Germany included public acknowledgement of the truth about Nazi crimes, though this did not mean immediate full acknowledgment and remembering. In the Federal Republic of West Germany (FRG), the official political line since the 1950s has been one of varying degrees of contrition and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Immediately after the war, the elite-centred Nuremberg trials in the 1940s and 1950s, while making it impossible to deny Nazi crimes, provided the new Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, and the general populace, with an opportunity of avoiding the acceptance of collective guilt, even while taking some responsibility by providing restitution to Jewish victims.⁶⁶

Herf suggests that more than the imposition of forms of government in post-war Germany by the victorious allies, the political traditions within East and West Germany were continuations of internal political traditions prior to 1933. He called this the ‘multiple restorations’ of the non- and anti-Nazi German political traditions, suppressed in 1933, by politicians returning from exile to re-enter political life. The ‘inherited traditions and ideologies’ these leaders carried within them, meant that post-war leaders whether Communist in East Germany or democrats in West Germany, interpreted Nazism through ‘long-established interpretive frameworks’.⁶⁷ Post-war memories rested on interpretations of Nazism which its German opponents had begun to develop in the Weimar Republic, rather than direct experience of the Nazi regime at its height.

⁶⁵ See for example: Fulbrook, M. (1999) *German National identity after the Holocaust* Cambridge: Polity Press

⁶⁶ See for example: Fullbrook (1999); Mitscherlich, A. & M. (1975) *The Inability to Mourn* New York: Grove Press Inc; Herf, J. (1997) *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press; Moeller, R.G. *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany*, reviewed by Rebecca E. Wittmann (2001) in *Ethics & International Affairs*, Vol.15, No.2; Kansteiner, W. (n.d.) *Nazis into (West) Europeans: The Reconstruction of German historical Identity after the Holocaust in Politics, Culture and Mass Media*, SUNY, Binghamton www.iue.it/Personal/Strath/archive/archive_seminars/downloads/kansteiner.doc Accessed 25-07-07

⁶⁷ Herf (1997): 4

Herf focuses on political leaders in post-war Germany, maintaining that the history of politics and the history of beliefs, ideas, ideology, discourses, narratives and representations, are inseparable from one another. By writing about politicians and the discourses and memories that they construct, he hoped to illustrate the importance of politics for shaping the way a society thinks about its past, while at the same time drawing attention to the autonomous weight that traditions and interpretive frameworks exert on political life. Methodologically he positions himself at the point where meaning and power intersect. While he is not concerned with education, the issues he raises and insights he provides are just as relevant to the construction of education policy in post-conflict societies.

Remembering in West Germany in the 1950s (at times labelled the Nuremberg interregnum), has been variously interpreted. Herf claims that Adenauer's 'silence' about the extent of popular participation in Nazi crimes was separating memory from the imperatives of justice. His acceptance of moral obligations regarding restitution to Jewish victims coincided with a general policy of silence about the crimes of the Nazi era,⁶⁸ which was located in the democratic processes being established in West Germany. Clearly memory was being traded for democracy at a time when West German voters had a lot to lose from an early confrontation with the past and simply would not vote for a leader who demanded it.

Fullbrook, while not downplaying the role of the political elites in shaping and legitimating particular interpretations of the past (Herf), points to a more wide-spread popular complicity in constructing national memory in West Germany.⁶⁹ In the 1950s, Christian Democrat (CDU) politicians, representatives of the *Wehrmacht* (military) and the German churches, all pressed for an end to the question of war criminals.

Moeller argues that West Germany did not engage in a willing forgetfulness in the 1950s and 1960s, but rather in selective remembering in an attempt to shift collective

⁶⁸ Ibid: 379 Another seminal book, not reviewed here, is by Jarausch, K. H. & Geyer, M. (2003) *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁶⁹ Fullbrook (1999)

guilt.⁷⁰ Immediate post-war West Germany was not dominated by silence, but a carefully manipulated representation of the past which aimed to downplay Germany culpability in Nazi crimes, by focussing on the equally destructive totalitarian system in the Soviet Union. Central to this were the widely circulated stories about two groups of German ‘victims’: the German nationals expelled from the land settled in the East by the encroaching Red Army; and the German POWs interned in Soviet prison camps. By concentrating on Soviet brutality, the Adenauer government could reject the Allied claims that Germany had been the sole perpetrator of crimes against humanity. This also allowed the emergence of a narrative of atrocities in Nazi Germany being perpetrated by evil Nazis at the top – a few sadistic, powerful men – rather than the German people. A war started by Hitler, which everyone lost. According to Moeller, the parliament, media, historians and filmmakers were all complicit in constructing West German identity on images of loss and a common history of suffering, shaping a selective memory of suffering in which German victimhood became the overarching theme.

The core issue raised by all researchers is essentially about when and why countries develop a culture of remembering or forgetting. Kansteiner suggested that the subsequent generations in West Germany, in distancing themselves from the disgrace of the Nazis, took the phrases about remembrance at face value, turning *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* into a serious historic obligation, that had the additional advantage of being an excellent tool for generational political and intellectual strife.⁷¹ From the 1960s, the politics of memory in West Germany certainly became more intense. While this could in part have been a manifestation of what Eva Hoffman has called, the ‘paradox of indirect knowledge that haunts those that come after’⁷² (she was writing from the perspective of a second generation Holocaust survivor, but Kansteiner suggests the knowledge also haunts children of perpetrators), it may also have had something to do with ‘cosmopolitanisation’ of the memory of the Holocaust as a universal measure of ‘good and evil’, which contributed to the creation of a

⁷⁰ Moeller, reviewed 2001

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Hoffman, E. (2004) *After Such Knowledge: Memory, History and the Legacy of the Holocaust* London: Secker & Warburg: 25

common European (if not global) memory.⁷³ The memory of the Holocaust in Germany simply cannot be ignored when so many countries force remembrance not only in memorials and museums, but also in the history curriculum.

Although not expressly stated in the literature reviewed, teaching about the Nazi past appears to have reflected the route taken by politicians in *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Since early 1950s, World War II and Hitler's dictatorship have figured prominently in the curriculum of West German schools, but it was only from the 1960s onwards, that special emphasis was placed on conveying the horrors of the Holocaust.⁷⁴ The primary objective for confronting young Germans with 'their country's darkest past and their ancestors' guilt', is to make them understand the consequences of Hitler's dictatorship, the uniqueness of the Holocaust and to appreciate the values and institutions that protect freedom and democracy.⁷⁵ The basic principles of Holocaust teaching in West Germany were introduced into East Germany in 1990.

However, while education guidelines are drawn up nationally by a standing conference of state (*Land*) ministers, education is the responsibility of individual federal states or *Bundesländer*. What is taught in the classroom is determined by the state governed syllabus, drawn up in accordance with the national guidelines or syllabus directives that determine topics to be covered and teaching objectives to be achieved. Textbooks are produced by independent textbook publishers, but approved by individual states. The lack of a national curriculum or syllabus means that the *Bundesländer* are able to interpret and present curriculum topics with different emphases, though there are also significant commonalities, including the influence of the fundamental human rights set out in the German Constitution.⁷⁶ Wenzeler, in her

⁷³ Levy, S. & Sznajder, N. (2002) The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory. *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(1): 87-196. This can be seen in the number of Holocaust Museums in countries outside of Germany and Israel. For example, apart from the Washington Holocaust Memorial Museum there are a number of smaller museums in the United States; Beth Shalom in the United Kingdom; and Cape Town Holocaust Centre in South Africa.

⁷⁴ German Information Centre, New York (downloaded 2007/07/24) *Holocaust Education in Germany* <http://www.learn.org/hgp/aeti-1998-no-frames/holocaust-ed-in-germany.htm>

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ Wenzeler, B. (2003) The Presentation of the Holocaust in German and English School History Textbooks – A Comparative Study, *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and*

survey of German textbooks, concentrated on the question of culpability for the Holocaust. This became an issue of acrimonious debate in academic history circles in Germany after the publication of Daniel Goldhagen's thesis, *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, in Germany in 1996.⁷⁷ Her article notes that until recently, German textbooks had tended to blame the members of the Nazi Party for the Holocaust. In contrast to this, the textbooks reviewed by Wenzeler which were published after Goldhagen's thesis, interrogated the role of ordinary Germans in contributing to the Holocaust, encouraging German pupils to accept the responsibility for the crimes of the Holocaust and come to terms with its consequences for the German nation. It would be interesting to conduct research similar to that of Barton and McCully in Northern Ireland, to establish to what extent these narratives compete with vernacular histories and the extent to which German pupils internalise guilt and responsibility. Sichrovsky's interviews with second generation Nazi families provide some insight into the various responses to trans-generational memory and acceptance or rejection of guilt and responsibility in West Germany,⁷⁸ and the tensions between vernacular and school histories. A weakness in terms of this study is the lack of analysis of the political context of the time as a framework for making meaning of the issues arising from the interviews.

