

**THE PAST IN SERVICE OF THE PRESENT: A STUDY OF SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL  
HISTORY SYLLABUSES AND TEXTBOOKS 1839-1990**

**BY**

**RICHARD EDDISON CHERNIS**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted for the degree of Doctorem Philosophiae at the University of Pretoria, has not been submitted by me for a degree at any other university.

**RICHARD E. CERNIS**

April 1990

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This dissertation is meant as a very modest contribution to a new South Africa.

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## OPSOMMING

In die ondersoek is gepoog om die verweefdheid van nasionale bewussyn en historiese bewussyn te demonstreeer. Vanweë die sentrale rol van Afrikaner nasionalisme in die Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis sedert die 1880's, word besondere aandag aan die verskynsel gegee.

Die funksies van geskiedenisonderrig met betrekking tot die oriënterings, identiteitsvormende- en legitimeringsbehoefte van die nasiestaat word toegelig. Die belangrikheid van 'n positiewe selfbeeld vir 'n nasie, asook van vyandbeelde van diene wat nie tot die nasie behoort nie, word aangedui. Geskiedenisleerplanne weerspieël die amptelik goedgekeurde vertolking van die verlede, terwyl handboeke die skrywer se historiese perspektief, vooroordeel en partydigheid blootlê.

Die ondersoek dek die tydperk vanaf 1839 tot die hede, vir al vier die provinsies. 'n Seleksie van skoolgeskiedenisleerplanne en -handboeke van die tydperk onder bespreking is ontleed, volgens die kriteria van die Georg Eckert Instituut-model. Die analise is beide kwantitatief en kwalitatief.

Tussen 1839 en 1918 toon die geskiedenisleerplanne en -handboeke in die Kaap en Natal die algehele oorheersing van die Imperiale gedagte. Die toenemende selfbewustheid van die twee jong state is egter ook te bespeur. Die stereotipes en meestersimbole wat vandag nog bestaan, het hulle oorsprong in die tydperk gehad.

Voor 1879 was daar feitlik geen nasionale bewussyn onder die Afrikaners nie. Dit word deur die afwesigheid van 'n historiese bewussyn in die leerplanne van die Republikeinse skole weerspieël. Na die krisis van 1879-81, het die Republikeinse Regering die waarde van geskiedenisonderrig vir die vestiging van 'n eie identiteit, vir die legitimering van hul bestaan, en vir die voorsiening van nasionale oriëntering toenemend erken.

Na die oornam van die Republieke in 1900, het die Britse owerheid die Afrikanerjeug aktief probeer verengels. Dit het die ontstaan van die C.N.O.-skole tot gevolg gehad. Na 1910 weerspieël geskiedenisleerplanne asook die meeste handboeke 'n begeerte om die twee blanke taalgroepe met mekaar te versoen.

Terwyl die leerplanne in die tydperk 1918-1948 gepoog het om polities neutraal te wees, weerspieël die handboeke van die tydperk baie duidelik twee uiteenlopende vertolkings van die Suid-Afrikaanse verlede: 'n pro-Britse, en 'n Afrikaner- nasionalistiese vertolking. Die herontwaking van die Afrikaner nasionalisme word beskryf.

Gedurende die tydperk van die Nasionale Party bewind sedert 1948, het geskiedenisleerplanne gepoog om republikeinisme te versterk, en Apartheid te legitimeer. Hoewel die tempo van politieke en maatskaplike verandering in die afgelope dekade versnel het, weerspieël die huidige geskiedenisleerplanne steeds 'n seksionale, versteende beeld van 'n grotendeels mitiese verlede. Terwyl kwetsende verwysings en ander neerhalende taalgebruik tot in die 1970's in handboeke voorgekom het, kom vooroordeel en partydigheid in handboeke nou minder opvallend voor. Tog word daar van geskiedenisleerplanne en -handboeke steeds verwag om 'n oriënterings-, legitimerings- en identiteitsvormende funksie vir slegs Afrikaanssprekende Blankes te vervul.

Die amptelike siening van Suid-Afrika se verlede word langs 'n wye front bevraagteken. Indien skoolgeskiedenis 'n rol daarin gaan speel om 'n nuwe bedeling in Suid-Afrika teweeg te bring, is 'n dringende en fundamentele hersiening van skoolgeskiedenisleerplanne en -handboeke noodsaaklik. Daar bestaan talryke internasionale modelle wat as nuttige voorbeelde kan dien. Regeringsuitsprake in die onlangse verlede dui daarop dat die Staat vir so 'n hersiening ontvanklik sou wees.

## SUMMARY

This investigation is an attempt to demonstrate the role of history teaching in the interconnectedness of national consciousness and historical consciousness. Because of its central role in South African history since the 1880's, particular attention is paid to the phenomenon of Afrikaans nationalism.

The functions of history teaching for the orientation, identity-formation and legitimation needs of a nation-state are examined in depth. The importance of a positive self-image to a nation and conversely of hostile images of those deemed outside the nation, are indicated. History syllabuses reflect the officially sanctioned view of the past, while textbooks reveal much about the author's historical perspective, bias and prejudices.

The investigation covers the period 1839 to the present, in all four provinces. A selection of school history syllabuses and textbooks of the period reviewed are examined, according to criteria adapted from the Georg Eckert Institute model. The analysis is both quantitative and qualitative.

Between 1839 and 1918 history syllabuses and textbooks in the Cape and Natal reflect the absolute dominance of the Imperial ideal. Yet the growing self-consciousness of the two young states is also evident. The stereotypes and master symbols which survive today have their origins in this period.

Before 1879 there was little national consciousness among Afrikaners. This is reflected in the lack of historical consciousness in the curriculum of Republican schools. After the crises of 1879-81, the Republican Governments increasingly recognized the value of history teaching in establishing an identity, legitimizing their existence, and providing national orientation.

Following the demise of the Republics in 1900, the British authorities actively attempted to Anglicise Afrikaner youth. This led to the establishment of Christian National Education Schools. After 1910, history syllabuses and most textbooks reflect a desire to reconcile the two White language groups.

While the syllabuses of the period between 1918 and 1948 attempt to be politically neutral, the textbooks of the period clearly mirror two different interpretations of the South African past: a pro-British, and an Afrikaner Nationalist. The resurgence of Afrikaner nationalism is described.

During the period of National Party rule since 1948, history syllabuses and many textbooks have reinforced republicanism, and attempted to legitimate Apartheid. Although the pace of political and social change has been accelerating, particularly during the past decade, the history syllabuses presently in use still reflect a sectional, petrified image of a largely mythical past. While the use of epithets and derogatory language in textbooks continued well into the 1970's, bias and prejudice in textbooks has become less obvious. Yet history syllabuses and textbooks are still expected to fulfil an orientation, legitimation and identity-formation function for Afrikaans-speaking Whites only.

The official view of South Africa's past is being challenged on a wide front. If school history is to play a role in bringing about a new dispensation in South Africa, an urgent and fundamental revision of school history syllabuses and textbooks is required. There are numerous international models which could serve as useful examples. Government pronouncements in recent times seem to indicate that the State would be receptive to such revision.

## PREFACE

South Africa is at the crossroads. Some would even say that for the Whites "Stunde-Null", or zero hour, as in Germany in 1945, had arrived. The illusory certainty of a White-dominated past is no more. The past decade has seen the collapse of Apartheid, the rise of a radical, Black nationalism as the dominant political force, and the recognition by the Government that South Africa is a unitary state inhabited by a single nation with a shared future.

These events have resulted in a crisis of identity among all South Africans, but among the Whites in particular, and even more especially among the Afrikaners. Suddenly the past is no longer what it was. The country's future has probably never appeared so uncertain. This realisation has brought about national disorientation on a massive scale. Moreover, the legitimacy of the present political, social and economic order is not only being questioned, but also rejected, on an unprecedented scale.

The implications of all this for the teaching of history in this country are profound. Evidence will be presented to show that current syllabuses and textbooks are not fulfilling their functions of orientation, identity-formation and legitimation. An antiquated, sectional image of the South African past, with its roots in the nineteenth century, is being perpetuated even today.

There is an urgent need for renewal. The recognition of South Africa as a unitary state, with a multi-cultural identity within a single nation, demands a new approach to both the content and the spirit of history teaching.

It was the awareness of this crisis, and the realisation of the role that the teaching of history should be playing in meeting the challenges of a future South Africa, that motivated this investigation. The writer has undertaken a study of formal history teaching in White schools in

in all four provinces from 1839 to 1990. This is an attempt to establish what kind of history has been taught in State schools, how the writers of textbooks have interpreted the syllabuses, and how White South Africans have viewed themselves and their non-White countrymen. It is also a study in nationalism, in prejudice, and in the didactics of history teaching.

Comparatively little work has been done in South Africa in this field. In many other countries syllabus and textbook revision, and the didactics of history teaching in general, are the subject of a considerable body of literature: books, journal articles and other occasional publications.

There are numerous theses and dissertations dealing with history syllabuses and textbooks in various periods in the different provinces. With few exceptions, these studies are largely descriptive, containing little if any analysis or criticism.

Examples of such studies\* are: A.G. Coetzee's Die Leerplan in Geskiedenis as Leervak op die Kaaplandse Middelbare Skole (1950), W.J. du Plooy's Die Handboek vir Geskiedenis in die Transvaalse Middelbare Skole (1964), A.I. Raubenheimer's Die Geskiedenis-Handboek op Skool met Besondere Verwysing na Suid-Afrika (1944), P.C. Smit's Histories-Kritiese Studie van die Geskiedenis-leergang van die Transvaalse Middelbare Onderwys 1859-1967 (1971), and J.J. Nel's Geskiedenis vir die Middelbare Skool onder die O.V.S. Departement van Onderwys 1933-1947 (1949). None of these attempts to analyse history syllabuses or textbooks from the perspective of the functions of history teaching, or to establish bias or examples of prejudice.

F.E. Auerbach's thesis An Enquiry into History Textbooks and Syllabuses in Transvaal High Schools (1963), subsequently published as The Power of

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\* Details of the works mentioned in this preface are contained in the bibliography.

Prejudice in South African Education. An Enquiry into History Textbooks and Syllabuses in the Transvaal High Schools of South Africa (1965), is a sound piece of academic work in which the topic is approached critically. Auberbach's focus was, however, on the Transvaal only, and was produced a quarter of a century ago.

A more recent and comprehensive work is that of R.B. Mulholland: The Evolution of the Relationship Between the Modes of Political Organization and the History Taught in Schools (1981). Mulholland analyses a small selection of syllabuses and textbooks essentially from the Transvaal, from the nineteenth century to the 1970's, in an attempt to establish the interconnectedness of the political order and history teaching.

O. van den Berg and P. Buckland in their published work, Beyond the History Syllabus. Constraints and Opportunities (1983), are highly critical of present syllabuses, and make some sound recommendations for their improvement.

The findings of a UNESCO study, published as History in Black and White: An Analysis of South African School History Textbooks (1983), by E. Dean, D. Hartmann and M. Katzen, analyses contemporary textbooks approved for use in White schools in the Transvaal and some books written for Black schools. The project was concerned with the kind of world view being offered in these textbooks. The writers reached the conclusion that some of the textbooks had been written specifically to support the ruling party in South Africa.

J.M. du Preez published her challenging Africana Afrikaner. Master Symbols in South African School Textbooks in 1983. Du Preez's book uses the concept of master symbols to investigate how South Africa and the Afrikaner are presented in school textbooks. Although textbooks other than history books are also analysed, this is a revealing study for those concerned about the teaching of history in South Africa.

In 1987 the HSRC published the report of the Working Committee: Historical Aspects on an investigation into inter-group relations, under the title Tussengroepverhoudinge soos weerspieël in die Suid-Afrikaanse historiografie. The Committee, consisting of the respected historians, J.C. Moll, H.J. van Aswegen, J.A. Benyon, T.R.H. Davenport and H.B. Giliomee, made a study of inter-group relations in Nationalist (both Afrikaner and Black), Liberal, and Radical Revisionist historiography in South Africa. Particular attention was paid to the way the writers portrayed their own and other groups in their books. The Committee's findings and recommendations are a confirmation of the results of this writer's investigation.

The most prolific writer on history teaching in this country is F.A. van Jaarsveld. His wide reading on the didactics of history teaching, particularly in the German literature, and exposure to international projects on textbook revision, have lent his work a breadth and depth unusual for a South African writer in this field. For more than three decades, van Jaarsveld has been publishing books and articles on topics such as the controversy surrounding school history, nationalism and history teaching, historical consciousness, conflicting images of the South African past, the problems facing the writer of school history textbooks, and the functions of history teaching. He has recently written and lectured on the challenge of the radicals to the official version of the past presented in schools. A list of his works relevant to this investigation is contained in the bibliography.

Yet as far as this author has been able to ascertain, an analysis of history syllabuses and textbooks in all four provinces, from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, from the particular perspective adopted, has not yet been undertaken.

One of the problems presented by this subject is the very vastness of the field. This writer was obliged to condense a great deal of material into some three hundred pages. The application of certain criteria, described in the Introduction, made selection easier and more relevant.



While in certain areas there is an abundance of source material, making a sample or selection essential, in other areas material is either scarce or not easily accessible. This presented a second obstacle. One such area was nineteenth century syllabuses and textbooks in the former colonies and republics. Often there was no prescribed history syllabus in the contemporary sense of the word, necessitating a study of examination papers, inspector's reports and other documents necessary before it was possible to reconstruct a picture of the content of what was being taught in classrooms.

Once an idea had been obtained of the titles recommended for use by the education authorities, an extensive search was required to trace the most widely-used textbooks of this early period. With the exception of the Transvaal Education Department, the provincial education departments are, on the whole, unable to supply archival material.

The traditional techniques of the historian's craft have been employed. Every effort has been made to gather as much relevant historical data as possible, particularly primary source material. A considerable amount of time was devoted to archival research in Government and departmental repositories in Cape Town, Pietermaritzburg and Pretoria.

Government reports on education and other official documents relating to education in all four provinces since the beginning of formal history teaching in the mid-nineteenth century, were consulted. Articles in newspapers and journals have supplemented official sources.

One of the most valuable primary sources upon which this study was based was, of course, history textbooks. Well over one hundred textbooks, covering a period of some one hundred and twenty years, were examined. Normally regarded as secondary sources, these texts, in the context of this investigation, became primary source material.

The primary sources were supplemented and complemented by a wide range of published and unpublished works, close on one hundred and eighty, both local and foreign.

Reading material was further supplemented by a number of interviews with educationists, academics and pupils, both Black and White, English- and Afrikaans-speaking.

It is appropriate here to comment on the following aspects of the investigation:

### Spelling

The names of historical characters and places can pose a problem because of the variety of spellings. To ensure consistency in the spelling of names such as Mzilikazi, Shaka, Slagters Nek and Isandlwana, T.R.H. Davenport's South Africa. A Modern History, is used throughout.

### Emphasis

Throughout the text certain words and phrases have been underlined by way of emphasis. Where the emphasis is that of the original text, this is stated.

### Translations

In consideration of non-South African readers and the natural flow of the text, this writer has opted to translate sources originally in German, Dutch and Afrikaans into English. Where such translations are straightforward, the original is not given. In cases where English has no exact equivalent or where idiom or verse make translation difficult, the quote in the original language is indicated in a footnote.

### Sources

A complete list of sources is contained in the bibliography. Where documents are obtainable in a specific repository, an abbreviated description of the repository is given before the document quoted. Such abbreviations are included in the full list of abbreviations.

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED**

<b>C.E.D.</b>	<b>Cape Education Department</b>
<b>C.N.E.</b>	<b>Christian National Education</b>
<b>D.E.T.</b>	<b>Department of Education and Training</b>
<b>D.R.C.</b>	<b>Dutch Reformed Church</b>
<b>E.V.R.</b>	<b>Eerste Volksraad</b>
<b>F.A.K.</b>	<b>Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurverenigings</b>
<b>G.A.P.</b>	<b>Government Archives Pietermaritzburg</b>
<b>G.A.C.T.</b>	<b>Government Archives Cape Town</b>
<b>H.S.R.C.</b>	<b>Human Sciences Research Council</b>
<b>J.C.</b>	<b>Junior Certificate</b>
<b>J.M.B.</b>	<b>Joint Matriculation Board</b>
<b>N.E.C.C.</b>	<b>National Education Co-ordinating Committee</b>
<b>N.E.D.</b>	<b>Natal Education Department</b>
<b>N.E.D.A.</b>	<b>Natal Education Department Archives</b>
<b>N.S.L.</b>	<b>Natal Society Library</b>
<b>S.A.I.R.R.</b>	<b>South African Institute of Race Relations</b>
<b>S.A.L.</b>	<b>South African Library</b>
<b>S.A.T.A.</b>	<b>South African Teachers' Association</b>
<b>S.C.</b>	<b>Senior Certificate</b>
<b>S.G.E.</b>	<b>Superintendent General of Education</b>
<b>T.B.V.C.</b>	<b>Transkei, Bophutatswana, Venda, Ciskei</b>
<b>T.E.D.</b>	<b>Transvaal Education Department</b>
<b>T.E.D.A.</b>	<b>Transvaal Education Department Archives</b>
<b>T.T.A.</b>	<b>Transvaal Teachers' Association</b>
<b>UNISA</b>	<b>University of South Africa</b>
<b>Z.A.R.</b>	<b>Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek</b>

## INTRODUCTION

### The Problem

This study is an inter-disciplinary investigation into the extent to which history syllabuses and textbooks, as components of history teaching, reflect a nation's self-comprehension and fulfil the legitimation, identification and orientation needs of the prevailing political, economic and social order. As an inter-disciplinary study it embraces history, the history of education, and didactics. It is also a study in historiography.

National consciousness and historical consciousness are inseparable, mutually reinforcing elements of nationalism. These two forms of a nation's consciousness of itself, as well as the phenomena of nationalism and national calling, need to be explained before history syllabuses and textbooks become meaningful. The aims, content and spirit of history teaching are neither haphazard nor incidental.

In the process of becoming a nation, a group will simultaneously develop a sense of history and an awareness of its own past. This, in turn, stimulates the growth of the particular nationalism or national self-awareness. Nations recall their past or, more accurately, their unique version of the past, to serve three specific ends: the establishment and reinforcement of a national identity; national orientation in a past-present-future continuum; and the legitimation or justification of the existing order. The ruling party or group, which controls the nation's system of education, finds in the teaching of history a powerful means of transferring the "authorised" or "official" view of the past to the next generation. In this way the three functions become tools in the hands of those governing a country. It is inevitable that history syllabuses, and even textbooks, should carry political overtones. For this reason history has been, and still is, and must always be, among the most controversial of school subjects.

This is apparent even in homogeneous societies. In divided, culturally complex societies such as the Soviet Union or South Africa, the situation is compounded.

Assuming that a national identity rests to a very significant degree on a nation's historical consciousness, and thus on a mutually acceptable version of the past (allowing of course for regional, class and other nuances), a broad South African national identity has yet to emerge. The history of history teaching in this country has up to now made a mutually acceptable version of the past impossible. This investigation to reveals that the British-orientated "Cape history" taught in South African schools was unacceptable to national-minded Afrikaners. Similarly the Republican history prescribed in Z.A.R. schools was rejected by the English-speaking Uitlanders of the time. The Afrikaner-centric "official" version of South Africa's past contained in history syllabuses since the 1950's is not "agreed upon" by many English-speaking Whites, and certainly not by non-White South Africans.

This investigation will endeavour to show that the main streams of historical thought reflected in school syllabuses and textbooks over the past century and a half have both been so narrow and sectional as to be unacceptable to even the other major White language group. How Indian, Coloured and Black South Africans perceive the way they are represented in school history was, until very recently, regarded as irrelevant.

Evidence will be presented in support of the theory that history teaching also has an important orientation function. History has been described as a "Horizont der Gegenwart",<sup>1</sup> an horizon of the present. The past provides an explanation for a nation's present situation and inspiration or direction for the future. This study will show that here too history teaching in South Africa is not providing orientation for the country as a whole. In fact, history syllabuses and textbooks have never really provided "national" orientation in the full sense of the word. These have inevitably been geared to the specific needs of the English, the Afrikaners or the Whites.

A considerable amount of evidence is provided to illustrate the degree to which school history serves to legitimate or justify a political

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1 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichte als Horizont der Gegenwart, passim.

system. The various governments in South Africa since the nineteenth century are no exception. It would seem that present syllabuses and textbooks, however, are attempting to legitimate a political and social order no longer in existence. Past group-images, entrenched by history in schools, militate against the changing state of South Africa.

Abundant examples are provided to illustrate the extent to which textbooks have reinforced various racial or ethnic stereotypes in contrast to an always favourable self-image. The negative is necessary to establish and strengthen the positive.

This writer postulates that current school history syllabuses and textbooks are perpetuating a narrow, simplistic, sterile and ossified version of this country's past. This version has reduced our history to a struggle between a heroic people (the Afrikaners) and their numerous enemies - the San, the Khoi, Black tribes, the British, the international community, and Black Africa. It is a caricature which does justice neither to the Afrikaner nor, of course, to any of his compatriots.

### Method of Study

The field of history teaching, more specifically syllabuses and textbooks, is vast. For the sake of manageability it was necessary to make some selection. First it was not possible to cover all four provinces in equal detail without running the risk of excessive length. All four provinces are covered, but the emphasis is on the Cape and Transvaal. This emphasis is justified on the following grounds:

- (i) For the past century these two larger provinces have been demographically, politically and economically the two most important.
- (ii) The Cape, as the oldest entity, has the longest tradition of history teaching, having provided the examining authority for

the other three until well into this century. The British influence there was pervasive. Thus for many decades Cape history syllabuses and textbooks followed the pro-British school of historical writing of the "Cape history" variety. Natal followed this.

- (iii) The Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek and its successor, the Province of Transvaal represent another historical perspective, i.e. that of Afrikaner nationalism and republicanism, little different from that found in the old Free State Republic.
- (iv) These two "pairs" of states conveniently reflect the two major schools of South African historical writing pertinent to this study: the British-orientated and the Afrikaans. For much of the period under review the debate on history and history teaching has revolved around these two perspectives.

To avoid unnecessary duplication, the "White" education departments of the four provinces form the focus of attention. For many decades these syllabuses were being studied in schools for Blacks, Indians and Coloureds. The officially sanctioned version of the past as mirrored in syllabuses and textbooks in Cape and Transvaal schools, or in national core syllabuses, was, and still is, the same version presented in schools for the other groups. There would be no point in duplicating those syllabuses, as the requirements of the Joint Matriculation Board have always been applicable to all education authorities. The teaching of history in schools for those other than Whites would be a fruitful field of investigation for other researchers.

The period covered spans approximately one hundred and fifty years: from the first official reference to history as a school subject in the Cape and the Transvaal in the mid-nineteenth century, to the situation prevailing in 1990. The study of the teaching of history in this period is linked throughout to important political, constitutional, economic and cultural events in the country as a whole: the interconnectedness of history teaching and such events is evident.

As it was not feasible to evaluate all the syllabuses of the four provinces, it was decided to concentrate on secondary school syllabuses, except where primary school syllabuses were also important or could shed light on a certain aspect of the topic. For example, in the nineteenth century very few children proceeded to the secondary level; and consequently what was being taught in primary schools then is of vital importance to this investigation. Nor does this pretend to be an exhaustive or complete study of all secondary school syllabuses - it was judged more important to establish general trends in history teaching and to illustrate how developments in national life were reflected in syllabuses and textbooks. In many cases the revision of syllabuses was so minor that there was no need to deal with every syllabus individually. For the sake of continuity, an attempt was made at maintaining one thread throughout, i.e. the requirements of the Junior and especially the Senior Certificate in the two provinces over the past century or more.

For obvious reasons the study is confined to the South African history sections of the syllabuses. General history has only been included where a topic (e.g. the treatment of the history of Africa) sheds light on how South Africans viewed themselves and their country's role at a particular point in time.

It was not possible to examine every history textbook ever published or used in South Africa over the past century or more. Some, especially early titles, are either no longer known or obtainable. In some instances textbooks are so similar in spirit and even content that their inclusion would have been mere repetition. However, the approximately one hundred books examined represent the best known and most used titles since the mid-nineteenth century.

Certain criteria were applied in the selection: they had to be books that :

- (a) were actually used in departmental schools;
- (b) were referred to, or recommended for use in schools, in departmental lists, reports, etc;



- (c) enjoyed a certain popularity (or notoriety), which was reflected in the number of impressions or editions produced, or in public reaction to them and
- (d) were representative of the spirit of the time or of a specific historical perspective, e.g. Empire-orientated, Republican, Afrikaner Nationalist, Christian National, and so on.

Wilmot, Noble, Whiteside, Foggin, Aitton, Hofmeyr, Theal, Stockenström, Gie, Lindeque, Fowler and Smit, Van Jaarsveld and Joubert, to name but a few, were, or still are, household names to generations of South Africans. This writer is satisfied that this selection of textbooks is a representative sample.

Previous to 1918 (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) so few history textbooks were produced that they could be analysed individually. In this way the individual character and "spirit" of each work is respected. After 1918 (Chapters 6 and 7) there are simply too many titles to make this method or approach feasible. Instead, these numerous volumes are analysed collectively according to certain criteria which are explained later. The latter approach facilitates comparison, grouping and the detection of trends; it is, however, detrimental to the "wholeness" of an author's work.

There are many methods of analysing history syllabuses and textbooks using a wide variety of criteria. A most useful model has come to the attention of this writer, one deserving some discussion.

#### The Georg-Eckert-Institute's Project 1971-1974

The George-Eckert-Institute for International Textbook Research in Brunswick, Germany, possesses the most comprehensive international school textbook library in the world, concentrating on the subjects history, geography and "political education" (Politische Bildung).

Between 1971 and 1974 the Institute undertook a project, on behalf of UNESCO, for multilateral consultations on secondary school textbooks in

history, geography and social studies.<sup>2</sup> The purpose of the project was twofold: to provide publishers with authoritative appraisals of the contents of their books in order to help ensure accuracy, objectivity and a balanced presentation from the point of view of promoting education for international understanding; and to stimulate textbook consultation on textbooks between member states of UNESCO.

Some 70 textbooks published in seven countries (France, West Germany, India, Japan, Kenya, Venezuela and the United Kingdom) were selected. An expert from each country reviewed the treatment given in those textbooks of the history, geography and culture of their respective countries. Reviewers were asked to prepare both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the textbooks reviewed.

The quantitative analysis was to be used to note the amount of space given to different countries, topics or themes in order to permit relative comparisons to be made. It was noted that quantitative appraisals, despite their limitations, may indicate deliberate political decisions on the part of the author or publisher concerning the allotment of space to various countries, epochs or topics. This suspicion is borne out by the evaluation of the textbooks undertaken in this study.

Qualitative analysis of textbook content was to be used to consider accuracy, adequacy and sensitivity, which are defined as follows:

- (a) Accuracy means that incidents should be presented without distortion (whether deliberate or unintentional) and in context;
- (b) Adequacy means that the selection and treatment of topics should be based on a well-balanced sense of their relative importance in a setting embracing the whole world, and the whole of human history. (Applied to South Africa this would imply the "whole of South Africa" and the "whole of its history").

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<sup>2</sup> P.K. Boden, Promoting International Understanding through School Textbooks. A Case Study, passim.

- (c) Sensitivity means the capacity for appraising what is best and most significant in the culture and history of other countries.

Experts were to pick out in particular:

- (a) wrong facts, erroneous ideas, controversial interpretation;  
(b) tendentious presentation which may give an unfair or derogatory image of a people or culture, and hence embitter relations between different countries;  
(c) the development of arguments unfitted, because of their length, to the importance of the subject being dealt with, whether, for example, it has been studied at too great a length or touched upon too briefly; and omissions, especially the omission of reasons for events.

Misleading interpretation and opinion manifest themselves as:

- (a) the inaccurate use of terms;  
(b) the emotive use of descriptive terms, particularly adjectives, with little or no evidence offered by the writer as to the appropriateness of the word in the context ;  
(c) the presentation of unsubstantiated comment in isolation, e.g. "treatment worse than animals";  
(d) the presentation of opinion from only one of the parties to an event or from one historical perspective only. The causes of "defective statements" were identified as, at the lowest level, simple misprints, but also included covert or overt preconceptions of authors and the deliberate aim of fostering particular viewpoints.

The evaluation of the project, after three years of research, brought to light the varying approaches to textbook preparation and revision. It was noted that various influences or restraints operate world-wide, perhaps imperceptably. First, the textbooks have to serve given syllabuses, which are determined or at least approved to some extent by government administrators at a certain level; second, common considerations influencing textbook production and third, accepted norms in the discipline, whether academically valid or not, act as a subtle though sometimes decisive influence on textbooks. State control was particularly important in developing countries, where the challenge to

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3 E. Bruley and E.H. Dance, in A History of Europe?, call this "bias by disproportion", p.25.

\* This writer's investigation produced hundreds of examples of such emotive terms.

the existing order was still potent, and state control of education could at times lead to the imposition of the government's ideology, to the exclusion of any other. South Africa probably has up to now fitted into this group.

The project found that there was a tendency in the syllabuses and textbooks of most countries to study the history of another country or group only from the point in time at which the two came into contact and that some major themes were either omitted or treated only perfunctorily. Lack of information was considered one of the most important causes of errors and bias. Lack of wide-ranging contacts between authors of different countries (or cultural groups) hampers the collection of wide and up-to-date information regarding different countries (communities). While it is relatively easy to check and revise factual errors, it is more difficult to combat bias arising from the social and cultural contexts which determine an author's approach. A major source of errors of fact and judgement was considered to be the use of stereotypes in textbooks. These tend to perpetuate false images about places, people and events. Often terms were used without reference to their precise meanings. The use of derogatory terms was to be regretted.

Ideally such a model, adapted to South Africa's unique circumstances, should form the basis of a fundamental and urgent renewal of this country's school history syllabuses and textbooks (see Chapter 8). This writer was not able to implement the Georg Eckert Institute model in its entirety for the purposes of this study. To do so successfully would require a collective, team approach with official sanction and financial support to be successful. Such an effort is clearly beyond the means or capabilities of an individual.

This writer has attempted to follow the methods used in the German model as far as possible, supplemented by certain additional dimensions. For the purposes of this study, the following questions, based on the elements highlighted in the two introductory chapters and the

quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Georg Eckert Institute, were applied to the syllabuses and textbooks examined:

- (a) What was the political, constitutional, social, cultural or economic background against which the books were written and which possibly exerted an influence on their aim, content or spirit?
- (b) In what way do they mirror the historical and national consciousness of South Africans at various stages in their history?
- (c) How do they reflect the phenomena of nationalism, imperialism or national calling?
- (d) How do they fulfil the identity-formation and -stabilising, and -entrenching function of history teaching?
- (e) In what way do they help to legitimate the prevailing political order?
- (f) How do they establish the time scale (continuum) necessary for the development, stabilising, entrenchment and ultimately the projection of individual, group and national identities?
- (g) How does the writer's particular, limited, and limiting perspective manifest itself?
- (h) What stereotypes, master symbols, positive self-image and negative "Feindbilder" (hostile images of others) are evident?
- (i) To what extent have they invited opposition?

Insofar as the syllabuses and textbooks examined provided answers to these questions (and to a very great extent they did), the findings of this investigation were used to reach certain conclusions and suggest possible guidelines for the future. It is hoped that the ground covered will be of use to those entrusted with drawing up new history syllabuses and those who will be writing the new history textbooks. There are lessons for us in the past, if only we would heed them. The writer's purpose is not to condemn any author, for all are products of their time, and are thus guilty of bias in one form or another. Rather it is hoped that the revelation of bias will make authors, publishers and teachers aware of the necessity for careful scrutiny of every word and every sentiment they utter, in order to guard against those unconscious prejudices that have marred intergroup understanding in the past.

### Organization of the Study

In the first chapter an attempt is made to demonstrate the interconnectedness of national consciousness, or nationalism on the one hand, and historical consciousness on the other. This congruence is illustrated by the idea of national calling and other manifestations of nationalism. Because of its central role in South African history since the 1880's, particular attention is paid to the phenomenon of Afrikaans nationalism and its influence on education.

The second chapter highlights the functions of history teaching more specifically in the context of the nation-state. An examination is made of the importance of a positive self-image to a nation and, conversely, of the generating of prejudice, bias toward, and a hostile image of those deemed outside the nation is indicated.

In the third, fourth and fifth chapters an investigation of history teaching in South African schools from the mid-nineteenth century to shortly after Union is undertaken, making use of the guidelines and criteria set out here and in the two introductory chapters. Syllabuses, textbooks and other material which throw light on the teaching of history are examined.