Research, Vol. 3 No.2 <http://www.centres.ex.ac.uk/historyresource/journal6/6contents.htm> Accessed 13 April 2005

⁷⁷ Goldhagen, D.J. (1997) *The New Discourse of Avoidance*, a revised version of an article published in Frankfurter Rundschau in response to an article published in Der Spiegel. Goldhagen suggested in his thesis, published in Germany in 1996, that anti-semitism was deeply ingrained in the German psyche which explained why so many ordinary Germans during the Third Reich supported and even participated in the persecution of the Jews.

⁷⁸ Sichrovsky, P. (1988) *Born Guilty: The Children of the Nazis* I.B. Taurus & Co

Conclusion

The literature relating to the intersection between political processes and the construction of the history curriculum and the exercise of power and ideology in societies emerging from conflict is fragmented. Overall there has been little engagement with the discourses of power and contesting interests in the processes of curriculum construction in transition societies. While some research deals with political transition and attempts to come to terms with a traumatic past (for example, Germany), other research explores the processes of curriculum construction and new master narratives in transition societies. Seldom are the two brought together in an analysis of the intersection of power, ideology and history curriculum. The questions raised at the beginning of this chapter remain less than fully answered.

What emerges clearly is that, overwhelmingly, history education is political education aiming at instilling a sense of nationalism and patriotism rather than the values of democracy in support of the new state.⁷⁹ In most post-conflict societies, one national narrative replaces another; therefore one form of patriotism is replaced with another. In authoritarian states, the national narrative is closely tied up with issues of legitimacy, resulting in strong action being taken by national governments to counter challenges to the hegemony of the official narrative in history education. While both South Africa and Rwanda reflect aspects of the ways in which post-conflict societies have in general, engaged with the conflict narrative within history education during transition, the literature does not adequately explain the trajectories taken by these countries in dealing with their particular conflict narratives and the paths chosen in constructing new memories and identities.

This research will examine the political and educational processes in these countries as they emerged from violent internecine conflict and engaged with the traumatic knowledge of the past. This study suggests that the changes in education policy and, in particular, the way in which the past is asserted and reflected in curriculum can best be understood by examining the intersection of the politics of memory and identity with the post-conflict changes in education policy. An analysis of who is attempting

⁷⁹ Northern Ireland is a notable exception to this.

to assert influence over history education and to what purpose provides further insight into the contestations of a society in transition. History education in this study is defined more broadly than in any of the literature surveyed. In post-conflict societies with high rates of illiteracy, the politics of memory and identity and the construction of new narratives go beyond historiography and history education. Furthermore, what the studies of Northern Ireland have demonstrated, but which has not been fully developed in the literature, is the intersection between vernacular memories located in vernacular cultures, public history and the way in which the curriculum is taught and received in the classroom.

Furthermore, little in the existing research engages with teacher identities and the personal legacy of the conflict on teachers who are entrusted within the new society to ‘deliver’ the new curriculum with its new values. This is a serious omission given that it is the transaction in the classroom that gives expression to the transformative ideals and outcomes of education. Teacher identities and the legacy of trauma or a painful past need to be taken into account if it is hoped that a new curriculum will change the values and attitudes of young people.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONSTRUCTING THE CONFLICT NARRATIVE IN APARTHEID EDUCATION: SOUTH AFRICA TO 1994

Introduction

This first chapter of the South African case study provides the historical context for the examination of the post-apartheid construction of memory and identity in the next two chapters. Understanding the particular moment in history in which the construction of the conflict narrative took place and the way in which it gained hegemony in history education, is critical to understanding the political and curriculum responses to that narrative in the post-conflict state.¹ To this end, the first part of the chapter provides an historical analysis of the construction of the conflict narrative, in this case the Afrikaner nationalist narrative, which was imposed as official history after 1948 (when the National Party gained power and introduced apartheid) and the ideologies that informed the narrative. It examines the extent to which the narrative contributed to identity-based conflict during apartheid. The construction of the narrative preceded apartheid, having been shaped during the 1930s and 1940s, at a time when the white Afrikaner community appeared to be in danger of fragmenting and needed a foundational myth indicating group cohesion. In Foucault's terms, the Afrikaner vernacular narrative could, at this point, be regarded as 'subjugated knowledge' – a 'block' of masked historical knowledge of the memory of hostile encounters regarded as hierarchically inferior to the current dominant narrative.²

By 1989, after forty-years during which the apartheid regime became increasingly authoritarian, the government was facing intense challenges both internally and

¹ Tawil, S. & Harley, A. (2004) *Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion* Geneva: UNESCO International Bureau of Education. Tawil and Harley make the point that understanding the ways in which education, and particularly history education, contributed to conflict provides a useful insight for the analysis of post-conflict curriculum reform. This is context specific rooted in the historical, social and political context of each society, in the nature of the conflict and in the nature of the transition.

² Foucault, M. "Two Lectures." In Gordon, C. (ed) (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings 1972-1977*. New York: Pantheon

externally.³ With the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, the subsequent disintegration of the Soviet Union and the release of Mandela in 1990, it became increasingly clear that political change in South Africa was imminent. The period of negotiations between the government and the African National Congress for a new political dispensation in South Africa, also opened up debates about history education, bringing challenges to the dominance of the Afrikaner nationalist narrative. The second part of this chapter examines the debates about history education and the challenges to the hegemony of the conflict narrative that opened up after 1990 and the expectations that political transition gave to a number of emerging potential education stakeholders. The conflict narrative now became open to rival narratives: Foucault's 'insurrection of subjugated knowledges, or counter-memory'.

The underlying assumption throughout is that history education is political education and an arena for competing political ideologies. What gets defined as 'official' memory reflects the power of certain groups and ideologies in society to define the past according to their interests.⁴ In more established liberal democracies, the basic national narrative remains essentially stable. However in a new nation the structures of power are tenuous and changing, and the hegemonic position of a national narrative can be challenged and even replaced with changes of government. In these states, vernacular histories gain strength in the shadows in opposition to the national narrative, becoming counter-memories. History education encompasses official history, vernacular histories and public history in the extent to which each of these are reflected and asserted in history classrooms.

The construction of the conflict narrative

Although all white South Africans constituted the privileged beneficiaries of apartheid, it was the Afrikaner nationalists, who came into power in 1948, who had

³ From the mid-1980s there was mass protest which aimed to make the country ungovernable. The largest mass organisation was the United Democratic Front (UDF) which was set up as the internal front of the ANC. Schools became sites of struggle and there was violent conflict in the townships. This was the time of the 'necklacing', the murder of suspected government spies by filling a tyre with petrol, placing it around the necks of victims and setting it alight. It was also the time of some of the worst of the government security force torture and murders.

⁴ Zembylas & Bekerman (2008): 129

political dominance and whose interpretation of the South African past became the hegemonic official ‘conflict’ narrative imposed on schools.

Afrikaner identity is rooted in a small, isolated settlement at the tip of Africa in the mid-17th and 18th centuries. It was constructed in relation to various ‘others’ over the centuries: the indigenous Khoikhoi, slaves, Xhosa and later, the British. While Afrikaner identity was formed over centuries, Afrikaner nationalist identity as it was expressed during apartheid, was forged in the 1930s and 1940s by a powerful combination of foundational myths rooted in a frontier tradition; a belief in a divine right of control over the land; and the firm belief in the superiority of the white Afrikaner ‘race’.

White English-speaking South Africans were later settlers to the Cape and Natal. From the beginning they were, in the Afrikaner view, associated with British control over the former Dutch colony and with expanding British imperialism in southern Africa. English identity was formed within a continuing sense of ties with Britain and the Empire and was generally more ‘outward’ looking, encompassing a broader South Africanism than Afrikaner identity. However, English identity was similarly constructed in relation to an ‘other’. Saul Dubow has argued that there has been an:

unconscious disposition on the part of English-speaking South Africans, refined over generations, to define everyone else in the country as either racially or ethnically ‘other’ – while blithely assuming their own identity to be somehow ‘normal’.⁵

Broader South Africanism and with it the linked English identity, ceased to have relevance after 1948.⁶

Two events of the mid- and late-19th century are considered seminal to the construction of Afrikaner nationalist identity: the events which became known as ‘The Great Trek’, which began in the mid-1830s in protest against British control at

⁵ Dubow, S. (2007) Thoughts on South Africa: some preliminary ideas in Stolten, E. (ed) (2007) *History Making and Present Day Politics* Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet: 52

⁶ Dubow, S. (2006) *A Commonwealth of Knowledge* Oxford: Oxford University Press: 10

the Cape; and the concentration camps, set up by the British for Boer women and children in the South African (Anglo-Boer) War of 1899-1902. The former became a narrative of triumph, a 'chosen glory'; the latter I suggest was consciously constructed as a chosen trauma.⁷ As such, they provide easily assimilated reference points for citizen identity: that is, they enable contemporary members of society to easily identify with these key points in the overall identity narrative.

The 'Great' Trek of Dutch farmers from the Cape Colony into the interior of South Africa in protest against what was considered to be British colonial oppression, was essentially a disorganised movement of disparate groups. It became a narrative of progress and heroic triumph of the Afrikaner 'volk', over adversity in the form of the British and the indigenous peoples of the interior of southern Africa.⁸ The narrative in this form was constructed in the early years of the 20th century by filmmakers and writers, in particular Gustav Preller.⁹ It became part of a foundation myth, a nationalist narrative presenting a version of the past intended to galvanise action in the present – to unite a fragmenting people into a cohesive Afrikaner volk. This narrative became, in Volkan's terms, a 'chosen glory' to be handed down to future generations.