Two distinct interpretations of history emerge from the outset: a pro-British, or Colonial English, and an Afrikaner. An attempt is made to provide a political and constitutional background to the teaching of history in this period, in particular the titanic struggle for dominance in the sub-continent between British Imperialism and the Boer Republics, as well as the rising national consciousness of both sections of the White community.

Chapter 6, covering the period 1918-1948, examines not only the syllabuses and textbooks in use, but also records the steady resurgence of Afrikaner nationalism and English-speaking reaction to it. In these years the Afrikaner Nationalist and Colonial English images of the past

merge to a significant degree on the role of the non-Whites in South African history. Regarding the British-Boer conflicts of the past, an uneasy truce is maintained during the "age of the generals" i.e. 1918 to 1948.

Chapter 7 is concerned with history as a school subject during the period of National Party rule from 1948 to the present. The Afrikaner Nationalists' interpretation of South Africa's past, largely that of the nineteenth century Boer Republicans, becomes the official interpretation of South African history, and is increasingly reflected in the syllabuses and officially sanctioned textbooks. In the light of the fundamental changes that have characterised South African society since the late 1970's, the present history syllabuses and most current history textbooks appear anachronistic.

The concluding chapter briefly examines recent challenges to the official version of the past. Some conclusions are reached and recommendations made on the findings of the investigation.

Having set out the field of study and the method of investigation, the writer will now embark upon a detailed analysis of primary and secondary sources to substantiate the claim that history syllabuses and textbooks, more obviously than those of any other school subject, are expressly designed to present a limited and particular perspective in order to perpetuate and entrench the existing hegemony.

## PART I

### CHAPTER 1

#### NATIONALISM AND HISTORY

In some ways this investigation is a study of nationalism. Before the rise of the modern nation-state, education was traditionally in the hands of the Church which emphasized universal values. The control of education by the State has brought with it a conscious effort at inculcating a specific view of the past and of reinforcing national consciousness. For this reason a brief look at the emergence of modern nations and the close link between national consciousness and historical consciousness is necessary. Nationalism is dependent upon a strong group identity and a particular national orientation.

Examples of such national and historical consciousness which have influenced South African education and the teaching of history in particular, are British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism. Aspects of the latter form of nationalism are discussed in some detail.

#### 1. THE NATION, NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Nations have been declared to be the result of a range of human physical and mental reaction and of every environmental difference, as well as the handiwork of God or "Destiny". Thus only broad hypotheses can be formulated concerning the rise of nations: nations and nationalism have had a multitude of origins. Shafer<sup>1</sup> lists the following as the most obvious illusions put forward to explain the origins of nations:

- (1) The supernatural - a nation is created by God, nature or, mystical forces;
- (2) Physical environment - a nation is determined by its soil, climate, and natural boundaries;

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1 B.C. Shafer, Nationalism. Myth and Reality, pp.17-18.



- (3) The physical and spiritual nature of man - a nation is rooted in race, tribe, blood, instinct;
- (4) Economic institutions and needs - a nation is the product of the bourgeoisie and their demand for markets and status;
- (5) Political security and prestige - a nation is the result of the struggle for existence and the desire for power;
- (6) Language - a nation is unified within and separated from other nations by language;
- (7) Social need - a nation is the outcome of the human need for social life;
- (8) History - nations are the products of their respective common pasts.

This study will endeavour to produce evidence to illustrate that a combination of all or many of these illusions has been instrumental in the growth of the various nations in South Africa, e.g. the Afrikaner nation, and the "White" nation, the embryo South African nation of tomorrow. The role of some of these factors, the supernatural and language in particular, will feature in the pages to follow. The function of history in the growth of nationalism, that is the nation as the product of its common past, is the main focus of this chapter.

Jeismann<sup>2</sup> differentiates between four differently accentuated concepts of nation:

- (1) The "Volksnation" - an ethnic unity, older than political unity. The national state is its political form.
- (2) The "Kulturnation" - cultural identity in a common language, literature, art, values and behaviour binds this nation together, transcending national or state boundaries.
- (3) The "Staatsbürgernation" - the constitution guaranteeing political rights and opportunities to all its citizens.
- (4) The "Klassennation" - the incarnation of the worker class with the Party in the vanguard.

This differentiation is useful for the student of South African history - one recognizes a potential South African nation embracing all its citizens in a future "Staatsbürgernation",

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2 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichte als Horizont der Gegenwart, p.125.

and the rise of the "Klassennation" in radical circles in recent times. These and other forms of nationhood are clearly reflected in the syllabuses and textbooks analysed, and are discussed further in Chapter 8.

A nation is not the physical fact of one blood, but the mental fact of one tradition. A nation remains in essence a fund of common thoughts and sentiments acquired by historic effort and backed by a common will.<sup>3</sup> Men do not become nationalists because of biology, they rather acquire national consciousness because the political, economic and social conditions and thought of their time make them so.<sup>4</sup> Kohn concurs that nationalities are the products of the living forces of history and are, therefore, fluctuating, never rigid.<sup>5</sup>

National history creates the nation as a conscious historical entity. Without the nation, there can be no national history: without national history there can be no nation. A nation is "more than anything else a venture in history".<sup>6</sup> Through national history, the nation gains orientation for thinking, judging and acting, a space and time embracing a feeling of belonging. According to Jeismann modern national history took over in secularised form the idea of the "Glaubensnation" with its origins in the Old Testament. The identification claim of a nation, as reflected in national history, can become so potent that it overshadows all other identification circles (church, class, etc.).<sup>7</sup> An individual can become dissolved in a nation. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the function of national history as an object of instruction has been to create, through national consciousness, a sense of belonging in all those

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3 E. Barker, National Character and the Factors in its Foundation, p.12.

4 B.C. Schafer, Nationalism. Myth and Reality, p.97.

5 H. Kohn, Nationalism. Its Meaning and History, p.9.

6 G. Milburn (Ed.), Teaching History in Canada, p.98.

7 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichte als Horizont der Gegenwart, pp.214-215.

deemed to belong or to be potential members.

In Germany before World War I this sense of belonging would supersede local or confessional loyalties. A nation would be synonymous with one political body. National history gives a nation a common political consciousness (national history - nation - nation state); it has always served the avowed aim of creating a nation as a conscious historical identity.<sup>8</sup> This was to be achieved not only through instruction: the entire modern state education system with its curriculum, formal, effective and "hidden" can be seen as a contribution to the subject of historical consciousness is first the individual; then a group of people whose historical consciousness is relatively homogeneous and which through socialization, propaganda, and education form personal attitudes of the individual. This process is extraordinarily complex and multi-faceted.<sup>9</sup> Kohn calls national consciousness a "fundamental condition", a common stock of memories of the past and hopes for the future, which permeates a whole people and determines their mind and aspirations. Their historical consciousness projects unity into the events of time and knits these closely together into a national history.<sup>10</sup>

Historical consciousness develops through tradition, the handing down of memories in tales, song, traditions, customs and institutions. Intentional historical teaching and the methodical, critical study of history are recent developments.<sup>11</sup> This will be dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter. Historical consciousness is not a constant, but is dependent on time, place, social environment and political will or decisions. There is, therefore, no single, unchanging historical consciousness.

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8 K.E. Jeismann, Nationalgeschichte als Lernziel, p.132.

9 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichte als Horizont der Gegenwart, pp.12-13.

10 H. Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism, pp.36-37.

11 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichte als Horizont der Gegenwart, p.12; see also, W. Kamla, Probleme einer nationalen Selbstbesinnung, pp.9-10.

It can, for example, be accentuated or sharpened during times of national crisis.<sup>12</sup> An example would be the annexation of the Transvaal and the resultant Transvaal War of Independence which served to stimulate Transvaal (and Afrikaner) historical consciousness.

Using the example of Germany, Salewski<sup>13</sup> shows how, before 1914, German historical and national consciousness did not need to be defined or debated - one simply possessed it. The twentieth century has brought uncertainty and a fresh search for German identity. Salewski poses a new set of questions on the nature of German self-comprehension:

- 1) How did the people of the time see their own era as expressed in song, poetry, etc? What pleased them, made them proud?
- 2) How did they perceive their own times in relation to the past?
- 3) What did they hope for or fear in the future?

These very pertinent questions, relating to, amongst others, the orientation function of history, will be posed when various eras in South African history are examined. This self-understanding is clearly reflected in the syllabuses and textbooks to be reviewed.

More than mere knowledge of, or pure interest in, history, historical consciousness embraces the interconnectedness of a nation or group's understanding of itself, of its past and present, and its views of the future. An integral part of a nation's self-understanding is its self-image and the image it has of others. Differing or conflicting forms of historical consciousness within one society or group are both the cause and result of strong political tensions.<sup>14</sup> South Africa has been, is today, and is likely to be for a long time to come, a vivid

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<sup>12</sup> O. Hauser, Geschichte und Geschichtsbewusstsein, pp.7-8.

<sup>13</sup> M. Salewski, Nationalbewusstsein, in O. Hauser, (Ed.), Geschichte und Geschichtsbewusstsein, pp.19-46.

<sup>14</sup> K.E. Jeismann, Geschichtsbewusstsein, in K. Bergmann et al., Geschichtsdidaktik: Theorie für die Praxis, p.41.

example of this phenomenon, as this study will illustrate. (See Chapter 8).

## 2. THE NATURE OF NATIONALISM

A short scholarly definition of a sentence or two, a precise definition which includes everything nationalism contains and excludes all that is irrelevant, is difficult, if not impossible. The nationalism of each people has expressed itself differently and altered with time. Consequently the meaning of the word has varied with each language, each nationalism, and with each period. Any use of the word "nationalism" to describe historical happenings before the eighteenth century is probably anachronistic.<sup>15</sup>

Patriotism identifiable with devotion to a nation spread widely and became popular in Western Europe only toward the end of the eighteenth century. Patriotism is best understood in relation to the developments that produced the French Revolution of 1789, which asserted the principle of national self-determination as the basis of the new political order in Europe.<sup>16</sup> Not until the first half of the nineteenth century did this patriotism become for most men so intense and active a devotion to the national group and to the nation-state that it can rightly be called nationalism in the fullest sense of the word.<sup>17</sup> Kamenka<sup>18</sup> concurs that nationalism is to be distinguished from "mere patriotism or national consciousness", as does Plamenatz,<sup>19</sup> who views nationalism as primarily a cultural phenomenon, different

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- 15 B.C. Schafer, Nationalism. Myth and Reality, p.3.  
16 E. Kamenka (Ed.), Nationalism. The Nature and Evolution of an Idea, p.7.  
17 B.C.Shafer, Nationalism, Myth and Reality, pp.4-5; see also A.D. Smith, Theories of Nationalism, for a particularly lucid discussion of the subject of nationalism.  
18 E. Kamenka, (Ed.), Nationalism. The Nature and Evolution of an Idea, p.7.  
19 J. Plamenatz, Two Types of Nationalism, in E. Kamenka, Nationalism, pp. 23-27.

from both patriotism and national consciousness.

Minogue<sup>20</sup> identifies three stages in the development of nationalism: the first may be loosely labelled "stirrings". This is the period in which a nation becomes aware of itself as a nation, a time of casting around for a cultural identity; the drive of nationalist theory is to discover a past which will support the aspirations of the present. This is the central theme of this investigation. In other words, this is the stage of legend-making. When applied to South Africa one recognizes the first stage of Afrikaner nationalism in the period between 1877 and 1895. The second stage is the centrepiece of nationalism; it is the time of the struggle for independence. The struggle may or may not have an obvious moment, but it usually has a fixed terminus. In the case of Afrikaner Nationalism, 1961, or perhaps 1948, comes to mind as a terminus. The actual content of the struggle varies enormously, but the vital point is that it should provide a legend of heroes backed up by the resilience of national virtues: once more, the past in service of the present. It would seem that African nationalism in the South African context is at present in this stage of struggle, with its hall of fame being filled with its own martyrs and heroes. The majority of the textbooks analysed reflect this "heroic" epoch of Afrikaner history. The third stage of the process is consolidation, during which nationalism reaches a maturity following the attainment of independence. After the establishment of the Republic in 1961, Afrikaner nationalism entered this phase.

According to Shafer,<sup>21</sup> present-day nationalism is a compound of a number of factors, of which the following are the most important:

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20 K.R. Minogue, Nationalism, pasim.  
21 B.C. Shafer, Nationalism, pp.5-6.

- 1) the love of a common land, race, language, and culture;
- 2) the desire for the political independence, security and prestige of the nation;
- 3) a mystical devotion to a vague, sometimes even supernatural social organism (nation or volk);
- 4) the dogma that the individual lives exclusively for the nation, with the corollary that the nation is an end in itself;
- 5) the doctrine that the nation is, or should be, dominant through aggression if necessary.

Modern nationalism is not a neat fixed concept, but a varying combination of beliefs and conditions. It may in part be founded on myth, but then myths have a way of perpetuating themselves and becoming not true but "real", as this study will show. Hans Kohn<sup>22</sup> speaks of the "idea" of nationalism, as a "state of mind", an "act of consciousness". Plamenatz<sup>23</sup> describes nationalism as the desire to preserve or enhance a people's national or cultural identity when the identity is threatened, or the desire to transform or even create this where it is felt to be inadequate or lacking; it is a reaction of peoples who feel culturally (and one could add politically) at a disadvantage. It is sometimes said that nationalism in history teaching is most evident in countries where nationalism itself is something new, and least evident in older countries where national status has long been secure.<sup>24</sup> Hertz<sup>25</sup> identifies four elements in national aspirations:

- 1) the striving for national unity comprising political, economic, social, religious and cultural unity;
- 2) the striving for separateness, distinctiveness, usually in the value attributed to a separate national language;
- 3) the striving for national freedom, which comprises independence from foreign domination or interference, and internal freedom from forces regarded as unnatural or derogatory to the nation;
- 4) the striving for prestige, dignity and influence, and sometimes domination.

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22 H. Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism, Introduction.

23 J. Plamenatz, Two Types of Nationalism, in E. Kamenka, Nationalism, pp.23-27.

24 E.H. Dance, History the Betrayer, p.76.

25 F. Hertz, Nationality in History and Politics, passim.

Again one recognizes these elements in the various brands of South African nationalism. Examples to illustrate these points are given throughout this study.

Shafer<sup>26</sup> expands on this, advancing the following ten characteristics of nationalism:

- 1) a certain defined unit of territory whether possessed or coveted;
- 2) some common cultural characteristics such as language, customs, manners and literature;
- 3) some common dominant social and economic institutions;
- 4) a common independent or sovereign government, or the desire for one. The principle that each nationality should be separate and independent is involved here;
- 5) a belief in a common history (possibly fictional) and in a common origin (often mistakenly conceived to be racial);
- 6) an esteem for fellow nationals or countrymen. This has to do with the very strong, positive self-image so characteristic of people who have imbibed nationalism;
- 7) a devotion to the entity called the nation which embodies a common territory, culture, social and economic institutions, government and fellow nationals;
- 8) a common pride in the achievement of this nation and a common sorrow in its tragedies, particularly its defeats;
- 9) a disregard for, or hostility to, other groups, especially if these prevent or seem to threaten the separate national existence. Here the antithesis of the positive self-image comes into play, that is the negative Feindbild or hostile image of other, alien groups;
- 10) a hope that the nation will have a great and glorious future and achieve some form of supremacy.

The presence of these beliefs in the South African nationalisms to be studied, Afrikaner nationalism in particular, as well as the role of history teaching in strengthening such beliefs, particularly the reinforcement of the favourable self-image and negative Feindbilder, will become evident in the chapters to follow.

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26 B.C. Shafer, Nationalism, pp.7-8.



Shafer's<sup>27</sup> description of nationalism is an adequate summary for the purposes of this study: nationalism is that sentiment unifying a group of people who have a real or imagined common historical experience and a common aspiration to live together as a separate group in the future. This unifying sentiment expresses itself in loyalty to a nation-state, in love for a native land, in pride of common culture and economic and social institutions, in preference for fellow nationals, and in zeal, not only for group security, but for glory and expansion. People become Frenchmen or Italians (a) because of the influence and power of their political state and its laws; (b) because of their immersion in the culture into which they were born and within which they mature; (c) because of the training and education they receive from parents and schools in the traditions and values of their group; and (d) because their interests and goals, reflecting, or flowing out of, their culture. These seem to be subsumed in those of the nation-state. Shafer<sup>28</sup> provides a perceptive view of modern man's seeming need for nationalism:

"Though no direct historical relationship between totemism and nationalism can be traced, nevertheless the last was the complex system through which modern men thought they could obtain what they wanted, a sense of belonging, a feeling of prestige, a way of avoiding dangers and warding off enemies".