The history of the Afrikaner 'volk' was seen as a form of divine revelation¹⁰, articulated in part in terms of a heroic mythology in which they portrayed themselves as God's 'chosen people'.¹¹ According to historian, Leonard Thompson, the key

⁷ Volkan, V. (2006) Large-group identity and Chosen Trauma, *Psychoanalysis downunder; the online journal of the Australian Psychoanalytical Society*, Issue 6. No page numbers
http://www.psychoanalysisdownunder.com/downunder/backissues/6/427/large_group_vv Accessed 27 March 2007

⁸ In a seminal series of lectures on South African historiography at the University of Cape Town in 1986, historian Colin Bundy noted of a book by a prominent Afrikaner nationalist historian that 'Africans surface for the most part rather like locusts, droughts, or cattle diseases – as environmental hazards...Africans are seen as 'restless', 'impudent', 'fractious', 'truculent' and 'causing difficulties'. Bundy, C. (1986) *Re-making the Past: New perspectives in South African History* (University of Cape Town Dept of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies). Also Chisholm, L. (1981) Ideology, legitimisation of the status quo, and history textbooks in South Africa. *Perspectives in Education*, 5(3): 134-149.

⁹ Dubow notes that Preller played a vital role in elevating the voortrekkers to pride of place in Afrikaner mythology.

¹⁰ Vorster (2008): 149

¹¹ Dubow (1992): 219

element in the myth of the chosen people, was the taking of Vow before the Battle of Blood River, the battle in which the Zulu regiments were defeated by a small group of Trekkers.¹² Great stress was placed on a covenant made by a preacher, Sarel Cilliers, who promised God that if his people defeated the Zulu, they and their descendents would commemorate the victory every year. Having been given the country by God¹³ – it was their God-given task to rule it in the spirit of ‘trusteeship’. This provided the Afrikaner narrative with a certain sacred aura that made it difficult for Afrikaner historians to engage critically with these constructions.¹⁴

This constituted an Afrikaner nationalist master narrative that grew out of vernacular histories, clustered around a shared body of values, beliefs, significant events and happenings embedded in a broad chronological framework that the Afrikaner community recognised, believed and supported. It fed into the dominant stereotypes of whites as civilized and black as barbarous, mirroring the patterns of inclusion and exclusion from citizenship and contributing to the shaping of social identities.¹⁵ It was a which set Afrikaners apart not only from black South Africans, but also from white, English-speaking South Africans.¹⁶ By 1938, the centenary of the Great Trek ‘both English speakers and blacks were identified as historical enemies and therefore perceived to be contemporary threats in the drive for the unity of the Afrikaners.’¹⁷

¹² Thompson, L.M. (1985) *The Political Mythology of Apartheid*. New Haven: Yale University Press: 112-114 and frontispiece. Thompson points out, that until the end of the 19th century, the covenant and the battle itself were largely ignored by Afrikaners. He argues that its metaphorical significance changed when the British threat to Afrikaner ‘nationhood’ gave way to a perceived black threat.

¹³ As a textbook for Standard 4 (Grade 6) declared, the two trekker leaders in Natal ‘completely relied on God’s help’. Steyn, J.J. (et.al.) (1987), *Basic History 4* Cape Town: Perskor: 33

¹⁴ Grundlingh, A. (1989) War, Wordsmiths and the ‘Volk’ p.48-49 quoted in van Heynigen, E. (2007) *The Creation of a Mythology, Historiography and the Concentration camps of the South African War, 1988-1902*, unpublished paper, University of Cape Town: 17

¹⁵ Chisholm, L. (2004) The History Curriculum in the (revised) national curriculum statement: an introduction in Jeppie, S. (ed) *Toward new Histories for South Africa* Cape Town: Juta Gariep: 178

¹⁶ The extent to which Afrikaners identified personally with the narrative was demonstrated when I wrote an article on identifying the myths in our history textbooks during the first post-1994-election purging of the curriculum. A group of white Afrikaners in the Western Cape Education Department responded by accusing me of attacking ‘the Afrikaners’. Neither I nor others with me could convince them that there was a difference between an Afrikaner nationalist version of the past, and Afrikaners themselves.

¹⁷ Van der Watt (1997): 2 Quoted in Heynigen (2007)

This interpretation of history was supported by the powerful combination of ideologies - of eugenics and apartheid theology - also developed and entrenched in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁸ The ‘triumph’ of the Afrikaners over indigenous peoples was therefore not only the result of divine favour, but could also be explained in ‘biological’ terms of the hierarchy of races (eugenics) and the superiority of whites.¹⁹ After 1948 apartheid theology provided a religious sanction for the continued segregation of races and for ideas of racial superiority. According to this view, the different races were ordained by God to be ‘apart’ from one another,²⁰ with separation being ‘one of God’s creational motives from the start’.²¹ Thus the notion of racial or ethnic purity became embedded in Afrikaner identity.²²

Ironically, Afrikaner nationalist historiography drew on early English settler historiography, which considered all peoples of southern Africa as having migrated into the area at roughly the same time. This, in the minds of Afrikaner nationalists, turned Afrikaner settlers into natives.²³ As late as 1987, a Grade 12 History textbook identified Afrikaners as the ‘most firmly established, White native-born community in

¹⁸ Louw, J. (1997) Social Context and Psychological Testing in South Africa, 1918-1939. *Theory and Psychology*, Vol. 7, No.2: 235-256

¹⁹ Klausen, S. (n.d.) *The Uncertain Future of White Supremacy and the Politics of Fertility in South Africa, 1930-1939*. Department of History, University of Victoria, Canada
<http://wiserweb.wits.ac.za/PDF%20Files/international%20-%20klausen.PDF> Accessed 12 March 2008; Dubow, S. (1995) *Scientific Racism in Modern South Africa* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

²⁰ Conradie, E.M. (n.d.) *Afrikaner Theology and Nature* University of the Western Cape
<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/user/bron/PDF--Christianity/Conradie--Afrikaner%20Theology%20+%20Nature.pdf> The passage from the Bible is Galatians 4:2

²¹ H.G. Stoker quoted in Vorster, N. (2008) Christian Theology and Racist ideology: A case study of Nazi Theology and Apartheid Theology. *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* Vol. 7, No. 19 (Spring): 149

²² Pauw, J.C. (2007) *Anti-apartheid theology in the Dutch Reformed Family of Churches* PhD Theology, Vrije Universiteit, <http://hdl.handle.net/1871/10880>: 110 Accessed 01 April 2008

²³ The concept of settlers and natives comes from Mamdani, *When Victims become Killers*. He introduced the notion of Tutsi being cast as settlers and Hutu as natives. In the South African context, George McCall Theal, a Canadian, was the first to be appointed ‘Colonial Historiographer’. He wrote that both the ‘Bantu’ and whites were immigrants to the country. This myth was later enthusiastically appropriated by Afrikaner nationalist historians. An interesting account of the casting of Afrikaners as natives and English as settlers is found in Pillay, S. (2004) *The Radical Imagination of Peace: Belonging and violence in South Africa’s past and future*. A paper presented to the Second International symposium on Peace Processes in Africa: an Experience for Colombia, in Bogotá, D.C. Colombia.

Africa...’ who fought ‘two wars of liberation to free themselves from British rule.’²⁴ Being ‘native-born’ distinguished Afrikaners from English-speaking South Africans. The same textbook noted that the ‘English came to South Africa many years after Afrikaners’.

While the Great Trek had become the central foundation myth or chosen glory of Afrikaner nationalism, in the 1930s and 1940s a second, more emotionally powerful, foundation myth was crafted in terms of victimhood and suffering – the chosen trauma of the suffering and deaths of Boer women and children in concentration camps set up by the British during the South African War of 1899 – 1902. The camp experience became, according to one Afrikaner nationalist historian, ‘the great reality of the Afrikaner people’;²⁵ a symbol of a shared national tragedy providing Afrikaners with ‘common victims to mourn and common grievances to nurture...that had an enduring effect well into the twentieth century’.²⁶ The transformation of the concentration camp experience into a chosen trauma provides valuable insight into the construction of vernacular histories as well as the deliberate construction of a chosen trauma in forging group identity.²⁷

While it is generally accepted that historiography is an important site for the construction of collective memory²⁸ it is interesting that the concentration camps received little attention from serious Afrikaner historians for more than fifty years

²⁴ Lintvelt, H.G.J., Smit, F.P.J., Vlok, A.C., van Wyk, O.C., and Smit, G.J.J., (1987) *Timelines 10* Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman: 181

²⁵ Van Jaarsveld, F.A. (1962) *The Afrikaner’s Interpretation of South African History* Cape Town: Simondium: 62, quoted in Van Heyningen, E. (2007) *The Creation of a mythology, historiography and the concentration camps of the South African War, 1899-1902*, University of Cape Town, unpublished paper: 3

²⁶ Grundlingh, A. (1992) War, wordsmiths and the volk’ in Lehmann, E & Reckwitz, E. (eds) *Mfecane to Boer War: versions of South African history* Essen: Die Blaue Eule, quoted in van Heyningen (2007)

²⁷ Van Heyningen’s paper provides valuable insight into this process though she does not use the concept ‘vernacular history’.

²⁸ Levy, D. (1999) The Future of the Past: Historiographical Disputes and Competing Memories in Germany and Israel. *History and Theory* 38, No. 1: 51-66. Levy makes the important observation that those who control images of the past shape the present and possibly ideas of the future and therefore historians become important players helping to shape collective identity by connecting past and present in particular ways.

after the South African War.²⁹ The memory that emerged in the first decades after the War was shaped by poets and writers closely linked to the Afrikaans language movement and the development of Afrikaans as a ‘standard, respected and written language, distinct from Dutch’³⁰ and given tangible and emotional expression by the construction of the Vrouemonument (Women’s Monument) in Bloemfontein. A volume of verses, *By die Monument*, published by a key author in the construction of Afrikaner nationalism, Totius, to raise funds for the proposed monument articulated the grief of Afrikaner people ‘giving meaning to otherwise futile suffering’.³¹

The ‘growing vitality’ of Afrikaans as a language and the social dislocation brought about by increased industrialisation, urbanisation and the erosion of what were considered ‘traditional values’ in the 1930s and 1940s led ‘cultural entrepreneurs’ and politicians to attempt to unite a rather disparate constituency of Afrikaans speakers, divided along class and regional lines, under the banner of Afrikaner nationalism.³² The camp experience became a mobilizing theme in the growing body of popular Afrikaans literature, with the Vrouemonument an ideological and emotional symbol and site of nationalist political rallies in the 1940s.³³ Afrikaans writers and poets drew on the women’s testimonies, diaries and letters presenting them as evidence for the trauma of the camp experience without questioning their veracity and used a small number of images ‘reproduced endlessly to make the point about starving children’.³⁴ The distinction between fact and fiction was often blurred in the attempt to make the camp experience accessible to the urbanising working class and the poor in a

²⁹ English-speaking historians such as Theal and Cory wrote histories of the War. Van Heyningen notes that Afrikaner academic history developed slowly after Union and it was some time before some serious research was published. Furthermore, at that time the archives had a 50 year block on the opening of records to researchers.

³⁰ Grundlingh, A. (n.d.) *The National Women’s Monument: The Making and Mutation of Meaning in Afrikaner Memory of the South African War*,

<http://www.celat.ulaval.ca/histoire.memoire/histoire/cape1/grundlingh.htm> Accessed 17 April 2008: 7

³¹ Hexham, I. (1981) *The Irony of apartheid, The struggle for National Independence of Afrikaner Calvinism Against British Imperialism* New York: Edwin Mellen Press:22-25 quoted in Heyningen (2007): 10

³² Grundlingh (n.d.): 8

³³ Grundlingh (n.d.): 10 Grundlingh also discusses the burial of a number of Afrikaner heroes and Emily Hobhouse at the foot of the memorial.

³⁴ Van Heyningen (2007): 15

deliberate attempt to forge an Afrikaner culture and group cohesion at a time when it seemed that Afrikaner identity was under threat.³⁵

By the 1930s the constructed vernacular memory of the camps was so firmly established in the popular literature that any attempt to offer an alternative perspective was ignored. When the camps did begin to get the attention of professional historians, Afrikaner historiography was often deeply committed to the ‘nationalist project’. By emphasising ‘objective-scientific’ history,³⁶ they could present the narratives as objective accounts of the past. This was crucial in legitimising the creation of Afrikaner nationalism and a ‘*volksgeskiedenis*’ [peoples’ history].³⁷ What is significant, is that the popular versions of the suffering in the concentration camps, became part of Afrikaner nationalist historiography and were presented as objective-scientific history, without any critique by Afrikaner historians of the sources on which the narratives had been constructed. This gave them the legitimacy of academy in preparation for, as it turned out, the narratives becoming part of official history. The expression of a common bond in group or ‘volk’ suffering was a powerful, emotional means of creating a sense of group identity in relation to the ‘other’, in this case, the British. This is what Malkki has termed, ‘mythico-history’ - narratives that correspond to record of events, but which are a ‘subversive recasting and reinterpretation [of the events] in fundamentally moral terms’.³⁸ Such narratives are concerned with the ‘ordering and reordering of social and political categories, with the defining of self in distinction to other’, reinterpreting historical events, processes

³⁵ Hofmeyr, I. (1987) Building a Nation from Words: Afrikaans Language, Literature and Ethnic Identity, 1902-1924 in Marks, S. and Trapido, S. (eds) *The Politics of Race, Class and Nationalism* London: Longman quoted in van Heyningen (2007): 9

³⁶ Van Heyningen (2007): 17 and 19

³⁷ Grundlingh, A. (1990) Politics, Principles and Problems of Profession: Afrikaner Historians and their Discipline, c. 1920 – c. 1965. *Perspectives in Education*, Vol. 12, No. 1: 1 The Head of the History Department at the University of Pretoria in 1947, A.N. Pelzer, for example believed that Afrikaner historians ‘had a special calling to stimulate pride in and patriotism towards the *volk* and love for the fatherland’. Van Heyningen (2007): 19. The University of Pretoria was central to the development of Afrikaner Nationalist thinking and ideology.

³⁸ Malkki, L.H. (1995) *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press): 55 I will return to Malkki’s work in more depth when I discuss Rwanda. Malkki’s research was among Burundian Hutu refugees in Tanzania.

and relationships and reinterpreting them within a deeply moral scheme of good and evil.³⁹

While Afrikaner historians had been slow in contributing to the collective camp memory, from the 1950s they attempted to interpret the war as ‘the foundation experience of the nation’, though there were difficulties, particularly in writing about the suffering of the women and children in the concentration camps.⁴⁰ This could not be moulded into a heroic narrative in the same way as the Great Trek; and furthermore, the War had actually divided the Afrikaner polity.⁴¹ What the camp narrative did, was to feed the exclusionary nature of the emerging Afrikaner nationalist identity and the sense of isolation of the Afrikaner in a threatening world. It directed Afrikaner resentment against English-speaking white South Africans, who were identified with Britain and blamed by many Afrikaners for what happened. In any case, white Afrikaans-speaking (mainly rural) and English-speaking (mainly urban) communities were perceived to be too distinct to allow a post-war sense of having a shared destiny.⁴²

The National Party victory in the 1948 elections was considered by many to be the first stage of the journey towards reversing the defeat of the Boer Republics at the hand of the British Empire; the creation of the Republic of South Africa in 1961, the fulfilment of that journey. The Afrikaner nationalist narrative legitimised that journey and sought to instil an unquestioning patriotism amongst the now ruling elite. It was intended to ‘operate as an apparatus for the social (re)production of national identities through linking the individual to the images and narratives of [Afrikaner] nationhood’,⁴³ while at the same time defining the ‘other’ in terms of racial, ethnic and gender stereotypes.⁴⁴

³⁹ Ibid: 55-56

⁴⁰ Saunders, C. (2001) Historiographical reflections on the significance of the South African War. *Kleio*, Vol. 33: 8

⁴¹ There was continuing bitterness between the *bittereinders*, those Afrikaners who fought to the bitter end and the *hensoppers*, those regarded with scorn because they surrendered to the British.

⁴² Saunders (2001): 9

⁴³ Popkewitz, T.S., Franklin, B.M. & Pereyra, M.A. (eds) (2001) *Cultural history and education: Critical essays on knowledge and schooling* New York: Routledge Falmer: 17 quoted in Parkes, R.J.

The Afrikaner vernacular histories were embedded in the history curriculum as official history and maintained as the central narrative by a closely controlled system of state-approved textbooks,⁴⁵ which were ‘considered to be authoritative bodies of factual knowledge’ presented as an ‘endless flow of undisputed facts’.⁴⁶ Particularly damaging were the racial stereotypes and the prejudices that were integral to the official narrative and regarded as fact. Possibly the most damage was done to primary school children whose textbooks often contained the most blatant examples of stereotyping and racism. Black children who went to school were exposed to these humiliating stereotypes of themselves set against the heroism of the white Afrikaner leaders within the narrative.⁴⁷

As official history, the narrative was that of the Afrikaner ‘volk’, promoting the values of the apartheid state and deliberately denying the majority of South Africans a history. Denying a group access to memory or history is a powerful means of oppression:

If the rulers can make the people believe that they are inferior, wipe out their past history or present it in such a way that they feel, not pride

(2007) Reading History Curriculum as Postcolonial Text: Towards a Curricular Response to the History Wars in Australia and beyond. *Curriculum Inquiry* Vol. 37 No. 4: 384

⁴⁴ King, R.H. (2002) *Reflections on Memory, Identity and Political Action*, Robert Penn Warren Centre for the Humanities, Online newsletter, Spring 2002, Vol. 10, No 2, www.vanderbilt.edu/rpw_centre/Is02a.htm Accessed, 25 May 2005

⁴⁵ Discussions with colleagues in state schools during the 1980s made this very clear. I had a free choice of textbooks as I taught in an independent school; however, I had to use the state-approved textbook for Grade 12 as the examination and the memorandum in the Cape were set on this book. From personal experience, this was the only way that pupils were able to achieve well in the final examinations.