It gave them in summary, protection, social significance and hope for the future.

### 3. NATIONAL CALLING AND DESTINY, AND MESSIANISM

From early times, nations have conceived of themselves as superior, and endowed with a mission to dominate others or to lead the rest of the world into paths of light<sup>29</sup>: the Jews, the Greeks, the Chinese, the Russians, the British, are but a few better-known examples.

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27 B.C. Shafer, Nationalism, pp.10 - 13.

28 Ibid., p.181.

29 E.M. Burns, The American Idea of Mission, p.3.

Kohn<sup>30</sup> has identified three essential traits of modern nationalism that originated with the Hebrews: the idea of the chosen people, the emphasis on a common stock of memories of the past and of hopes for the future, and national messianism. At the beginning of Hebrew history stands the covenant concluded between God and His people. The Hebrews envisaged the whole of history as a unified process with a special, distinctive role for themselves at its centre. The chosen people had been singled out by God through His deeds in history.

The Jews developed two aspects of the Messianic Doctrine which were to influence later national movements deeply: one was the expression of a narrow group mind aimed at a fundamental betterment of the national situation, and the other reflected a more distant universalism. National political hopes became distilled into the belief that their fulfilment was an action of divine justice. The individual nation, the chosen vehicle of God's designs, saw in its political triumph the march of God in history. Messianism had a particularly strong influence on nationalism where the nation as a corporate Messiah replaces the personal Messiah, to bring about a new order. Such nationality transcends the limits of a political or social concept; it becomes a holy body sanctified by God, and nationalism becomes a religious duty.<sup>31</sup> Van Jaarsveld terms this the secularisation of the New Testament idea of the Christian calling.<sup>32</sup> Similarly Hans Glöckel says of Communism that it is secularised theology.<sup>33</sup> When men have not been able to find a material explanation of human institutions, they have fallen back upon natural law or God and miracles, or some vague mystical force like destiny, or fate. Schafer notes that "These things, being inexplicable, seem to explain everything".<sup>34</sup> That God consciously created their

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30 H. Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism, pp.11-12.

31 Ibid., pp. 43-44.

32 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, p.230.

33 H. Glöckel, Geschichtsunterricht, p.50.

34 B.C. Shafer, Nationalism. Its Meaning and History, p.18.

particular nation has been, and is, a belief of many patriots. This proposition is stated in different ways at different times by different men. Nehru called it "'the curious illusion of all peoples and all nations that in some way they are a chosen race'". Jan Hus in the fifteenth century believed that divine will commanded that the Bohemians should be first in Bohemia. Herder and Fichte maintained that God had created the nations as part of His divine plan. Down the centuries, John Quincy Adams, Mazzini and many others have invoked divine origins for their nations.<sup>35</sup>

God, in creating the different peoples and in guiding their destinies, really formed the nation as both means and end for man. Around 1848, according to Shafer,<sup>36</sup> every one of the great European groups was being told by its intellectuals that it had the right to consider itself chosen. Studies of modern European nationalism seem to indicate that national awakenings result from external pressure, danger, or attacks on that nation's self-esteem ("selfgevoel").<sup>37</sup> A nation justifies its existence and aspirations and attempts to prove its worth by claiming a special task, aim, calling or destiny, which after a catastrophe easily manifests itself as "fate" in which past, present and future become intertwined. Not only oppressed or threatened nationalities take refuge in the hope of a messianic mission; at other times this mission can become a symbol of national pride and often dangerous call to greatness and overreaching power.<sup>38</sup>

The idea of a calling leads to a historical legend and national ideology. It lends shape and a feeling of independence, security and worth to a nation. Each nation possesses a destination ideology ("bestemmingsideologie") which is inseparable from its national history legend ("geskiedenislegende").<sup>39</sup> One or two

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35 E.H. Dance, History the Betrayer, p.44.  
36 B.C. Shafer, Nationalism. Its Meaning and History, pp.19-20.  
37 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, p.232.  
38 H. Kohn, Nationalism. Its Meaning and History, p.12.  
39 F.A.van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, p.232.

examples will illustrate this: Snyder<sup>40</sup> quotes the American politician and publisher, J.L. O'Sullivan, who in 1839 wrote:

"We may confidently assume that our country is destined to be the great nation of futurity ... Providence is with us ... The Nation of many nations is destined to manifest to mankind the excellence of divine principles. We must onward to the fulfilment of our mission ... this is our destiny ... to establish on earth the moral dignity and salvation of man ... For this blessed mission ... America has been chosen."

In his study of the American idea of mission, Burns<sup>41</sup> found that no truth was more patent in American history than the "fact" that the American nation was an Old Testament people.

In an essay entitled "The Anglo-Saxon Destiny" (1885), the preacher Josiah Strong,<sup>42</sup> expounded the idea of the mission of the Anglo-Saxon race to bear the ideals of civil liberty and spiritual Christianity to peoples in remote areas of the world. They were the great missionary race, divinely commissioned:

"It seems to me that God with infinite wisdom and skill is training the Anglo-Saxon race ... to dispossess many weaker races, assimilate others ... until it has Anglo-Saxonized mankind".

In South Africa this manifested itself in Milnerism and other efforts at anglicization. A.G. Mazour,<sup>43</sup> in his "The Rise of Russian Nationalism 1825-1855", writes of Russia's "great mission", while the novelist Nikolai Gogol<sup>44</sup> compared Russia with a sleigh drawn by horses, rushing over the snow towards Russia's goal of world leadership, flying forward on a divine mission.

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40 Quoted in L.L. Snyder (Ed.), The Dynamics of Nationalism, pp.262-263.

41 E.M. Burns, The American Idea of Mission, p.11.

42 Ibid., p.274.

43 See L.L. Snyder, (Ed.), The Dynamics of Nationalism, p.263.

44 Ibid., pp.207-208.

A study of modern nationalism reveals that every European nation that has experienced a "national awakening" has seen itself as "chosen" and has become conscious of a special "mission".<sup>45</sup> The idea of a national calling has played a significant role in British imperialism as it has in South Africa in Afrikaner and African nationalism. The Afrikaners' sense of mission is clearly reflected in the textbooks reviewed in Part II of this study.

Closely related to the idea of a divine mission is the role of what Mosse<sup>46</sup> terms "political liturgy" in nationalism. Historical consciousness is aroused by myths expressed through symbols, public festivals and national monuments. Patriotic festivals in nineteenth century Germany, for instance, borrowed the liturgical rhythm of Protestantism and fused this with ancient Germanic pagan elements. The real cohesion of the crowd was obtained through the space in which the festival took place. Where this was a "sacred place", it became "cult space" where the national past came alive. There are many examples of such sacred national spaces or shrines - the Hermannsdenkmal in the Teutoburgerwald, the tomb of Napoleon, and Blood River and the Voortrekker Monuments in South Africa.

Weymar<sup>47</sup> warns that the belief in a calling or mission has two sides. It can be a humble gaze upward, or an arrogant gaze downward; it can serve religion and humanity, inspire men to great cultural achievement; but it can also degenerate into fanaticism, self-indulgence and inhumanity. Van Jaarsveld<sup>48</sup>, too, warns of the dangers of nationalistic self-infatuation, which he calls narcissism.

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45 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, p.229

46 G.L. Mosse, Mass Politics and the Political Liturgy of Nationalism, in E. Kamenka, (Ed.), Nationalism, pp.40-43.

47 E. Weymar, Das Selbstverständnis der Deutschen : Ein Bericht über den Geist des Geschichtsunterrichts der höheren Schulen im 19. Jahrhundert, Introduction.

48 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Omstrede Verlede, p. 52.

Afrikaner nationalism has been central to South African politics since early in this century. Afrikaners have been ruling South Africa since 1910, sometimes in partnership with English-speakers, and sometimes alone. While Black nationalism has been increasingly eclipsing Afrikaner nationalism as the dominant political force since the 1960's, the former brand has yet to be reflected in official syllabuses and textbooks, even in Black schools. At the time of writing, the Afrikaner's view of history is still the "authorised" view as mirrored in the school history syllabuses and approved textbooks of all education departments in the country (see Chapter 8). For this reason a closer look at the dynamo of Afrikaner nationalism would be useful.

#### 4. THE NATURE OF AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

##### 4.1. The Afrikaners' Historical Perspective

According to van Jaarsveld, the reading of Afrikaans history books will reveal an image of the past which could be described as typically Afrikaans, an image which is different, not only because of the language used but also the themes chosen. The study of a national historiography will reveal the image ("beeld") which a nation has of itself, and the unique nationalism which it has developed. This image of the past existed before the writing of Afrikaans histories, i.e. history books are secondary to the image of the past already formed. This Afrikaans view of history underlies and colours all individual historical works, giving Afrikaans historiography its distinctive character. The Afrikaners' historical consciousness rests on national-political values and Biblical foundations.<sup>49</sup>

The Great Trek and the Anglo-Boer War formed the two major foci or poles of the Afrikaners' view of the past. This was the

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49 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, pp. 55-69.

Afrikaners' heroic age, dynamic and romantic. It was in this period that the great heroic deeds were enacted. Running through the entire period was the central fact of the British authorities' policy towards the Afrikaners and their resistance to it. The picture that emerges is one of British oppression, persecution and injustice. Against this is to be seen the Afrikaners' struggle for freedom, a saga of suffering and martyrdom. This inevitably led to a view of the past which was fundamentally good-bad: the wicked and the innocent, the persecutors and the persecuted, injustice versus justice, imperialism versus patriotis.<sup>50</sup>

Van Jaarsveld identifies three dimensions of the historical consciousness of the Afrikaners from the 1870's. The first is the reality of the British "threat", leading their thoughts to the second, i.e. the immediate experienced past, remembered by the present generation, stirring in its turn memories of the more distant past, which although not experienced by the living, still pervade the present. It is in this sphere that legends are formed and national myths created. Slagters Nek is an example: an event of little consequence at the time and virtually forgotten by the time of the Great Trek. Rediscovered only around 1868, it became the symbol of British tyranny. The further the event from its origins, the greater became the indignation and the more intense became the experiencing or reliving ("belewenis") and exploitation ("gebruikmaking") thereof.<sup>51</sup>

The Afrikaners' view of the past was a byproduct of Afrikaner nationalism. The idealisation, glorification and apotheosis of

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50 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, pp.68-69.  
51 Ibid., pp.66-67,; see also J.C. Motl, et al., Tussengroepverhoudinge soos weerspieël in die Suid-Afrikaanse Historiografie, pp.17-18.

the Voortrekkers began in earnest from 1881. The heavier the pressures of the current times became, the more the Voortrekkers and their virtues were praised: courage, perseverance, and love of freedom. Every Voortrekker became a hero. Inspiration was sought in the past to encourage the nation in its hour of need. From the letters, leader articles and reports in newspapers, such as De Zuid-Afrikaan, De Express and Di Patriot, it is clear that history had a function in the youth of Afrikaner nationalism as early as the nineteenth century.<sup>52</sup>

The first great pole in Afrikaner historical thinking was the Great Trek, the beginning of the Afrikaner heroic age. The second pole was the Transvaal War of Independence, which was later replaced by the Anglo-Boer War. The collective memory of the Great Trek and the concentration camps fed the fire of nationalism after 1902. This view of the past was utilised in the service of nationalism and, conversely, the upcoming nationalism influenced the view of the past. After the defeat and loss of independence in 1902, the Afrikaner nation's major reality was its history in that this could offer an explanation for its present predicament. It could provide the cohesive power and ideals necessary for survival as a cultural and political identity. The shared memory of a heroic yet painful past could provide new impetus. The enemy of the past was often seen as the enemy of today, and past grudges were often held against the descendents of the long deceased real "culprits". An uprooted nation, having lost its independence, was in search of historical and national anchorages: the Great Trek and the Anglo-Boer War filled this need.<sup>53</sup>

The impulse of the past could inspire the nation, serving as a constant reminder of the need to continue the struggle. Were past sufferings to be in vain? The Afrikaners' history provided

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52 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, pp. 64, 70, 74.

53 Ibid., pp.73,74,86.



not only the cement to bind the nation, but also an arsenal of weapons with which to continue the political struggle: "The image of the past was in this way politicised and came to serve politics." It could hardly have been otherwise; between man and his past there is an existential connectedness ("samehang").<sup>54</sup>

As De Kiewiet points out, the massive and apparently indestructible shape of Great Britain and her Empire gave the nineteenth (and early twentieth) century Englishman an unshakeable feeling of superiority and rectitude. Some of them, commanding great political, military or economic power, were arrogant men who failed to recognize or respect the inner life of the Boers, thus giving deep and lasting offence. The "century of wrong" perceived by the Afrikaners was like a wound that would not heal, "an offending emptiness across which men cannot reach one another" (see Chapters 4 and 5). On the legacy of the Anglo-Boer War, De Kiewiet comments that the pain of war "left a hunger for a compensating victory, for a retroactive declaration of independence, for some symbolic act of rebellion, and defiance that would purge the memory of defeat and wrong." It became the seedbed of nationalist feeling and "racial passion".<sup>55</sup>

Van Jaarsveld postulates that from 1902 the Afrikaner entered the phase of romantic nationalism. Preller even attempted to fit the Trek into the framework of the Germanic *Völkerwanderung*.<sup>56</sup> Since then his view of the past has become oversimplified, missing universal aspects. It absolutised and made heroes of only certain ancestors from a limited period in the past. The military, and to a lesser extent political, dimension was overemphasized and it was introspective, often negative and apologetic. The Trek and the War were epic events providing heroes in the political and military fields.<sup>57</sup> This view is supported by De Kiewiet, and the

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54 Ibid., pp. 74-76.

55 C.W. De Kiewiet, *The Anatomy of South African Misery*, pp.10-16.

56 F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Lewende Verlede*, p.91.

57 F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Lewende Verlede*, pp. 78-82.

HSRC panel of historians: the Great Trek ushered in a period of conflict and bloodshed "so that every South African schoolboy is taught to place an altogether exaggerated emphasis upon war and conflict". There was (and still is) a "historical deafness and an anachronistic preoccupation" with certain special episodes in the South African past.<sup>58</sup> Van Jaarsveld and De Kiewiet's assertions are more than borne out by those Afrikaans history textbooks (and also most of the English ones) examined in Part II.

#### 4.2 The Afrikaners' Sense of Calling

From the very beginning the White settlers venerated their Bible. To them it was an object of reverence and awe. In the interior there were few educational facilities, but children learned to read and write and had to know their Bible intimately before being accepted as full church members. The Bible was the reading and study material of the early Afrikaners, and their special affection was for the Old Testament. Some believed that they too were the chosen race, fleeing before Pharaoh through the barren wilderness to the promised land and freedom.<sup>59</sup> Reverend Erasmus Smit wrote in his diary that Retief had been appointed to lead the Trekkers as "Moses". The Bible had a tremendous influence on the national character of the Afrikaner: the patriarchal figure in family life, youthful weddings, and large families with every child bearing a biblical name.<sup>60</sup> The Afrikaner does not

58 See C.W. De Kiewiet, The Anatomy of South African Misery, pp.21-28; also J.C. Moll et al., Tussengroepverhoudinge, pp.12-16; 74.

59 There is some debate on the extent to which such beliefs were actually held; see A. du Toit, Captive to the Nationalist Paradigm: F.A. van Jaarsveld and the historical evidence for the Afrikaner's ideas on his calling and mission, in S.A. Historical Journal 16 (1984) pp. 49-80; also No Chosen People: The Myth of the Calvinist Origins of Afrikaner Nationalism, in American Historical Review 88 (1983), pp. 120-152; Puritans of Africa: Afrikaner "Calvinism" and Kuyperian Neo-Calvinism in late 19th Century South Africa, in Comparative Studies in Society and History 27 (1985), pp. 209-240.

60 H.D.A. du Toit, The Formative Influence of the Bible on the Afrikaner, p.17.

believe that he is in Africa by mere chance, but he was "placed" in Southern Africa by a Higher Hand to fulfil two callings: firstly to evangelize and civilize the non-Whites in his midst, and secondly to become the leader in Africa through assistance to other African states.<sup>61</sup> The origins of this belief in, or consciousness of, a calling can be traced in the distant past of the Afrikaners' history.

As already mentioned, it is usually in times of crisis that one encounters an intensification of pronouncements on national "calling" or "mission". Three such major crises which threatened the existence, ideas, values and future of the Afrikaner can be identified: The Great Trek period, the two Wars of Independence, and the currently perceived external and internal threats. There are numerous references from the Trek period which touch on the Trekkers' idea of a mission; they are directed towards the future. A nation has still to be moulded, a free nation detached from British authority and safeguarded from the non-Whites. From the Trekkers' conception of their special calling, one infers the sense of responsibility of the Christian toward the heathen, of a higher towards a lower form of civilization. The Trekkers thus saw themselves as the instruments in God's hand who would civilize the non-Whites; they were the bearers of the torch of civilisation in darkest Africa.

The second major crisis was the struggle against British imperialism culminating in three climactic events: the Annexation, and War of 1880-81, the Jameson Raid, and the War of 1899-1902. The underlying purpose of the struggles was the retention of the fruits of the Great Trek and the independence of the Republics. The Trek was seen in retrospect as a mission and it had been predetermined. S.J. du Toit could say that God had "placed" the Afrikaners in Africa and given them the Afrikaans language. Dr D.F. Malan's view was that the Afrikaner was not

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<sup>61</sup> D.J. Kotze, Nasionalisme. 'n Vergelykende Studie. Deel 1, p.49.

the work of man, but a creation of God. The Afrikaners had a divine right to be Afrikaners.<sup>62</sup>

In 1938, with the centenary of the Great Trek, J.J. Pienaar<sup>63</sup> could state that the commemoration was a "godly inspiration". He quotes Theo Wassenaar's poem "By die Mylpaal"<sup>64</sup> specially written for the centenary:

"God has determined that we should be a nation  
With an own language and soul and spirit ...  
Hail, trekker wagons! Rejoice, Afrikanerdom!  
A holy message has come to you".

God would show where the "Pad van Suid-Afrika" would lead. The heroic deeds of the folk-heroes who lived in a more or less mythical age were worshipped at this time as never before.<sup>65</sup> According to O'Meara, the participants in the centenary, "by dressing themselves in Trekker garb, by appealing to the God of Piet Retief and Paul Kruger", were not so much harking back to the past, as using it to transform their present.<sup>66</sup>

Moodie believes that what he terms the Afrikaners' "civil religion" was not overtly accepted by the majority of Afrikaners until 1938, with the centenary of the Covenant, after which "civil religious enthusiasm seized Afrikanerdom". Ordinary Afrikaners were swept en masse into the mainstream of Christian-National "myth and ritual". The abstractions of civil belief became personified in tales of heroes and martyrs and in emotion-laden symbols. Constant repetition at ritual reunions associated with certain "holy" gathering places such as the Vrouemonument or Blood River reaffirmed the nation in its common

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62 Quoted in F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, pp.66-67.

63 Voortrekker-Eeufees, p.5.

64 Ibid., p.25: "God het bepaal ons moet 'n nasie wees,  
Met eie taal en siel en gees ...  
Heil trekker waens! Juig, Afrikanerdom!  
'n Heilige boodskap het tot jou gekom."

65 D.C.S. Oosthuisen, Analysis of Nationalism, pp.16-17.

66 D. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme. Class, Capital and Ideology in the Development of Afrikaner Nationalism, p.166.

sentiment. The civil ritual provided the civil faith with positive content, uniting Afrikaners in their sense of unique identity and destiny. It is estimated that fully one-tenth of Afrikanerdom gathered in 1938 for the festivities in Pretoria.<sup>67</sup> A fuller discussion of the importance of this event for history teaching is contained in Chapter 6.

In his inaugural speech at the Voortrekker Monument in 1949, Dr Malan drew a parallel between Peter's purported meeting with Christ on the Appian Way, and the Afrikaner's hour of truth at the Monument <sup>68</sup>:

"This is your Quo Vadis sanctuary, Afrikaner, now and through all the coming generations! ... Should you betray the Voortrekkers to whom you are paying tribute today, by your deeds, or crucify them, and your eye should fall on this monument where you and the Voortrekkers meet today in spirit, face to face ... Quo Vadis, whither are you going?"

The third major crisis was the post-war de-colonisation and resultant internal and external pressure on the Afrikaner nation. These wide-reaching changes in the world, particularly during the 1950's, led to the implementation of the policy or ideology of apartheid. This drew on traditional views on colour, equality, levels of civilisation, segregation and so on. It offered the the Afrikaner a "mission", that of dissolving, dividing and separating the main constituents of the population into separate areas in which each could develop according to its own character. Underlying the ideology are the traditional ideas of select

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67 D. Moodie, The Rise of Afrikanerdom. Power, Apartheid and the Afrikaner Civil Religion, pp.11-27.

68 S.W. Pienaar, and J.J.J. Scholtz, Glo in u Volk. Dr. Malan as Redenaar, pp.136-137:

"Dis u Quo Vadis-heiligdom, Afrikaner, nou en deur al die toekomstige geslagte heen! As u die Voortrekkers wat u vandag huldig met die daad verloën en ... kruisig en u oog val op hierdie monument waar u en die Voortrekkers vandag in die gees mekaar van aangesig tot aangesig ontmoet ... Afrikaner, Quo Vadis, waar gaan jy heen?"

destiny, calling and mission, all interwoven. According to van Jaarsveld<sup>69</sup>, it would be possible to compile a whole volume of select writings of pronouncements on the Afrikaners' idea of calling and mission as expressed in the ideology of apartheid. These beliefs and views are still held by some today. Addressing the celebrations of the Great Trek in December 1988, P.W. Botha spoke of the Afrikaners' calling ("roeping") in Africa.<sup>70</sup> In the Credo read at this gathering, there are several references to this theme, for instance the descendents of the Trekkers carried Christianity deep into Africa, now the Afrikaner people stood before God conscious of its responsibility.

Yet there was a new tone to the "official" or establishment view of the importance of 16 December during these celebrations. In its commentary of 16 December 1988, Beeld, South Africa's biggest Afrikaans daily, while recognizing the religious content of the day, nevertheless regretted the fact that the events 150 years ago had taken on a "mythical meaning" through which Blood River was understood to be the hour of birth of the Afrikaner nation, and the vow as a covenant between God and the Afrikaans people. Through this the accent had shifted from the universal God to a God specifically for the Afrikaners and for Blood River. The article also mentioned a new calling for the Afrikaner - a calling to open the way to the other nations with whom he shares the country.<sup>71</sup> These changed and changing views, already evident many years previously, feature in Chapter 8. It should be remembered that a nation is never politically homogeneous. Afrikanerdom has never been a political monolith, as some would have it.

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69 F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History, pp.22-25.

70 Rapport, 18 December 1988.

71 Beeld, 16 December 1988.

#### 4.3. Cultural Uniqueness and Apartheid

In addition to physical detachment from the mother country, isolation in the interior and social and economic factors, influences such as the Calvinist heritage and the Old Testament went into the moulding of the Afrikaner. From the beginning of the settlement at the Cape, "Christian" and "heathen" were distinguished from one other. During the eighteenth century there was an increasing tendency for the use of these terms synonymously with "White" and "Coloured". "Civilized" and "uncivilized" thus became terms associated with Whites and "Non-Whites" respectively. The Coloured races were held to be hewers of wood and drawers of water, i.e. the children of Ham, cursed by God forever. This attitude was also prevalent in North America, and other territories settled by Whites.<sup>72</sup>

Another assumption was the Afrikaners' rejection of the admixture of blood and equalisation between the races. As the isolation of the Dutch-speaking colonists in the remote interior increased, so did the literal application to themselves of the contents of the Old Testament. The non-Whites were identified not only with the descendents of Ham, but also with the Canaanites of the Promised Land. On these grounds, equality between White and non-White was inconceivable. The way of life of the Boers was similar to that of the Israelites. For the Afrikaners the parallel with the children of the Lord grew into a form of mysticism.<sup>73</sup>

Behind the ideology of apartheid are the traditional concepts of "calling", ("geroepenheid") and "mission" ("bestemming"). In this ideology the two are intertwined. Just as the Israelites were commanded to remain pure and aloof, so the Afrikaners were called upon to separate White from Black so that Whites could be

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72 F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History, pp.5-6; see also G.M. Frederickson, A Comparative Study in American and South African History, Ch VI.  
73 Ibid., pp.6-7, 10.

permanently in a position to fulfil their calling. Van Jaarsveld<sup>74</sup> points out that pronouncements in this regard by Afrikaner politicians, theologians and commentators in the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's differ little in content and meaning from those of the Trek period and immediately thereafter. Both are self-justifying and defensive of policies and deeds.

According to O'Meara,<sup>75</sup> most Afrikaner intellectuals in the 1930's sought to paper over the social differentiation and political polarisation in their nation by appealing to a mythical and mystified Boer unity in the rural republican past, and by validating these appeals in terms of the symbols, myths and ideologies of that mystified past, a bygone age. Once again, the past was recalled to serve the present. Potchefstroom academics who dominated the Broederbond in the late 1920's and 1930's elaborated an explicit Calvinist Weltanschauung rooted in the Kuyperian doctrine of sovereignty in one's own circle. Culture was a divine product which, together with race, history, fatherland and politics, distinguished the various nations from one another. As a divinely created entity each nation was a separate social sphere with a God-willed structure and calling. As products of Divine Will, the protection and promotion of each culture's unique, exclusive values was thus a divinely ordained duty. These beliefs are clearly evident in Afrikaans textbooks especially since 1948 (see Chapters 6 and 7).

#### 4.4. Christian National Education and History Teaching

That the philosophy of Christian National Education has influenced the South African education system, particularly since 1948, is undisputed, although there is considerable disagreement as to the extent of the influence. The 1948 policy statement by the "Instituut vir Christelik-Nasionale Onderwys" is important

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74 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, pp.251-252.

75 D. O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme, pp.54-71.



in this context and is, therefore, quoted at length<sup>76</sup> :

"We believe that history must be taught in the light of the Divine Revelation and must be seen as the fulfilment of God's plan for the world and for mankind ...

"In full preservation of the essential unity of history we believe that God, in execution of the great task He has entrusted to mankind, has willed separate nations and peoples, and has given to each nation and people its special calling ('roeping') and task and gifts, so that each nation and people in the fulfilment of its calling and task is a builder of culture ... We believe that youth can faithfully take over the task and mission of the older generation ... only if they, in the teaching of history, obtain a true vision of the origin of the nation and of the cultural heritage ... We believe that next to the mother tongue, the national history of the nation ('nasie') is the great means of cultivating love of one's own ('liefde vir die eie').

"We believe that our ideal is and remains the Christian National school, but we understand that our present task for the time being lies in the direct permeation of the current public school through our Christian National task and direction."

In 1941 Greyling<sup>77</sup> was advocating a "healthy nationalism in education," which would manifest itself in love for and appreciation of a special fatherland and history, a nationalism which knows no greater history than its own. The Afrikaner "volkskind" was to be inspired with a love of his nation's common history. In his 1944 evaluation of South African textbooks, Raubenheimer<sup>78</sup> comments on Lindeque's book as follows: "Here we find such a degree of national inspiration that every Afrikaans child's heart will be made to beat faster and his blood to pound with proper national pride." He also finds the "national basis" of Gie's books inspiring. Walker's, Moderne Geskiedenis vir Afrikaners, on the other hand could not be regarded as the equal of Gie and Lindeque: "It does not have the required Afrikaans national basis." Books by both Gie and Lindeque are examined

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76 Instituut vir Christelik-Onderwys, Christelik-Nasionale Onderwysbeleid.

77 E. Greyling, Christelike en Nasionale Onderwys. Deel 1. Die Tweede Reeks, No. VIII, pp.19, 35.

78 A.I. Raubenheimer, Die Geskiedenis-Handboek op Skool met Besondere Verwysing na Suid-Afrika, pp. 46, 53, 56.

later.

The advocates of Christian National Education believe that national history ("vaderlandse geskiedenis") is one of the subjects which most effectively promotes national understanding ("die nasionale begrip"). Through history, respect and love for the national cultural heritage is developed, the feeling of togetherness of a nation is strengthened, and the nation inspired by past deeds to great deeds in the future.<sup>79</sup> J.J. van Tonder also regards history, religious instruction and the mother-tongue as the three pillars upon which the "volksgebou" is built. History allows the youth to take stock of the origins, existence and survival of the nation. It encourages love of fatherland and a sense of calling ("roepingsbewustheid").<sup>80</sup> The influence of the C.N.E. philosophy on the teaching of history in South African schools is dealt with in subsequent chapters.

## 5. SUMMARY

There is general agreement that historical and national consciousness go hand in hand, the one strengthening and complementing the other. National consciousness, especially in the form of nationalism, is a relatively modern phenomenon, having its origins in the rise of the European nation-states.

Nationalisms, although each may be unique, have certain characteristics in common and appear to develop in three distinct stages. National consciousness provides a nation, or potential nation, with an identity rooted in a real or imagined common historical experience, with cohesion, and with shared goals and aspirations. The latter may manifest themselves in the form of national calling, even messianism. Afrikaner nationalism, and British nationalism (as imperialism), both display many of the

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79 E. Greyling, *Christelike en Nasionale Onderwys*, Deel 1, p.145.  
80 J.J. Van Tonder, *Geskiedenis staan by die wegwaaiende*, p.4.



general characteristics of nationalism. Because of the central role of Afrikaner nationalism in South African history since the 1880's, some of its most prominent features have been discussed briefly. In the chapters to follow, the interplay between historical and national consciousness, and the phenomenon of nationalism, and in particular the role of "national" history in the service of the present, form the central theme. We turn now to the functions of history and history teaching in these processes.

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM

#### 1. THE DEBATE ON WHAT SHOULD BE TAUGHT AND HOW

History is undoubtedly the most important subject in which the values of a society and its national consciousness are verbalised and repeated. The state curriculum seeks to generate a normative consensus amongst the future citizens of the country. Acquiring knowledge of the past is one of man's most rational attempts to understand the forces surrounding him, and to gain insight into the meaning of his existence and his place in the world. What is taught and achieved in history classes has for decades been of special interest to students of social and political forces. The state, the church, parties and interest groups make no secret of the fact that they are not neutral towards the images, views and judgement of the past which are inculcated in their youth.

From vast possible resources societies choose that knowledge which serves and furthers the needs, utilitarian or otherwise, of society. One of the questions posed in this investigation is to what extent "official" knowledge represents the ideological configuration of the dominant interests in society. Those who control education will in some way utilize it to further their own value systems. Control of education enables the dominant group to achieve several aims: to define what counts as education through the curriculum, to define methodology through accepted methods of pedagogy and, through the examination system, to decide what is most significant, in order to reward those who have grasped the essentials. The state defines the curriculum, approves texts, oversees examinations through its own agents and grants school-leaving certificates.

There are also vested interests within the teaching profession which may either accelerate or prevent change, and this according to criteria which are not necessarily educational. Those who

compile syllabuses want to pass on their own value systems to the next generation, and they will choose knowledge they consider valuable. A study of the history syllabuses will, therefore, tell us a great deal about a society.

The history of history teaching illustrates the massive degree to which the state has attempted to influence or steer the objectives and nature of history as taught at school.<sup>1</sup> History teaching, i.e. the institutionalized state-supervised part of the process, as a rule follows the current, sanctioned spectrum of historical consciousness. The breadth of the spectrum depends on the nature of the state's constitution.<sup>2</sup>

Educational policy-making, especially in plural societies, is essentially a political activity. Davies's<sup>3</sup> premise that a potential for tension exists within the educational systems of a plural society, due to the different interests and expectations of the groupings, is correct, as this investigation bears out. Since educational policy is designed to secure a particular type of socialization of the young, political involvement in education especially, but not only, in plural societies seeks to protect and enhance group interests through education. When one group aspires to dominate, claims to dominate, or actually does dominate, the politics of a heterogeneous society, the strain on the educational system may well be acute, since education is seen as an instrument of domination. In multi-ethnic South Africa education has historically been a central battle-ground of politics.