⁴⁶ van den Berg, O. & Buckland, P. (1983) *Beyond the History Syllabus: Constraints and Opportunities* Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter: 3

⁴⁷ For example, a Standard 4 (Grade 6) textbook, Steyn, J.J. et al (1987), *Basic History 4* Cape Town: Perskor: 1, 3, 4 described the Xhosa as ‘causing trouble by stealing and plundering.’; the Khoi-Khoi as ‘causing trouble’, who ‘could not always be persuaded to work on farms and resorted to plundering and stealing’; after the emancipation of slaves ‘...many slaves joined the Khoi-Khoi in plundering White farms...’ refusing to work for their former owners. However, there were always a number of textbooks which neither supported the Afrikaner nationalist version of history, nor entrenched racial stereotypes, but these generally did not get official approval for use in schools.

but shame, then they create the conditions that make it easy to dominate the people.⁴⁸

Black South Africans were systematically denied a particular history in schools texts as a means, in Foucauldian terms, by which the state exercised power and control during apartheid:

The history that is...taught to the African, Indian or Coloured denies his existence as it is the heroic tale of the rise of the Afrikaner...by denying blacks a history, it is intended to prevent the growth of a national class consciousness and to reduce as much as possible any desire for a radical alternative.⁴⁹

Education became the vehicle for indoctrination – of socialising South Africans into their divinely ordained positions in society – thus contributing to the identity-based conflict.⁵⁰ History education was manipulated to legitimise Afrikaner control of the country and to entrench the racialised identities formalised by apartheid legislation. For decades, the majority of South Africans had been the victims of institutionalised humiliation, a form of long-term oppression that included degrading, debasing, subjugating and being treated with contempt by many fellow South Africans.⁵¹ Under Christian National Education (CNE), the curriculum, and in this case the history

⁴⁸ Majeke, N. (1952) *The Role of the Missionaries in Conquest* Cape Town: Society of Young Africa: Introduction.

⁴⁹ Chisholm (1981): 137

⁵⁰ An article that appeared in *Die Burger* in May 2007 provides insight into the formation of Afrikaner identity: 'Ek wonder of in the wêreld een ander bevolkingsgroep is wat só behep met sy identiteit is soos wit Afrikaners...Ek stem saam met Max du Preez dat 'n mens (dit is nou die generasie wat in sy veertiger- en vyftigerjare is) jou Afrikanerskap met moedersmelk ingekry het deur die praatjies tuis, die leer van nasionalisme in die skool en die preke Sondag in die kerk, en in die geval van jong mans deur indoktrinering in die weermag... Amanda Gouws, *Die Burger* 24/05/2007

www.dieburger.com/Stories/Opinion/Columns/14.0.2635446347.aspx Accessed 25 May 2007

(I wonder if there is any other population group in the world that is so taken up with its identity as white Afrikaners...I agree with Max du Preez that one (that is the generation which are in their forties and fifties) took in one's Afrikanerdom with one's mother's milk through discussions in the home, the teaching of nationalism in school and the sermons on Sundays in the church, and in the case of young men, through indoctrination in the army...) These are the key areas of socialisation into identities.

⁵¹ Lindner, E.G. (2000) *The Psychology of Humiliation: Somalia, Rwanda/Burundi and Hitler's Germany* Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Oslo. In her thesis, Lindner explores forms of humiliation and responses to long-term humiliation.

curriculum, became in Popkewitz's terms, 'a disciplining technology' that directed how the individual was to act, feel, talk, and 'see' the world and 'self'.⁵²

This legalised discrimination and hierarchy of privilege and the concomitant attitudes have been deeply entrenched in South African society. Just how entrenched is evidenced by written comments from *Facing the Past* teacher workshops, which have been organised with an annual cohort of new teachers since 2004. Fourteen years after apartheid these feelings are still very real. Teachers engage in a 'silent conversation' activity, responding in writing (in silence), to a set of sources that contain experiences of ordinary people during apartheid. They are always 'racially' mixed groups of teachers from a variety of schools:

I can identify! I don't have any white friends; so I am always suspicious. I'm not quite certain whether I'm prepared to subject myself to a possible 'ordeal' as presented in the text. (Teacher A)

I believe many Africans can identify with this. We still feel very much inferior to whites. Such that when you have white friend/speak English fluently, your status is elevated. Sometimes when you do something perfectly they call you umlungu (white man) as if a white man is capable of doing only good things. (Teacher B)

I get angry with myself when my child's invited to his 'white friend' and we feel honoured! (Teacher C)

I grew up in such a community [Afrikaans]. I was an 'insider' and 'outsider'. I had mixed emotions, mixed culture, mixed ideologies. I felt both humiliated and angry, as well as supremely embarrassed at how each community: Afrikaans, English, Coloured and Black treated

⁵² Popkewitz, T. (2001) The production of reason and power: Curriculum history and intellectual traditions, in Popkewitz, T.S., Franklin, B.M. & Pereyra, M.A. (eds) (2001) *Cultural history and education: Critical essays on knowledge and schooling* New York: Routledge Falmer: 153 quoted in Parkes, R.J. (2007):383

each other. It is still part of my consciousness. I was too often a bystander. I felt powerless and afraid. (Teacher D)

It is not politics or ‘political correctness’ that is the hurdle. It is the perceptions of culture that make us afraid to assimilate. We need to be able to make mistakes when interacting without feeling afraid, ashamed or even uneasy. Let us just get to be with one another and acknowledge our ignorance and our pain and learn to be comfortable among all people. Not easy! (Teacher E)⁵³

Counter memories - resisting the dominant narrative in history education

This then begs the question: to what extent was the conflict narrative accepted as a true interpretation of South Africa’s past, thereby contributing to identity-based conflict? Evidence from research in Northern Ireland, for example, suggests that in divided societies, official history does not, in fact, have the power to shape identities to the extent that has been claimed. This would be particularly the case in a country with a high rate of illiteracy. Firstly, those who are not exposed to formal history education, continue to transmit vernacular narratives located in oral histories and oral traditions of the different communities. The apartheid policy of separate development was predicated upon ‘ethnic’ identities in ‘homelands’ with traditional leaders. This provided the context for an almost ahistorical ‘freezing’ of ethnic identities and in many cases the continued transmission of oral traditions and histories located in vernacular cultures.⁵⁴ This vernacular tradition can also at times take a physical symbolic form, for example, as it did when Buthelezi, leader of the Zulu-based Inkatha Freedom Party, dressed in Zulu traditional regalia at political rallies and the carrying of ‘cultural weapons’ by the Zulu men on the mines, which became such a contentious issue in the early 1990s, when they were used as weapons of murder.⁵⁵

⁵³ The ‘silent conversation’ activity has been done every year since 2003. Because of the nature of the activity, the respondents are not identified.

⁵⁴ The praise singer or imbongi who performed at the inauguration of President Mandela in 1994 amply demonstrated the survival of traditional histories and rituals.

⁵⁵ This will be dealt with later in this chapter.

Secondly, even in more formal education contexts in divided societies, there is an embedded potential for vernacular histories, nurtured in vernacular cultures, to be constructed in opposition to the official narrative. Again, the Northern Irish studies have shown fairly convincingly, that vernacular narratives have considerable influence on the way young people receive official history as taught in schools.⁵⁶ In South Africa, the official narrative may well have been a powerful influence on the shaping of identities of most young white Afrikaners, but the majority of teachers and pupils were not Afrikaners. Vernacular histories located in communities that were often physically isolated from one another, would have contributed to the shaping of the identities of the majority of teachers and pupils in the schools located in those communities. Contrasting historical narratives are most likely to circulate among marginalised groups, whose historical experiences (or the way they remember or construct them) deviate from official accounts.⁵⁷ Vernacular histories in this context become a means of expressing resistance to oppression.

By the 1980s an insurrection of subjugated knowledges or counter memories, from two sources, were beginning to influence history education: a rich body of work by radical (or revisionist) South African historians, mostly living in the United Kingdom which provided alternative narratives of social history often drawing on oral histories of people and communities; and the Peoples' History movement drawing on local oral histories.

The work of the radical historians could be regarded as a top-down western white-driven interpretation of the past, however, there was a considerable vernacular element involved, even though reconstituted in a written discourse that was located outside of the country.⁵⁸ However, it has also been claimed that the work of the

⁵⁶ cf Chapter 3

⁵⁷ Barton, K & McCully, A (2007) 'You can form your own point of view': Beyond appropriation and resistance in Northern Ireland students' encounters with history, article submitted to the *International Journal of Qualitative Research in Education*.