After 1789 the objective of education became increasingly to

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1 J. Rohlfes, Umriss einer Didaktik der Geschichte, p.101.  
2 See B.C. Shafer, Nationalism. Myth and Reality, pp.25-27; and R.B. Mulholland, The Evolution of History Teaching in South Africa, Chapters 1 and 3.  
3 J.L. Davies, Christian National Education in South Africa: A Study in the Influence of Calvinism and Nationalism on Education Policy, passim.

produce national patriots and good citizens. Montesquieu viewed the establishing of a love for the French Republic as the principal business of education. Rousseau pleaded for education which would place constantly before men, from cradle to grave, the idea of the nation, and thus awaken in them an ardent love of their country in them. In the nineteenth century great strides were made in western nations to make education universal, free and compulsory in order to create "good citizens". Family, school, and the teaching and writing of history and literature all exercised pressures in the direction of nationalism. When parents became "national-minded", children imitated and followed. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as most parents grew more aware of their nationalities, their children, born into the parents' cultural outlook, absorbed patriotic attitudes.<sup>4</sup> A Frenchman<sup>5</sup> once stated that the Prussian schoolmaster won the war at Sedan. Following France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, the education of patriotism and loyalty was established on a sound basis by the French Government, by devoted textbook writers and by zealous teachers. The fatherland was to be enshrined in the hearts of young Frenchmen. All ways, it has been said, start in the history classroom.<sup>6</sup>

What family life began, the schools continued and shaped further in the direction of nationalism. Governments and patriots everywhere employed the schools to teach national patriotism. From at least 1789, rulers have realized the value of formal education in the inculcation of loyalty. Lauwerys<sup>7</sup> notes that from a study of over eight hundred American textbooks of the period 1776 - 1865, it had been concluded that the elementary schools had operated as a primary instrument for the inculcation

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4 B.C. Shafer, Nationalism. Myth and Reality. pp. 25-27.

5 Quoted in J.F. Scott, Inculcation of Nationalism in French Schools after 1870, in L.L. Snyder, (Ed.), The Dynamics of Nationalism, pp.120-121.

6 C.J.H. Hayes, France. A Nation of Patriots, in L.L. Snyder, (Ed.), The Dynamics of Nationalism, p.2.

7 J.A. Lauwerys, History Textbooks and International Understanding, p.2.

of nationalism in the United States. Lauwerys also points out that syllabuses always reflect the local social climate and "spirit of the age" and are intended to keep in good order the institutions and attitudes serving the community which maintains the school.

Kandel<sup>8</sup> distinguished between two types of nationalism which may operate as forces determining the character of the education imparted in school. The first may be achieved by relating the work of the schools to the culture pattern of the environment and developing a certain pride in their group culture. The second may be achieved by direct indoctrination through the culture of loyalty and unquestioning obedience to the state, by the inculcation of a feeling of superiority over others, resulting in an emphasis on differences, rather than on those common elements which could form a bond or union between men. The state's concern in fostering education is to maintain a certain state morale, and state doctrines important to its conservation.<sup>9</sup> Jahn, founder of the German "Turnverbände", regarded a living history of the fatherland as a prerequisite for life: history was to portray the heart and soul of a people.<sup>10</sup> For history in the German Democratic Republic, the Party was the object of historical study. The Party consciously uses history as a means of legitimating the Socialist Order and as a "system-stabilising factor".<sup>11</sup>

Dalhuisen<sup>12</sup> contends that history in Dutch schools in the last hundred years has been characterized by an emphasis on political or military history, on great men and great events, usually political or military. History teaching in South Africa has

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8 I.L. Kandel, Nationalism, p.137.  
9 B.C. Shafer, Nationalism, pp. 183-184.  
10 L.L. Snyder, The Dynamics of Nationalism, p.152.  
11 D. Riesenberger, Geschichte und Geschichtsunterricht in der DDR, pp.8-24.  
12 L.G. Dalhuisen, et al, Geschiedenis op School, Deel I.

been no different. The teaching of history is contracted to the writing of history which for centuries has been in the service of the rulers. Lewis<sup>13</sup> quotes Lord Bullock's argument that the survival of British democracy depended on voters who understood how British political institutions have evolved, and the events that went into their creation; that a nation's sense of its history is indistinguishable from its social cohesion; that if you do not teach people good history, they will learn bad history; that history is a powerful force at any time, but in the context of nationalism it is dynamite.

Historical didactics is charged with the investing of historical consciousness (the central category) within a society. According to Jeismann<sup>14</sup> the following questions need to be asked of the didactics of any subject: What should be taught and learned, i.e. what is the object ("Gegenstand") of study? What is the nature of the subjects involved in the learning process? What are the aims, content, nature, methods and results of the international transfer of the knowledge concerned?

Historical consciousness as the central category prescribes the object of learning and teaching, describes the abilities ("Vermögen") demanded in the learning process, and contains the aims and content of the transfer of historical knowledge. The didactics of history has established itself as a scientific discipline with its own methods of questioning and objects of study. Besides researching, learning and teaching processes using hermeneutic and analytical methods, the didactics of history also researches history as a school subject. As such it is a subdiscipline of both pedagogics and historical studies.<sup>15</sup>

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13 T.C. Lewis, The National Curriculum and History, in V.R. Berghahn, and H. Schissler (Ed.), Perceptions of History, pp. 134-140.

14 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichte als Horizont der Gegenwart, pp.46-47.

15 K. Bergmann, K., and J. Rüsen, Zum Verhältnis von Geschichtswissenschaft und Geschichtsdidaktik, in K. Bergmann, and J. Rüsen (Ed.), Geschichtsdidaktik: Theorie für die Praxis.



Quandt<sup>16</sup> further describes the task of historical didactics as the analysis and organization of historical information, communication and experience in and between societies. Of its content it asks the questions: Who am I/are we? Who are the others? What have we to do with one another? Its aim is individual and group orientation in time. This aspect of historical didactics forms one of the central themes of this study.

History, when well taught, is the demythologizing of the past. A truly national curriculum for history requires wide debate as the best possible counter to the chance of its party politicisation. Open debate concerning the criteria for syllabus content selection is a safeguard against the formation of stereotypes.<sup>17</sup>

It should be obvious to all that an open debate of such a nature is an urgent necessity in South Africa if a history syllabus acceptable to groups other than Whites (in this case the Afrikaners) is to be formulated (see Chapter 8). With good reason, Dance<sup>18</sup> maintains that the West is perhaps too indifferent to the power of things non-political that have influenced men's lives far more than politics ever has. What Dance writes about the Western approach to history can be applied to the official South African approach to history: the time has gone by when nine-tenths of the history taught can safely be devoted to a quarter of the world's inhabitants (i.e. the White or Western segment). The challenge to the way history teaching promotes historical consciousness is to make the divergent political spectrum as intelligible as possible through an approach involving a variety of perspectives (see Chapter 8).

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16 S. Quandt, *Didaktik der Geschichte. Systematische Perspektiven und Entwicklungstand*, in K. Pellens, et al., *Geschichtskultur-Geschichtsdidaktik*.

17 T.C. Lewis, *The National Curriculum and History*, in V.R. Berghahn and H. Schissler (Ed.), *Perceptions of History*, p.140.

18 E.H. Dance, *History the Betrayer*, p.125.

Within the historical unity of a society there exists a spectrum of divergent, even opposing positions, and it is precisely in this diversity and tension that the identity of society lies. Historical consciousness is not an accidental haphazard matter, but serves specific interests. Jeismann<sup>19</sup> distinguishes three functions of historical consciousness in a nation's self-understanding ("Selbstverständnis"): the identity-establishing ("Identitätsstiftende"), the legitimating ("legitimierung") and the orientating ("orientierung"). While history teaching cannot belie its identification, legitimation and orientation functions, it should offer alternative historical views, question prevailing identification and legitimization claims, and should view the orientation function of history as open<sup>20</sup> (see Chapter 8). De Kiewiet<sup>21</sup> saw history as the emancipator amongst disciplines, releasing man from "thralldom to the past"; the historian was in a position to strip away hypocrisy in human relations, to set men's minds and hearts free.

This seldom, however, holds true of the way history is actually taught. As early as 1936 a Government Report<sup>22</sup> filed evidence to the effect that history taught in "Native" primary schools in South Africa too often started with "1066 and all that" and dealt mainly with the affairs of the kings of England, while the history of South Africa and that of their own people in particular was neglected. There was a real difficulty in the lack of suitable books dealing with the history of the "Native peoples". These complaints echo the feelings of many Afrikaners towards British or Cape history during the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>23</sup> In 1961 F.A. van Jaarsveld pleaded for a scientific investigation of the historical views and nationalist

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19 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichte als Horizont der Gegenwart, p.13.

20 Ibid., p.59.

21 C.W. De Kiewiet, The Anatomy of South African Misery, p.3.

22 Report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education, 1935-1936, p.91.

23 See F.A. van Jaarsveld, Die Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse Verlede, Chapter 2.

character underlying South African school history books as an urgent necessity. Today, nearly thirty years later, his plea has still not been heeded. The constant controversy surrounding history syllabuses, textbooks and the presentation of history in South African classrooms is discussed at various points in this study.

## 2. THREE FUNCTIONS OF HISTORY TEACHING

Among the many functions of the teaching of history are three which have received considerable attention in didactic studies in West Germany, and which are most useful in analysing and examining syllabuses and textbooks. All three illustrate how man seeks in the past that which is of use to him in the present.

### 2.1. History and the Identity-Formation Function

Every club, society, firm and institution, fosters ("pflegt") its traditions, its history; preserves testimony of the past as witness to a continuity, and presents itself as a historical, collective entity ("Individuum"), to ensure its uniqueness ("Eigenart") and, throughout all changes, its core-identity.<sup>24</sup> Nations are no different. Only through the establishment of an identity is a group distinct from other groups. This search for an identity must, of necessity, rely on history. In traditional societies this historical consciousness was moulded by the environment. In modern societies, as has been mentioned in Chapter 1, it is consciously fostered through festivals, flags, songs, the restoration of sites, the erection of monuments and museums, and, not least, through instruction in the classroom.

Patriots in each nation formed societies to foster nationalism. Many demanded (and still demand) the teaching of patriotism and

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24 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichte als Horizont der Gegenwart, p.13.

tried to weed out "unpatriotic" teachers and teaching. They presented copies of flags, national songs and documents to schools, erected national monuments and gave prizes to children for patriotic essays.<sup>25</sup> In South Africa one thinks here of the efforts of, amongst others, the Rapportryers and F.A.K. to arouse patriotism in Afrikaans schools.

History teaching, as with the other human sciences, is in its most elementary sense a learning of identity ("Identifikations-lernen").<sup>26</sup> The present search by South Africans for a common identity is an attempt to establish a national identity. This endeavour is doomed to failure unless South Africans can discover a common past (see Chapter 8). Constitutional unity usually leads to national identity, despite linguistic, ethnic and other differences, as the examples of Switzerland, Belgium and Canada illustrate. This identity is based on a common history. In South Africa such a common history does exist, but is not interpreted uniformly, nor is it agreed upon. There is, therefore, no national South African identity as yet.

The identity of minorities in such heterogeneous states can be disparate and vastly complicated. Canada's minorities attempt to maintain themselves against the majority (and its identity) with the aid of their own identity.<sup>27</sup> In doing so, they refer to their past, which they rewrite according to their own needs. A minority can become the majority and vice-versa, depending on one's perspective, or by geographical or political delineation. Through the policy of separate development, for example, attempts were made to create the illusion that the Whites were a majority in

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25 B.C. Shafer, Nationalism, pp.194-195.

26 I. Hantsche, Geschichtsbewusstsein und Identität, in Geschichtsdidaktik 1984, p.437. See also W. Weidenfeld, Geschichte und Politik, in W. Weidenfeld, et al., Geschichtsbewusstsein der Deutschen, pp. 20-25.

27 See M. Wade, The French-Canadian Outlook, passim.

South Africa. The alteration of political boundaries gives rise to problems at the very seams ("Nahtstelle")<sup>28</sup> of states and nations. The creation of the "national states" in South Africa is a case in point (see Chapter 8).

One can differentiate between defensive and offensive identity. According to Hantsche,<sup>29</sup> both are based on history, but in different ways. Whereas the defensive identity is more strongly tradition-bound and manifests itself more pertinently in the cultural rather than economic or political sphere, the offensive identity is more active in the political area and attempts to bring about changes (e.g. the Afrikaners after 1948).

Ireland illustrates how intertwined an image of the past and identity are. Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic display vastly differing representations and interpretations of Irish history. In fact the history of Ireland as a whole does not stimulate historical consciousness. Only the regional history does this.<sup>30</sup> This is applicable to South Africa where Whites and Blacks each have their "own" history, at this stage precluding historical consciousness of a common past.

## 2.2. The Legitimation Function of History Teaching

History serves to justify or legitimate the existing political order and emphasizes the struggle that led to its attainment.

When referring to legitimation in history teaching, one is usually speaking of the legitimation of present authority ("Herrschaft"). For example, ideas with the help of which

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28 I. Hantsche, *Geschichtsbewusstsein und Identität*, in *Geschichtsdidaktik*, 1984, p.438.

29 *Ibid.*, p.438.

30 *Ibid.*, p.438.

states, governments, etc., legitimate themselves, or of the way challenge to the present (i.e. revolution) justifies itself. This does not cover the full range of attempts at, and need for, legitimacy in society. Below the level of central state authority there are any number of similar endeavours: classes, minority groups, even families. At the base of this is an exclusive identity, as well as the security and dependability of common attitudes and views.<sup>31</sup>

One of the most common methods of finding legitimacy is reaching back ("Rückgriff") to the past. All larger social entities seek inner stability by writing their own history, thereby expressing two needs: a need for security and a need for self-respect or dignity. A group which has its own history cannot perceive itself - nor can it be perceived as being - without an identity. This heightened consciousness of community has a stabilizing or conforming influence on individual members.<sup>32</sup>

In South African history the Afrikaner nation's striving for legitimacy is clearly reflected in Afrikaner historiography. The Black South Africans' need for legitimacy can be seen in the rise of an African historical perspective, especially since the 1950's. Where a nation or a group has for a long time been subjected to foreign domination, it is often cut off from its own history. This has to a large extent been the lot of Black people in South Africa. The process of political emancipation then is accompanied by a search for one's origins and the rediscovery of one's own history. The new historical image can in turn clearly manifests itself in self-justification and idealisation.

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31 R. Schörken, Zur Formenvielfalt der Legitimation durch Geschichte, in K.E. Jeismann, (Ed.), Geschichte als Legitimation, pp.25-27.

32 R. Schörken, Zur Formenvielfalt der Legitimation durch Geschichte, in K.E. Jeismann, (Ed.), Geschichte als Legitimation? p.27.

Schörken<sup>33</sup> points to the unhistorical reconstruction of the past by many African politicians and nationalists; for example the Gold Coast claimed the name of the eleventh century kingdom of Ghana, yet it had no connection with Ghana, either ethnically or geographically, there being 1000 kilometres between them. Mali, Benin, and Zimbabwe are further examples.

The legitimization function of history in the classroom is not limited to the reinforcement of a certain political order: history can also be used to justify specific policies or actions. The syllabuses and textbooks examined in Part II abound with examples: the Annexation of the Transvaal in 1877; the invasion of Zululand in 1879; the policy of apartheid, and B.J. Vorster's policy of détente are but a few.

### 2.3. National Orientation and the Teaching of History

According to Jeismann,<sup>34</sup> orientation as opposed to the other two functions, is not natural or unreflective. It has evolved only since the late eighteenth century as a conscious effort to reconstruct the past, in order to gain insight into the present. Orientation distanced itself from the other two traditional functions in order to supersede, correct, differentiate and expand on them. Historical didactic material is in Jeismann's words an "attempt at orientation in time",<sup>35</sup> just as historical consciousness in the broader sense provides man with a fixed point, or orientation in time.<sup>36</sup> Jeismann<sup>37</sup> points to the interconnectedness of historical consciousness, and understanding of the present and future perspectives. Historical consciousness is not linear, from the present back into the past, but is a

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33 R. Schörken, Zur Formenvielfalt der Legitimation durch Geschichte, in K.H. Jeismann, (Ed.), Geschichte als Legitimation? pp.25-26.

34 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichte als Horizont der Gegenwart, p.13.

35 Ibid., p.50.

36 J. Rohlfes, Umriss einer Didaktik der Geschichte, p.102.

37 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichte als Horizont der Gegenwart, p.17.

horizon. The loss of certainty about the past may lead to this horizon being shifted, so that the present becomes rudderless between past and future. This results in an identity crisis and disorientation. White South Africa is now on the brink of such a shift in horizon (see Chapter 8).

Amongst the ways in which people orientate themselves through history, orientation by symbols plays an important role. Because history reinforces a sense of belonging on a wide range of levels by providing such symbols, it may be regarded as one of the most potent "Ich-stabilisierende" influences. This does not, however, preclude the possibility of individuals or groups rejecting or radically revising the overall suprapersonal past (or view of the past). In the long run this does not remain at the level of mere denial of the past, but soon leads to a new identity with a new view of the past or with a reinterpretation of the old historical image.

The "underprivileged" classes in a society, which, having rejected the official historical perspective, develop their own group history, offer examples of this. A section of South Africa's Black population is at this very time in the process of doing just this. The stabilising function of history is fundamentally applicable to all persons and groups, regardless of their political or social position: the individual and the group need confirmation of their status and they delve into their history in search of symbols to obtain this confirmation.<sup>38</sup>

History "is the sextant and compass of state which, tossed by wind and current, would be lost in confusion if they could not fix their position", in the words of the historian Allan

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38 R. Schörken, Zur Formenvielfalt der Legitimation der Geschichte, in K.E. Jeismann, (Ed.) Geschichte als Legitimation? pp.26-27.



Nevins.<sup>39</sup>

3. THE ABUSE OF HISTORY: BIAS, STEREOTYPES AND MASTER SYMBOLS IN HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

3. 1. Textbooks in History Teaching

Whether the status quo is maintained or the way is prepared for change, the influence that education has on later political attitudes is complex and difficult to determine. It is equally difficult to establish precisely what is imparted by the teacher. In an analysis such as this, one is thus heavily reliant on the "official" content of education as reflected in the curriculum, syllabus and textbooks. The curriculum, made up of different syllabuses, is the basis laid down by educational authorities of the body of knowledge that teachers are intended to impart. The syllabus, in expanded form, is known to pupils as textbooks.

Textbooks remain the most important vehicle for the effective transmission of syllabus content. According to du Preez<sup>40</sup> pupils devote 95% of their academic time at school and at study to their textbooks. Textbooks remain one of the most cost-effective and efficient teaching aids, and they seem to enjoy prestige among most teachers and pupils, being regarded as authoritative. They are imbued with a particular set of values. Authors themselves are the products of a certain period and social climate, thus the values to which they subscribe and which have influenced them find expression in their books. F.A. van Jaarsveld<sup>41</sup> has sketched some of the problems confronting the writers of school history textbooks.

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39 Quoted in G. Milburn (Ed.), Teaching History in Canada, p.98.

40 J.M. du Preez, Africana Afrikaner. Master Symbols in South African Textbooks, p.11.

41 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Probleme by die skrywe van skool-geskiedenisboeke, in Historia, September 1962, pp.142-163.

The contents of school textbooks are sources of information on information on a society's attitudes, cultural values and preconceived views; in other words its self-comprehension. The symbols of a country's ruling party are inevitably reflected in textbooks, since these books have to comply with the prescribed syllabus. School textbooks are responsible for conveying to children and young people what adults believe they should know about their own culture and the culture of others. There are many sources of socialisation in modern societies, but few compare to textbooks in their capacity to convey a uniform, approved, even official version of what the young should believe.<sup>42</sup> Every generation makes a considerable effort to transmit to the next generation its traditions, norms and values.

As nationalism spread, this came to mean that a sense of separateness would be instilled vis-à-vis other nations or cultures. Toward the late nineteenth century with the emergence of "integral nationalism", this notion also appeared in the history textbooks of the time. Teachers and textbooks were increasingly expected by governments and officials to inculcate love of homeland by depicting the glorious history of the nation, bemoaning its wrongs, and showing how treacherous, cowardly and dishonourable other nations were, especially in war. Lesser historians usually popularised national views of history. Out of these national misconceptions rose famous national heroes upon whose lives the young were taught to model their own.<sup>43</sup>

Assuming then that history at school is seen in most countries as an important vehicle for socialisation, the question arises as to the structure and value-system of the society in which

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42 D.S. Hutton, and H.D. Mehlinger: International Textbook Revision, in V.R. Berghahn, and H. Schissler (Ed.). Perceptions of History. International Textbooks Research in Britain, Germany and the United States, pp.141-142.

43 B.C. Shafer, Nationalism, pp.184-191.

the pupils are to be socialised. As already mentioned the symbols of a country's ruling party are inevitably reflected in textbooks, since these books comply with the prescribed syllabus. That the teaching of history in schools and the content of textbooks both raise fundamental questions of politics and ideology may be gauged from the German experience.

Using the example of the Nazi textbook, Der Weg zum Reich (1944), Dance<sup>44</sup> shows that the book contains no deliberate lies. Lies are bad propaganda - sooner or later they reveal themselves. No government, however efficient its propaganda machine, could get away with a policy of mass lying in schools. Yet, although this book contains no passages which are patently false, it may be said that it is false from cover to cover. The Nazi book was not untrue to facts, "but stupendously untrue to history". The facts are reasonably accurate, yet the impression left on the pupils' minds is wrong. Der Weg Zum Reich resembles all other history textbooks in fostering misconception, not by inaccuracy of statement, but by selection among statements which are accurate. The degree to which this, or other methods of conveying prejudice and bias, holds for South African textbooks will be tested in in this thesis. After World War II, history textbooks in West Germany were rewritten according to the guidelines of the "re-education" programme with the specific aim of establishing Western-style democratic principles.<sup>45</sup>

Textbooks are useful artefacts for evidence of what dominant groups have thought a society should be, and how it should relate to other societies at particular points in time; in other words, textbooks betray the self-understanding of the dominant group. However, what is approved at one time may fall out of favour at another,<sup>46</sup> as this study will illustrate.

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44 E.H. Dance, History the Betrayer, pp.53-56.

45 B.C. Shafer, Nationalism, pp.184-191.

46 D.S. Hutton, and H.D. Mehlinger, International Textbook Revision, p.142.

Frances Fitzgerald<sup>47</sup> identifies the "leitmotiv" of American history textbooks in the 1950's as being American power and strength. They reflected an image of a perfect America, the greatest nation in the world, the embodiment of democracy, freedom and technological progress. The 1960's brought about a dramatic rewriting of history in American textbooks. American history is seen increasingly as a far from positive experience, involving problems, turmoil and conflict. In fact, every few years the content of American history textbooks changes appreciably. Fitzgerald terms this "slippery history", yet that transient history becomes that generation of children's history forever: it is their particular version of America. The pace of change in South African textbooks is slower than that in the United States. In fact in some respects the content of our history textbooks has remained remarkably constant. This is understandable in the light of the "fixed", some would say fossilized, view of the past prevalent in official circles virtually since Union (see Chapter 8).

We turn our attention now to specific aspects such as bias, stereotypes and master-symbols.

### 3.2 Bias in History Teaching

The writers of textbooks, like historians in general, write from a specific perspective fashioned by their world view, their times and environment. This is a subconscious subjectivity which is all but impossible to eliminate. Ideally all historical writing, including textbooks, should be free of all bias: in practice this ideal cannot be achieved. The contents of historical documents are coloured by the prevailing attitude of the times and the author's views, personality, upbringing and so on. What applies to traditional primary sources applies equally

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47 F. Fitzgerald, Perceptions of American History after World War I, in V.R. Berghahn, and H. Schissler (Ed.), Perceptions of History, pp.18-25.

to two of the sources researched for this study, i.e. textbooks and syllabuses, both of which strongly reflect prevalent political and other attitudes of their time.

Man is the product of his past, the sum total of all his past experiences, and this past lives on, in its effects, in the lives of individuals and groups. This influence is usually silent and unconscious.<sup>48</sup> The author writes against a background that allows him to see only one side of any story, no matter how hard he strives for objectivity. The age in which he lives, the training given him during his youth, the family that has reared him, the society in which he functions, and many other forces operate constantly to inject in him views and values of which he is scarcely aware. The goal of objectivity is always beyond his grasp, and his published works marred by prejudices that are part of him as they are part of the society that shaped his views.<sup>49</sup>

Not only is the present illuminated by the past, but the past may also be illuminated by the present, as new questions arise in the present and are put to the past; documents and other sources thus gain new meaning. The interpretation of the past in the light of present needs is often inspired by political passions. The past is approached with a prior fixed apologetic scheme, whereby an ideal image is created of the way things should have been. This is conscious bias.<sup>50</sup>

In practice one finds that there are always objectives stated for the teaching of history, and that the textbook very clearly bears such a mark. Historical facts are inevitably tempered to fit the aim at hand.<sup>51</sup>

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48 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, pp.25-27.

49 R.A. Billington, et al., The Historian's Contribution to Anglo-American Misunderstanding, p.2.

50 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, pp.29-32.

51 A.I. Raubenheimer, Die Geskiedenis-Handboek op Skool met Besondere Verwysing na Suid-Afrika, p.60.

A historian (or textbook writer) who becomes an exponent of a political party or movement, tends to lapse into tendentious or nationalistic narratives, he is on the lookout for inspiring and heroic events glorifying his own nation and acting as the scourge of the "enemy".

The history of one's own nation is treated with loving piety. Wherever the historian takes up the cudgels for a political cause, he uses history as an arsenal to fire at past, and essentially also present enemies. Van Jaarsveld<sup>52</sup> calls this approach the "aktivisties-strydende". The political historian writes with passion, fights in the trenches with his history's exalted heroes against his nation's foes. The people of history become blurred as the fronts are formed for and against: "In this way history becomes a kind of political history of salvation with right and justice on one side only",<sup>53</sup> the symbiosis of politics and history. The historian becomes prosecutor, detective, advocate and judge.<sup>54</sup>

Instead of this, one would like to see the whole person, with all his weaknesses, faults and failings, but also his positive qualities and achievements. Man's environment, the factors which influenced his behaviour, his conscious and subconscious-motives, all demand analysis and reflective speculation; failing this, one is conjuring up idealized people, usually heroes who are raised to legendary greatness and "unthinkingly glorified".<sup>55</sup> There are many examples of such writing in Part II of this study, by British jingoes, Afrikaner nationalists and Black radicals.

The nature of the on-going debate in South Africa on history and

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52 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, p.121.

53 Ibid., p.121.

54 Ibid., p.122.

55 Ibid., p.34.

history teaching illustrates that there is a close connection between political ideas (ideology) and the image of the past. A historical image ("geskiedenisbeeld") manifests itself first in politics and then in education. The teaching of history at school is inevitably rooted in such an image. Without it, history teaching would be a mere series of facts and dates.<sup>56</sup>

A study of textbooks can reveal the warped perceptions in the rudimentary forms of historical consciousness which are to be found in school texts. Schissler<sup>57</sup> points to a difference in approach to school history in the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany. The Germans deem it necessary to inculcate those values on which their society is based; the absence of this feeling of necessity in Britain once again points to that country's relatively unbroken national identity. The picture which is drawn of another society (or group) in a textbook, on close inspection, frequently reveals more about the problems of the national past of the writer rather than providing a bridge to understanding the society (or group) whose history is the subject of enquiry. In Part II the reader will discover to what extent this is true of the way various South African groups have portrayed other groups, thereby actually revealing much about themselves.

It is commonly supposed that history is literally the stuff of the past and unalterable. Yet history is not the past, but the record of the past. The recorders of the past have views and prejudices that enter and colour their records and colour them. Dance<sup>58</sup> points out that some historians recommend sticking to dates which, they contend, cannot lie. He shows how

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56 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, p.60.

57 H. Schissler, Perceptions of the Other and Discovery of the Self, in V.R. Berghahn and H. Schissler (Ed.), Perceptions of History, pp. 28-37.

58 E.A. Dance, History the Betrayer, pp. 9-13.

meaningless this contention is with two date lists from two history school books, one British, the other German. Although covering the same period, they do not have a single date or fact in common, because they are compiled from two different points of view, which are then imparted to the pupils using them. Closer to home, 1652, 1838, 1902, 1948 and 1961 would be regarded by Afrikaners as key dates in South African history; to other groups the same dates would possibly have no particular significance or would have an entirely different connotation. The selection of dates must, of necessity, be a matter of bias, or to entrench a particular perspective. This applies even more to sentences and paragraphs: the shorter the book the more vigorous the selection of facts. This means, in Dance's view, that the shorter the book, the more prejudiced it is. School books being necessarily the shortest of them all, are often the most biased of all.<sup>59</sup>

All nations look at things from their own perspective and their history textbooks suffer accordingly. These conflicting points of view are the inevitable result of biased selections from among well-known, even commonplace facts. The problem is that in different countries the commonplaces are different. Each nation tends to recall things congenial to itself and to ignore those favourable to other nations. History is often misrepresented, "because we regard it too narrowly from our own little spot on the earth's surface".<sup>60</sup> Historical writing is an exercise in selection. In his selection of facts and the amount of space devoted to them the author can be guilty of bias by omission.<sup>61</sup>

It may take generations for the results of research to percolate into textbooks (for example research into the arrival of Bantu-speakers in Southern Africa and the conclusions reached long ago have not been reflected in South African school history

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59 E.A. Dance, History the Betrayer, pp. 14-16.

60 Ibid., pp. 20-22.

61 R.A. Billington, The Historian's Contribution to Anglo-American Misunderstanding, pp.9-10.



textbooks until very recently). Fresh evidence in the favour of group antipathy will strengthen it, while fresh evidence against it, is ignored or rejected. The evidence of the presence of a considerable number of non-Afrikaans Whites, Coloureds and even Blacks inside the laager at Blood River seldom features in Afrikaans textbooks. Billington<sup>62</sup> calls this "bias by inertia" - the failure of textbooks writers to keep abreast of current research and their readiness to perpetuate outworn legends.

Group antipathies are not confined to political or military history, but apply equally to the history of science and culture. The contributions of the individual's nation in all these fields are emphasized at the expense of the achievements of others: "Everywhere the story is the same. Germans and Turks and Russians and Americans all complain that their contributions to world culture are neglected in the textbooks of other nations".<sup>63</sup>

Applied to South Africa, this observation is extremely pertinent: English-speakers, Indian South Africans, Coloureds and Blacks, have all complained that their contribution to the building of South Africa is neglected in school textbooks, particularly since 1948 (see Chapter 8). As Dance<sup>64</sup> puts it, "our mouths are full of clichés". The very vocabularies of school textbooks abound in clichés and unconscious prejudice. There is the bias which we introduce into history textbooks by verbal nuances that are barely noticeable. In A History of the USSR, once the official Soviet history (1948), there are examples of propaganda by assertion, supplemented by the more insidious forms of propaganda i.e. omission and distortion. Tendentious epithets abound and subtle nuances of phraseology sow their seeds of misunderstanding.<sup>65</sup> The textbooks examined in this investigation also abound in examples of derogatory or loaded language.

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62 Ibid, pp.5-7.

63 E.A. Dance, History the Betrayer, p.44

64 Ibid, pp.45-46.

65 E.A. Dance, History the Betrayer, pp.67-68.

Root's<sup>66</sup> examination of eleven of the most widely used textbooks in American high schools in the 1950's reveals her concern with what she regards as the left-leaning bias evident in them. According to her, the texts undermine American patriotism and values, belief in the Founding Fathers, while they expound collectivism, and other "subversive" ideas. Quoting the British historian Belloc, that the truth of history resides in proper proportioning, she attempts to quantify the amount of attention given by the authors to various events and personalities. Her conclusion is that there was a disproportionate emphasis on the left-leaning approach.

International textbook analysis can make a contribution by revealing more clearly the nature of the problems looming behind the writing of history textbooks in a national context (see Chapter 8). One of these contributions has been research into stereotyping and prejudice.

### 3.3 Stereotypes and Prejudices

One of the more obvious forms of bias is the use of stereotypes and/or prejudices.

The opportunities provided by school textbooks for conveying stereotypes and hostile images of other cultures or countries were recognized as early as the nineteenth century. It would seem that stereotypes are important to the cohesion of a particular group, in the sense that they protect its members from "cognitive chaos", strengthen the self-esteem of both the individual and the group, and act as "socially approved lightning conductors for intra-group conflicts or aggressions."<sup>67</sup>

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66 E.M. Root, Brainwashing in the High Schools. An Examination of Eleven American History Textbooks, p.27.

67 V.R. Berghahn, and H. Schissler (Ed.), Perceptions of History, pp.14-15.

Stereotypes, prejudices,<sup>68</sup> and other negative Feindbilder lend themselves to mobilisation for political purposes. Du Preez<sup>69</sup> defines a stereotype as a fixed concept of, for example, a person or group, a static picture of the world around us, to which we adapt our habits, tastes, preferences, abilities and expectations. Such stereotypes have the following negative characteristics :

- (1) Stereotypes of ethnic groups are crystallised descriptions that allow little or no deviation from a fixed idea.
- (2) Stereotypes attribute grossly exaggerated, carefully selected characteristics, found in a few members of a particular group, to all its members. This is then presented as the whole truth.
- (3) Stereotypes confirm and entrench the status quo, and consolidate and maintain existing belief systems. They thus perform a legitimation function.