⁵⁸ For example, Bundy, C. (1979) *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*, London: Heinemann; Peires, J.B. (1981) *The House of Phalo*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press; van Onselen, C. (1982) *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886-1914 New Babylon (Vol 1) New Nineveh (Vol 2)*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press; Delius, P. (1983) *The Land Belongs To Us The Pedi Polity, the Boers and the British in the Nineteenth Century Transvaal*, Johannesburg: Ravan

radical historians became ‘the master tool of intellectual resistance’ to apartheid.⁵⁹ While the counter narratives did not pose a serious challenge to the dominance of the official narrative in schools, there were a number of teachers who drew on these radical histories and taught against the grain of apartheid history, particularly in the 1980s.⁶⁰

The Peoples’ History movement, located in universities, emerged from 1985 as part of a broader Peoples’ Education movement that was launched at an education conference convened by the Soweto Parents’ Crisis Committee at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg. Led by a National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), Peoples’ Education drew on the ideas of the ‘pedagogy of liberation’, in particular of Paolo Freire and aimed at providing an alternative to apartheid education.⁶¹ An NECC member expressed the committee’s position:

that since education as we have known it has been used as a tool of oppression, Peoples’ Education will be an education that must help us to achieve peoples’ power.⁶²

The history syllabus and history textbooks were identified as major areas of concern, and among the principles of the NECC was the following:

We will formulate our own history syllabus, which will include people’s perceptions of what history is, international and African history.⁶³

Press; Marks, S (1986) *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa, Class Nationalism and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press; Beinart W. and Bundy, C. (1987) *Hidden Struggles in Rural South Africa Politics and Popular Movements in the Transkei and Eastern Cape 1890-1930*, Johannesburg: Ravan Press

⁵⁹ Bundy, C. (2007) New nation, new history? Constructing the past in post-apartheid South Africa, in Stolten, H.E. (ed) (2007) *History Making and Present Day Politics: The meaning of collective memory in South Africa* Upsalla: Nordisk Afrikainstitutet: 73

⁶⁰ I experienced this in the Western Cape in the 1980s when I was teaching. I came into contact with a number of teachers in independent schools, English-speaking government schools and teachers at a number of former Coloured schools who taught in this way. I can only assume that it was also happening elsewhere in the country.

⁶¹ Van den Heever, R. (ed) (1987) *Alternative Education – A vision of a Democratic Alternative* Cape Town: UTASA Publication: 5

⁶² Eric Molobi quoted in van den Heever (1987): 2

⁶³ Quoted in Van den Heever (1987):1

From this grew Peoples' History, drawing on one hand on the philosophy of radical pedagogy of Peoples' Education, and on the other, on vernacular histories within local communities. To support the new approach, the NECC published an enquiry-based approach to school history called 'What is History' in 1987.⁶⁴ This clearly challenged the Afrikaner nationalist narrative and the unquestioning approach of fundamental pedagogics. The introduction stated:

History, as a subject, is not just a collection of dead facts about the past...It is the record of the lives, the experiences, and the struggles of those who have gone before – and of how their lives, experiences and struggles have shaped ours. If we do not understand the past, it is more difficult to change the present or look ahead to the future...it should identify the historical sources of dispossession, oppression and exploitation, and should examine the ways in which these were resisted.⁶⁵

Peoples' History was a movement located within the country and outside of overtly white academia and in its limited challenge to the dominant narrative, could be considered to be the production of counter-memory, that according to Aronowitz and Giroux:

presents an attempt to rewrite the language of resistance in terms that connect human beings within forms of remembrance that dignify public life, while at the same time allowing people to speak from their particular histories and voices.⁶⁶

In this vision, the insurrection of subjugated knowledges or counter-memory is an attempt to develop the language of resistance, so as to substitute the subjugated

⁶⁴ Though interestingly, this was compiled by a white, University of the Western Cape academic, Melanie Walker. Information from an interview with Rob Siebörger, 22 April 2008.

⁶⁵ NECC (1987) *What is History? A new approach to History for Students, Workers and Communities* Johannesburg: NECC & Skotaville: 1

⁶⁶ Aronowitz, S. & Giroux, H.A. (1991) *Postmodern Education* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 124 Quoted in Wang, C-L. (n.d.) *Power/knowledge in curriculum theory: Henry Giroux and the misinterpretation of Michel Foucault*.

<http://www.philosophy-of-education.org/conferences/pdfs/Wang%20PESGB%202007.pdf> Accessed 18 June 2007. No page numbers

history for the official narrative. It could also, in Boler's terms, be considered an expression of '*feeling power*' - the power of feeling as a basis for collective and individual social resistance to injustices.⁶⁷ Although the influence of Peoples' History was not widespread,⁶⁸ a number of teachers taught the alternative content and approach of peoples' history in defiance of the attempted continuing tight controls over schools by education departments and officials. However, in contrast to the Afrikaner nationalist '*volksgeskiedenis*', Peoples' History drew from diverse vernacular cultures, so it lacked a nationalist-ideological cohesion. Peoples' History was an ideological expression of populist resistance to apartheid in the 1980s, rather than the construction of collective memory in service of a nationalist-type collective identity. This may have worked against its having a more significant impact.

Generally in a divided society pupils are exposed to three intersecting interpretations of the past which may influence the way in which they receive narratives of the past: the official narrative as well as the vernacular narratives of teachers and the narratives of the pupils' own families. Appropriation of an official narrative will occur when that narrative is most closely linked to family and community narratives. The experience of white Afrikaner children was that family, school, church and the media all reinforced the Afrikaner nationalist narrative and exclusive Afrikaner identity while casting fellow South Africans as 'the other'. This was the state of memory and identity within history education in 1990 when Nelson Mandela was released from prison.

Opening up the memory debates: the interregnum years 1990-1994

The political transition challenged the entrenched ideologies and power structures of the apartheid regime, providing ideological space for challenges to the Afrikaner nationalist interpretation of history expressed in official textbooks. The negotiations

⁶⁷ Boler, M. (1999) *Feeling Power: Emotions and Education* New York: Routledge.; xxi

⁶⁸ Peoples' History was located in the History Department at the University of the Western Cape, a 'Coloured' preferential area during apartheid. By the 1980s the University had opened up to all races and there were a large number of black students and teachers upgrading their qualifications. It was teachers who had been in contact with the programme who were trying alternative approaches to history teaching. White teachers in a number of former white schools in Cape Town were using a similar approach to history teaching drawing on the revisionist work of 'history from below'.

for a post-apartheid settlement were launched in December 1991 and continued throughout 1992 and 1993, resulting in the first democratic elections in South Africa on 27 April 1994. The progress of the negotiations and the growing realisation that a settlement could be reached that would alter the political status quo, evoked very different responses within the history community. On the one hand, there was an urgent attempt by the apartheid bureaucracy to ‘reform’ the official history curriculum in order to maintain its Afrikaner nationalist identity and ongoing influence; and on the other the progressive history community⁶⁹ embarked on its first sustained and open challenge to the official narrative in history education in recent years, leading to a series of teacher conferences and textbook colloquia in 1992 and 1993. While the progressive history group attempted to make participation in the debates more racially inclusive, the contestations in history education at this time were essentially between white English and Afrikaans interests and identities.

The Afrikaner nationalist response to the shifting political context, came from the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 1991 and 1992 and from within the (apartheid) Department of National Education (DNE) system in 1994, during the run-up to the elections. The Afrikaner nationalist position was strongly reaffirmed in the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) report on *The Teaching of history in the RSA* published in 1992. The report attempted to signal a reforming state, but the authors were unable to free themselves of Afrikaner nationalist ideology and Afrikaner identity. Noting that the teaching of history had become highly sensitive and politicised by the early 1990s, the authors believed that history would be the subject that, ‘among all the subjects taught in a future ‘new dispensation’, will probably be the one most extensively debated as regards its value, objectives and curriculum...’.⁷⁰ They advocated a conservative pluralist approach to school history; race was thinly disguised as the ‘cultures’ of various ‘groups’. It noted that ‘each community has its own distinctive historical roots and identity and can rightly demand that this be recognised and respected in the education of its children’. It recommended

⁶⁹ This was a loosely constituted group of mainly white, English-speaking historians, history educators at HEIs, and teachers.

⁷⁰ HSRC (1992) *The teaching of History in the RSA*, HSRC Education Research Programme No.27, Pretoria: HSRC

that in South African history, ‘justice should be done to all the communities’, that syllabi should be ‘balanced, true and accountable’, and that a syllabus should provide for teaching the ‘cultural history’ of a group and for ‘teaching the cultural history of other cultural groups’ with the proviso that:

the richer a community’s cultural life and the greater its contribution to historical development, the stronger its claim that the teaching of its cultural history be accorded a central place in the syllabus.⁷¹

The central place in the proposed South African history modules continued to be given to whites, particularly Afrikaners, which clearly indicated that the compilers believed that ‘the greater... contribution to historical development’ in this country had been that of the Afrikaners. This was a thinly disguised move to privilege the Afrikaner nationalist narrative and to maintain Afrikaner nationalism as a central tenet of history education. The construction of a common collective South African memory and identity was not entertained.

In February 1994, in an apparently urgent last attempt to be seen to be initiating change before the first democratic elections took place in April, the Department of National Education put out a report outlining proposed amendments to the school history curriculum. The Core Syllabus Committee (CSC) for History that drew up the report was composed of eight men, for the most part white and middle-aged. Five of them were either from the still racially separate national or provincial education departments; of the two listed ‘experts’, one was the Afrikaner Nationalist Historian from the University of Stellenbosch who had co-authored the ‘illustrative syllabus’ included in the 1992 HSRC Report, the other was from Vista University; and the final member was a representative of the Committee of University Principals.⁷² With minor differences, the approach to the history syllabus was still firmly situated in an Afrikaner Nationalist approach.

⁷¹ HSRC (1992): 9

⁷² The membership of the CSC is listed in a paper, CEPD (1994) *Clearing the Decks: Proposals concerning the History Curriculum in SA Schools*, prepared by the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) History Curriculum Committee on behalf of the National Education Conference (NEC) to be tabled at the National Education and Training Forum (NETF) Social Sciences Field Committee (September). The historian from Stellenbosch University was Prof. P. Kapp.

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) researchers and the Department of National Education officials underestimated the extent to which the political climate had already changed. The HSRC was in political limbo by that time.⁷³ Though attempting through the report to show that it still had relevance as a research unit, the HSRC was located structurally, ideologically and politically in a place that could not bring change or establish a credible policy position. Those who compiled the report, did recognise that the history curriculum would have to change, but were unable to imagine a South African narrative that did not have Afrikaner identity as its central organising feature. What the report further revealed is that there was still a very significant group of Afrikaner academics who thought radical change to the history curriculum was not necessary and that all that would be needed was to ‘modernise’ the curriculum that had last been developed in 1987.⁷⁴

The Department of National Education officials involved in the 1994 attempt to preempt changes to the history curriculum, equally misjudged the political context. With the negotiations for a post-apartheid settlement by that time so far advanced, the Department of National Education could not force through any curriculum changes. Furthermore, education policy networks were emerging that would have greater voice and influence in the post-apartheid curriculum revision processes.⁷⁵ In 1992, a National Education and Training Forum (NETF) had been set up, following pressure to address the education crisis in a broad stakeholder forum, which included the

⁷³ Established in 1968, the HSRC received funding from the state and its executive officials were known to be Broederbonders (members of a secret Afrikaner society). Vadi, I. (1992) Address to a teacher conference in Johannesburg, in History Education Group (1993): 24-25

⁷⁴ Rob Siebörger – comments 26 March 2008. The 1987 curriculum development process was the first after a new political dispensation was introduced in 1983. In an attempt to still the rising tide of discontent, the Botha government introduced a tri-cameral system of government extending limited political rights to ‘Coloureds’ and ‘Indians’ but still refusing to include blacks. Parliament was reconstituted to include a House of Assembly (whites), a House of Representatives (Coloureds) and a House of Delegates (Indians). This move unleashed unprecedented mass violence as the United Democratic Front (UDF), a front for the ANC, was launched and a call to make the country ungovernable went out. Representatives from the House of Representatives and House of Delegates were given observer status during the process of creating the 1987 syllabuses.

⁷⁵ Fataar, A. (2006) Policy networks in recalibrated political terrain: the case of school curriculum policy and politics in South Africa. *Journal of Education Policy* Vol. 21, No. 6: 641-659

apartheid government and extra-parliamentary organisations.⁷⁶ The NETF established a Curriculum Technical Sub-Committee (CTSC) to ensure that the government did not do any unilateral restructuring of the curriculum before the first democratic elections.⁷⁷ When the report was submitted to the Curriculum Technical Sub-Committee, it was put on hold. The Report had been, in effect, little more than yet another attempt to ensure continued influence over the national narrative in the new state. As it turned out, the syllabus revision process immediately after the first democratic elections would do this for them.

The progressive history group lobbied for position in three teacher conferences held in 1992, organised by the History Education Group (HEG), based in Cape Town and two textbook colloquia of 1993, supported by the Georg Eckert Institute. They were organised after, and in response to, the publication of the Human Sciences Research Council report and a Department of National Education (DNE) curriculum report, a *Curriculum Model for South Africa* (CUMSA). CUMSA's position on school history was that history should disappear in Grades 7 – 9 (Standards 5 – 7) and be replaced with Social Studies.⁷⁸

There was a sense among the progressive history community at that time, that in relation to the Afrikaner nationalist historians, they had the moral high ground as far as influencing a new history curriculum was concerned.⁷⁹ A number of the group had also been involved in writing various alternative history textbooks, which they felt really offered a sound model as to what history education could be like.⁸⁰ This led to

⁷⁶ Jansen, J (1999c) The school curriculum since apartheid: intersections of politics and policy in the South African transition. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, Vol. 31, Issue 2: 57-67. The setting up of the NETF was in the spirit of the political negotiations that were taking place at the time.

⁷⁷ Lowry, S. (1995a) A Review of the History Curriculum Process. A paper delivered at the workshop on *School History Textbook Writing: From Principles to Practice*, Cape Town, 30 July 1995; John Samuel, record of proceedings of a public meeting to hear a report-back from the NETF History sub-committee, 30 July 1995, in Siebörger, R. & Reid, R. (eds) (1995) Workshop on *School History Textbook Writing: From principles ...to Practice* PRAESA & Georg Eckert Institute

⁷⁸ History Education Group (1993): 10

⁷⁹ Interview with Rob Siebörger, 22 April 2008

⁸⁰ For example, Heineman-Centaur publications such as Johannesson, B. & van Dyk, P. (1992) *Gold and Diamonds*. Pietermaritzburg: Heineman-Centaur, and Weldon, G. (1993) *George Grey and the Xhosa*. Pietermaritzburg: Heineman-Centaur ; SACHED publications such as Johannesson, B. (1992) *The Land the Basuto Lost*. SACHED Trust; and a series of integrated studies books from Sacred Heart,

a real hope that, excluded from history curriculum construction during apartheid, they would be able to influence the direction of history education in a new, democratic South Africa.⁸¹

A total of 378 teachers attended the three teacher conferences organised by the History Education Group (HEG), held in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. The HEG felt strongly that conversations across the education departments needed to happen and over two-thirds of the delegates were from African, Coloured and Indian schools.⁸² The Cape Town conference was organised for a school day as a deliberate move to stake an alternative claim to any possible in-service training organised by the Education Department. The conferences were the most inclusive to date and the discussions more wide-ranging than had ever occurred publically around the school history curriculum.⁸³ The general emphasis in all of the conferences was on history as a discipline, on how it should be taught in order to reflect the skills and processes of historians, and on a more inclusive history, rather than the construction of a new national narrative that would reflect a post-apartheid South African identity. The contribution history education could make to democratic values was a further strong focus. However, much of the discussion in the teacher conferences centred on technical issues, such as the proportion of core and optional content in a new curriculum, rather than on what the content should be, although it was noted that the higher the core content the more this would favour the re-building of the nation.⁸⁴

for example, Potenza, E. (1992) *The Broken String*. Johannesburg: Heineman-Centaur. They were very different from the official textbooks of the time and the Germans liked them.

⁸¹ This optimism was expressed by Neville Alexander, anti-apartheid activist and in 1992 director of the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) at the University of Cape Town when he addressed a teacher conference in 1992: 'We have entered a unique period which gives us the opportunity to change things and change them radically. We are not in this period of transition as passive spectators. We are *part* of this transition – we can shape it. In shaping and fashioning the history curriculum we are ourselves making history. We are giving shape both to the history of the present and the future.' Alexander, N. (1992) Critiques of the present curriculum and proposals for change in History Education Group (1993), *History Matters* Houghton: Heinemann-Centaur: 13; also Siebörger, 22 April 2008

⁸² History Education Group, (1993):5

⁸³ Siebörger, Interview April 2008; HEG (1993): 4

⁸⁴ History Education Group (1993): 50

While the teacher conferences were an attempt to draw teachers into the history education debates, the textbook colloquia on 'School History Textbooks for a Democratic South Africa' brought together historians and history educators with diametrically opposed views on the nature and purpose of history and history education. Given the opposing views of history education, outside facilitation was thought necessary to facilitate the dialogue between the Afrikaner nationalist historians and textbook writers and historians and writers representing the progressive history community. The Georg-Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Braunschweig, which sponsored the colloquia, had experience in textbook revision in post-conflict societies.⁸⁵ This also indicated that the expectation was that South Africa would follow the path of other countries in transition and revise history textbooks as part of the rejection of the old narrative. Clashes and reconciliations took place as Afrikaner nationalist and English historians and history educators confronted one another.⁸⁶ F.A. van Jaarsveld, the doyen of Afrikaner nationalist historians, gave what might have been considered elements of an apology, feeling that he needed to explain and justify what they had been doing and why.⁸⁷ Alone of the Afrikaner nationalist historians, he had recognised and voiced the need to change how they wrote about the South African past. In 1990 he wrote:

In revised curricula, more room will have to be made for Black history in its own right and a balance must be struck between Black and White history...There must be an awareness...that in the historical unity of South African society there is a spectrum of diverse and contra-distinctive groups, each with its own historical origin...the syllabus content must be presented with emphasis on the diversity...[syllabi]

⁸⁵ Set up by the Braunschweig historian, Georg Eckert to support UNESCO efforts to address the role of textbooks in shaping views of the enemy. He organised bi- and multilateral textbook conferences with Germany's neighbours and especially with her previous enemies until his death in 1974. <http://www.gei.de/> A board member of the Institute, Jörn Rüsen, was researching in South Africa at the time and made a proposal to the Institute to fund the colloquia.

⁸⁶ Siebörger (2000) History and the Emerging Nation: The South African Experience, *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*, Vol. 1 No. 1. Online Copy: <http://www.ex.ac.uk/historyresource/journal1/journalstart.htm> No page numbers.

⁸⁷ Siebörger, R.: Interview April 2008

will have to be based on consensus among the groups involved, Black, Brown and White.⁸⁸

In other words, he recognised the presence and potential power of ‘subjugated knowledges or counter-memory’. Indeed, we can argue that he was implicitly recognising not only that they might be an element in an ‘insurrection’ of the non-Afrikaner communities, but also that they might become the master narrative, with the current Afrikaner master narrative in turn taking its place in the ranks of subjugated knowledges and counter-memories. But, however progressive this may have seemed to fellow Afrikaner nationalist historians, the point of departure nevertheless remained grounded in notions of ethnically defined groups or communities. Bundy regarded this to be a conservative pluralist/multicultural model that had little hope of delivering little more than a sanitised version of South Africa’s past.⁸⁹

There was significant disagreement between the Afrikaner nationalist and progressive historians, over whether or not it was possible to discuss textbooks without considering the wider curriculum framework of which they would form part.⁹⁰ While the progressive group felt the two were inextricably bound together, a leading Afrikaner nationalist historian of the University of Stellenbosch vehemently opposed this and was adamant that curriculum should not be discussed. He held the view that conferences should not be making curriculum; that it was bringing politics into the textbook conference; and that curriculum construction belonged to the government; and that they should not pre-empt what might come out of the constitutional discussions.⁹¹ His position was interpreted as a rearguard action of Afrikaner nationalism trying to postpone the inevitable, by a person who had been intimately

⁸⁸ Van Jaarsveld, F.A. (1990) Controversial South African School History *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* Vol. 12 quoted in Bundy, C. (2007): 88

⁸⁹ Bundy (2007): 88

⁹⁰ Siebörger (1994b): 100

⁹¹ This was Prof. Kapp, who had contributed to the HSRC Report and was a member of the Core Syllabus Committee which in February 1994 attempted to rush through a revised curriculum. He was on the organising committee of the textbook colloquia which had representation from the three major universities in the Western Cape, Universities of Cape Town, Western Cape and Stellenbosch. The composition of the committee appears as a footnote in Siebörger (1994b): 98

involved in constructing Afrikaner nationalist history, demonstrating a sense of insecurity that the progress of the political negotiations was giving.⁹²

The issue was not resolved and it was decided by the colloquia organisers that a statement released after the second colloquium, would include positions on construction of curriculum as well as on school textbooks. The position of those who drew up the statement was that the role of school history should be ‘inclusive and democratic’; that a new history curriculum should not ‘exclude, diminish or distort the history of particular groups, classes or communities’; and that it should reflect ‘cultural diversity while reconciling national unity’.⁹³ Significantly, though the progressive history community distanced themselves from the Afrikaner nationalist thinking, in talking of the ‘history of particular groups’ they similarly displayed a point of departure locked into apartheid-style ethnicity. It was, however, accepted that history education was central to the construction of:

a new national identity [which] would fulfil three roles: keeping the triumph over evil fresh, memorialising the struggles of the past and helping to break down all remaining racism; giving back a history to those who had been denied or robbed of one before; and helping to strengthen democratic and constitutional values.⁹⁴

The content debates drew on the work of radical or revisionist historians of South African history, rather than engaging in what might constitute a new collective memory and identity for post-apartheid South Africa. These historians had provided South Africans with a ‘usable past’ and the general acceptance of their work as an alternative content source, that provided a more ‘balanced’ and ‘diverse view’ of the South African past, meant that the written body of academic work of white historians effectively silenced any possible emerging vernacular voices.⁹⁵

⁹² Siebörger (2008): Interview April 2008

⁹³ Siebörger, R. (1994a) *New History Textbooks for South Africa* Manzini: Macmillan Boleswa; Siebörger (1994b): 100-101

⁹⁴ Siebörger, R. (2000)

⁹⁵ The influence of the revisionist historians was to be critical in future curriculum processes and will be revisited in the last South African chapter.

What was remarkable for conferences involving historians, was that the reports on the three teacher conferences made little reference to the political instability and violence in the country that was at that time threatening to destabilise the negotiations. It was pointed out that the conference in Durban took place against the backdrop of political violence in KwaZulu/Natal. Neither the KwaZulu Department of Education and Culture, nor the Inkatha-aligned Natal African Teachers Union (NATU), took active part in the conference, contributing, it was thought, to an underrepresentation of black, especially African, teachers.⁹⁶

The conference report also noted that, in the Durban conference, there was a comparatively low participation by African teachers in the discussions. It was suggested that this could have been either because African teachers were in the minority or because of the generally low morale among teachers in KwaZulu/Natal.⁹⁷ However, evidence from the *Facing the Past* teacher workshops mentioned earlier, suggests that this would have had far more to do with the inequalities and conditioning of years of apartheid than with either of the two reasons offered. This would have been twofold.

Firstly, the psychological trauma and humiliation experienced by the majority of South Africans under years of apartheid had left many with a deep sense of inferiority. Experience gained during workshops with teachers, has shown that people only begin to engage with one another at a deeper level across racial divides, when a sense of community has been nurtured and a safe space provided.⁹⁸ Attitudes of superiority among white English-speaking South Africans, though at times unconscious, are equally deeply ingrained and constantly transmitted, if not through verbal language, then through body language. This effectively shuts down open communication.

⁹⁶ History Education Group (1993): 2

⁹⁷ Ibid

⁹⁸ This has been the experience gained in the Western Cape based professional development project, *Facing the Past – Transforming our Future*, which has been running for the past 6 years.

Secondly, apartheid educated unequally. The conferences were attempting to engage in conversations around knowledge of a particular approach to history and content that may not have been familiar to black teachers. The work of the revisionist historians was largely inaccessible (lecturers at black universities would not have used them) and the syllabus in the Department of Education and Training (DET – black education) for South African history, ended at 1948, while the syllabuses of the other education departments continued to 1970. In addition, the language of the conference was English, a second or even third language for black South Africans. In the context of the decades of humiliation and trauma, it would take more than a single conference for someone to be confident enough to take part in a debate with white South Africans, in a language that was not a first language, and in a debate that had the potential for indicating a lack of sufficient knowledge. Apartheid education resulted in different understandings of history education among South African teachers. Though these conferences may have opened the way for vernacular histories to enter through the front door at last, given the context, they would have been overwhelmed by the literate narratives of white-constructed revisionist historians and the expectations of those who organised the conferences. A further influence may have been at work. Many of the white participants had been exposed to the latest approaches to teaching history and had been trained in universities that rejected fundamental pedagogics. Black teachers on the other hand would not have had similar opportunities to gain the same exposure.

Conclusion

The trajectory of South Africa's political negotiations during the early transition to democracy, gave rise to expectations among history academics and educationists on both sides of the political spectrum, though mainly located in white politics. The negotiations opened a space, in which both progressive and Afrikaner nationalist historians and history educationists felt that they could intervene to influence the course of the post-apartheid history curriculum.

There was considerable expectation at this stage that the National Party would continue to be able to exercise influence in the new government, which led Afrikaner

historians and education officials to attempt to exercise authority in proposing the syllabus changes even as late as 1994. On the other hand, the progressive history community were convinced that having been excluded from curriculum processes during apartheid, they would be able to exercise influence in the new state. What emerges is that all of those involved in the history debates of the early 1990s, had clearly underestimated the extent to which history education is political and ideological and that any new curriculum would not be left to academics and teachers to develop.

The history debates of the early 1990s were essentially white debates. They had failed to recognise the power of the Foucauldian insight into the role and nature of the master narrative of the political nation and the ‘subjugated knowledges or counter-memories’, particularly when the narratives and memories played a central part in both political subjugation by those in control of the state, and the resistance movement of those who considered themselves to be the oppressed. The segregation and relative isolation of South Africans from one another, and the long period of white political hegemony, had contributed to a lack of insight on the part of white academics and teachers into the true locus of political legitimacy that was emerging. As far as history education was concerned, there was too much at stake in the potential of education policy to signal transformation, to leave it in the hands of academics and teachers without ‘struggle’ credentials and appropriate political affiliation to major resistance organisations, which would contest for dominance in the emerging state.

The next chapter will examine the political and educational processes that occurred in South Africa immediately after the first democratic elections with regard to memory, identity and history education. It will examine the shifts in the policy discourses from the first attempt to realign the old apartheid syllabi to the new democratic values, to the construction of Curriculum 2005 which became the flagship curriculum of the new state. Education policy during the first phase of transition after 1994 would be characterised by stakeholder representation and labour dominated policy networks. This would be a radical departure from the accepted modus operandi of curriculum

construction during apartheid. It would also be shaped by the political context of compromise and reconciliation and the tacit understanding that resulted from the political negotiation process that there would have to be compromises within education policy.