There is ample evidence of this in the textbooks studied in Part II. Inevitably there is a political dimension to the knowledge which is being imparted in school books and what images are being transmitted to the next generation of a particular society and its neighbours. The power of historical knowledge finds expression in the way in which hostile images and stereotypes operate within society.<sup>70</sup> Textbooks are an excellent starting-point for studying the functions of stereotypes and prejudices as aids to the development of identity and the distinguishing of a group from other groups. School history books also confirm a self-image which may be no less stereotyped than the perceptions of other nations or groups. This self-image may be identified directly or be discovered behind the images and portrayal of others. As Berghahn and Schissler<sup>71</sup> point out, such an analysis reveals that stereotypes and prejudices

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68 See G.W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice, ch. 12.

69 J.M. du Preez, Africana Afrikaner, p.7.

70 H. Schissler, Perceptions of the Other and the Discovery of the Self, in R.V. Berghahn, and H. Schissler (Ed.), Perceptions of History, pp.26-27.

71 V.R. Berghahn and H. Schissler (Eds.), Perceptions of History, pp.14-15.

tend to be related to the need of a society to find points of self-orientation in the process of its own development.

The intentional or unconscious communication of prejudices and hostile images (Feindbilder) in history teaching and textbooks is only one side of the coin. As Schmid<sup>72</sup> correctly points out, the other is that pupils come to the history lesson not as tabulae rasae, but already bring with them a mixture of rudimentary knowledge, prejudices, values, preconceptions, etc., which can be loosely grouped together as "Alltagsbewusstsein". Many of empirical studies, especially in the U.S., have shown that politically relevant attitudes are inculcated at a very early stage of a child's socialisation. This is especially true of the basic identification models ("Muster"), such as nation and ethnic group, but also of affectively unfavourable preconceptions towards alien groups. Research points to the very early (or pre-school) internalisation of these identification processes and to their great rigidity. The degree to which such views can be revised during a pupil's school career is a matter of debate. It is, however, generally accepted that people's views can and do change.

Matthäus<sup>73</sup> differentiates between attitudes ("Einstellungen"), which are a relatively stable system of views towards individuals, groups or objects on the one hand, and prejudices on the other. He defines prejudices as negative attitudes towards another person or group (Feindbilder), whereby individuals or groups have attributed to them, certain characteristics according to stereotype perceptions. Because of their inflexibility ("Starrheit") and emotional content, they are difficult to correct even in the face of experience to the contrary. This,

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72 H. Schmid, Vorurteile und Feindbilder als Problem der Geschichts-  
didaktik, in Geschichtsdidaktik, 1981, Heft 2, pp.131-142.

73 W. Matthäus, Vorurteile und Feindbilder als Problem der  
Geschichtsdidaktik, in Geschichtsdidaktik, 1981, Heft 2,  
pp.117-130; see also G.W. Allport, The Nature of Prejudice,  
pp.6-10.

more than anything else, highlights the awesome responsibility of the teacher, in particular the history teacher.

Prejudices are, therefore, fixed, anchored attitudes in man's personality structure determining to a considerable extent the observation and interpretation of social reality and behaviour. They reflect man's natural tendency to form an image of reality, to generalise, to categorise and to interpret the new in the light of previously gained experience. Prejudices are characterised by their rigidity and overgeneralisation (i.e. stereotyping). A noticeable characteristic of these distortions of reality is that they generate mechanisms which appear to be self-corroborating, for example, by selective observation or self-fulfilling prophecy. The inflexibility of prejudices can also be explained by their being anchored in society; they are social products. They can act as a collective release to tensions in society for example, by creating scapegoats. In history teaching, prejudice is most evident in the form of the "Fremd -Feind" model. Prejudices can be different from the national stereotype by the thoroughly negative evaluation of the alien ("Fremd") group.

The dichotomy inherent in the good-bad, or black-white, picture provides orientation and serves to maintain and legitimate the status quo. An assault on stereotypes is likely to be experienced as a severe threat to the individual or group adhering to the stereotype<sup>74</sup> (see Chapter 8).

### 3.4 Master Symbols

There are certain subjects that are highly regarded by individuals or groups, and images woven around these subjects can

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74 W. Matthäus, Vorurteile und Feindbilder als Problem der Geschichtsdidaktik, in Geschichtsdidaktik, 1981, Heft 2, pp.117-130.

provoke strong emotional reactions. Such topics include the Supreme Being, the nation, race, destiny and mission. As we have seen, these concepts often acquire a metaphysical or mystical connotation. The ruling or dominant symbols with which a society identifies, are reflected inter alia in school textbooks. Those symbols with which the individual and the community are strongly identified and which are inherently capable of manipulating the behaviour of people, or which serve as a basis for other symbols, are master symbols.

By carefully selecting or utilising master symbols, one is in a position to influence the attitudes of people towards others, for master symbols contain stereotypes, and stereotypes are outstanding manipulatory tools. Master symbols are generalizations which dramatically strengthen socio-cultural values; they are also sometimes described as myths. An example of this is a group laying claim to a specific territory: it may state its claims on historical, legendary or mythological grounds. The Whites' claim to South Africa is based on the historical traditions of occupation and the purchase of unoccupied land, while the San's claim stems from a mythical tradition according to which they descended from gods who had formerly inhabited the land.<sup>75</sup> Master symbols, then, are the categories in which man classifies his world and everything around him. These concepts are more than convictions or rational opinions. They are deepseated points of view that have become so much part of an individual that he is not even aware of them. They become, in fact, spectacles through which he sees, experiences and evaluates.<sup>76</sup>

Master symbols become so much part of a society's collective consciousness that they are eventually regarded as irrefutable facts. Current ideologies and dogmas within a society are seen as

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75 J.M. du Preez, Africana Afrikaner, pp.6-8.

76 Ibid., p.89.

sound opinions. People in positions of authority within institutions and social structures maintain their authority by, amongst other things, linking their positions to important or moral symbols, sacred emblems and legal formulae. In this way they become identified with such symbols. These strong symbols are often used to foster a feeling of solidarity in a nation. By integrating the symbols of the past, the present and the future, a symbolic whole is created which gives an individual a feeling of belonging and of security.

Deliberate selection and use of master symbols are powerful weapons in the process of manipulation. Stereotypes and not the issue or event itself often determine political orientation. In textbooks, master symbols can be identified by means of the presentation of facts. If we look, therefore, at the techniques the writer employs to characterise his principal character, which actions are esteemed, what events are regarded as sacred and also other intimations of importance, the value system or historical perspective of the writer is clarified.<sup>77</sup>

Should master symbols be questioned by members of a society, counter-symbols may develop. The counter-symbols can result in the formation of a new ideological group, which, in turn, will develop an explicit credibility. When the roles enacted by individuals change more rapidly than do the master symbols that make these roles meaningful, the individuals concerned can become alienated from the symbols and exchange them for the opposing set of symbols. Conflict over symbols can arise between institutions of the same order, e.g. between different churches or political parties; between different orders in the same social structure, e.g. church and state, or between different social structures, e.g. nations.

In the following chapters, the reader will see how the Afrikaners increasingly rejected the master symbols of the existing British order, whether outer symbols such as the Union Jack or "God Save the King", or others such as the British Empire, the Commonwealth or the monarchy. There will also be evidence of the current rejections of White symbols by large sections of the Black population. The recent controversy over national symbols such as the flag and the anthem, as well as a counter-interpretation of South African history will be highlighted in Chapter 8.

Du Preez<sup>78</sup> provides a summary of the master symbols and counter-symbols which she identified in her investigation. The following are pertinent to this study:

Whites are superior to Blacks;  
South Africa belongs to the Whites;  
The Afrikaner nation has an exclusive (or special) relationship with God;  
The Afrikaner volk has a God-given task in Africa;  
The Afrikaner and his country are threatened;  
Blacks, and non-Whites in general, are a threat to the Whites.

Counter-symbols which emerged that are relevant here are:

Injustices have been (and still are being) committed against the Blacks;  
The Whites are intruders in South Africa.

It is significant that some of the Afrikaner's master symbols mentioned above originated as counter-symbols to the British-orientated master symbols of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, e.g. British rule was beneficial, Britain had a calling to conquer and uplift other peoples; British soldiers were extraordinarily brave and disciplined; British settlers were industrious.

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78 J.M. du Preez, Africana Afrikaner, p.70.



These three sets of symbols will be discussed and illustrated in the pages to follow amongst other aspects of the self-understanding of these three groups of South Africans.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The rise of nation-states has gone hand-in-hand with the development of state education. From the time of the French Revolution the modern nation-state has, through its control of public education, attempted to ensure its own cohesion, foster patriotism, and inculcate certain values. Such values, whether cultural, social, or even political, were, and still are, those of the dominant group in a particular nation-state. In homogeneous countries, there is considerable consensus as to what should be imparted in the classroom. In plural societies, education is often characterised by severe tensions, controversy and even acrimony. South Africa is no exception.

Within education, history teaching is regarded by many as a highly effective socializing agent. Three of the most important and obvious functions of history as such an agent are its role in identity establishment, its legitimation function, and its service in national orientation. Because history in the classroom is almost inevitably regarded as a political tool, it is vulnerable to considerable abuse; sometimes such abuse is crude and conscious as in the Marxist states; in others, such as the Western Democracies, it is inclined to be more subtle, even unconscious. Yet bias, stereotypes, prejudices and other human failings are always present. While history syllabuses reflect the current, or officially sanctioned, view of the past, textbooks reveal much about the author's historical perspective, his bias and prejudices.

A nation's self-image, portrayed as flatteringly as possible in its history textbooks, is to a large extent defined by the manner in which it views others. It is almost as if the self-image is enhanced by the co-existence of hostile images of those deemed outside the group. This gives rise to the stereotypes, prejudices and derogatory language so evident in textbooks. Master symbols reflecting both a group's self-esteem, as well as jaundiced assumptions about "others", are an example of the enduring nature of prejudices.

## PART II

### CHAPTER 3

#### HISTORY TEACHING IN CAPE AND NATAL SCHOOLS 1839 - 1918

##### 1. INTRODUCTION

When examining the curriculum and especially the textbooks of the period under discussion, the researcher should beware of the danger of presentism, i.e. judging the past in terms of the present. The officials compiling Cape History syllabuses in the latter half of the nineteenth century were officers of the Imperial British Government doing Her Majesty's duty in a colony of the British Empire. That the subjects of the Cape Colony (whether English or Dutch) should be expected to learn British history, and later Cape history in the context of the British Imperial history, was regarded as a matter of course. The spirit of the times was such that Englishmen everywhere were convinced of the superiority, and beneficial effects, of all things British.

Particularly after 1880 European nations, large and small, set out to acquire overseas possessions. This burst of energy (some would call it aggression) manifested itself in Africa as the "Scramble for Africa". Belgium, Germany, Portugal, France, Britain and Italy carved up the continent in a decade or two. This was the age of Rhodes, of "painting the map red", of Cape to Cairo, of European imperialism in a boundlessly optimistic mood. Britannia ruled the waves, including the Cape sea-route.

In 1868 the politician and imperialist C.W. Dilke prophesied that the stronger, more energetic and intelligent Anglo-Saxons would conquer the world, pushing aside the "cheaper races".<sup>1</sup> Rudyard

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<sup>1</sup> C.W. Dilke, *The Anglo-Saxons Destined to Conquer the World*, in L.L. Snyder (Ed.), *The Dynamics of Nationalism*, p.90.

Kipling, obsessed with the conviction of Britain's noble destiny, extolled the virtues and glories of the British Empire and the Anglo-Saxons in his prolific writings. But one example is this stanza:

"God of our fathers, known of old -  
Lord of our far-flung battle line -  
Beneath whose awful hand we hold  
Dominion over palm and pine - " 2

Professor Cramb of Queen's College, London, lectured on Britain's World Mission: "Never since on Sinai God spoke in thunder has mandate more imperative been issued to any race, city, nation, than now to this nation and to this people". 3

Not only were the British and Colonial textbook writers of the time infused with this kind of spirit which in itself would result in a contempt of the "cheaper races", but there was also the influence of the Social Darwinism of the time which seemed to indicate that there were different levels of human development; the Caucasians being the highest species. This attitude of racial superiority could be found amongst the Europeans of the Americas and Australasia, the Belgians in the Congo, the Dutch in Indonesia, the Germans in Tanganyika, the Italians in Abyssinia, even the "white" Russians in Siberia. Before judging 19th century textbook writers too harshly, we should remember that the prominent historian, Hugh Trevor-Roper, was still writing the following in the early 1960's: "'Perhaps in the future, there will be some African history to teach. But at present there is none, or very little: there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness ... and darkness is not a subject for history'". He went on to describe the African past as "'the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but

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2 Quoted in C.W. Dilke, The Anglo-Saxons Destined to Conquer the World, in L.L. Snyder (Ed.), The Dynamics of Nationalism, p.90.

3 Ibid., p.97.

irrelevant corners of the globe'".<sup>4</sup> Similarly the terminology used was that of the times. The term "Kafir" or "Kaffer", for example, was the accepted word used to describe the Xhosa and later other Blacks. In its nineteenth century context, therefore, it simply did not have the current negative connotation. It is against this background and in this context that the following pages should be read.

## 2. HISTORY AS A SCHOOL SUBJECT IN THE CAPE COLONY

In 1839, an Education Department under the control of a Superintendent General was established. The subjects of instruction in established schools, as laid down in the Government memorandum of May 1839, included for the Senior Division Elementary Course, "Outlines of General History", to be covered by Recitation in Chambers' History of the British Empire.<sup>5</sup> In 1853, history was included as a subject in the secondary curriculum at nine of the sixteen "First Class" or "Principal" schools then in existence. There is no description of the content of the syllabus other than that it concerned "British History".<sup>6</sup> It is possible to gain some idea of the type of history studied in Cape schools at that time by reviewing the questions selected from the papers by which the senior pupils in the First Class Government schools were examined in 1854:

"Give the lines of kings in English history from the Norman conquest to the present time. ... By what relation to the Tudor line did the house of Stuart lay claim to the crown of England?  
Who was the last of the Saxon kings? In what battle was the fate of that dynasty decided?"

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4 Quoted in J.B. Peires, African History, in South Africa International, Volume Nineteen, Number Two, October 1988, p.74.

5 G.A.C.T., (1/2/1/8). Cape of Good Hope. Report of the Superintendent General of Education for the Year 1860, p.7.

6 G.A.C.T., (1/2/2/1/10). Cape of Good Hope. Appendix to the Report of the S.G.E. for 1853 & Preceding Years, p.25.

In what battle was the protracted struggle between the house of York and Lancaster terminated?"

There are other questions relating to British history, and some on the history of Ancient Greece.

During the 1852 and 1853 tours of inspection of the Superintendent General, the senior pupils at Wynberg were to be examined on "The history of the British Empire, from the accession of Henry VIII to the death of Charles the I", Worcester and Somerset East pupils on "Pinnrock's Catechism of English History", those at Colesberg on "British History" and candidates at Malmesbury Government School on "English and Graecian history."<sup>8</sup>

In 1858, the Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science was established, consisting of seven members of whom three would be examiners in the classical languages, modern languages, literature and history. For the Preliminary Examination a candidate had to offer amongst other subjects, "the outlines of English History". The Public Service Certificate, introduced for those candidates intent on joining the public service, also included (English) history as an examination subject. The Third Class Certificate in Literature and Science, the forerunner of the Matriculation examination, included in its curriculum the "Outlines of the History of England" for which Keightley's Elementary History of England and "The Outlines of the English Constitution as contained in Creasy, or in lieu, at the option of the candidate, a portion of the outlines of the history of English literature by Spalding".<sup>9</sup>

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- 7 G.A.C.T., (CCP 4/5/1). Cape of Good Hope. Report of the Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science 1854, p.22.
- 8 G.A.C.T., (CCP 1/2/1/1). Cape of Good Hope. Report on Public Education 1854, pp.8-11.
9. S.A.L., Bylaws and Rules framed by the Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science 1859, pp. 9; 16.

The 1859 examination paper for the Public Service Certificate<sup>10</sup> contained questions such as the following:

In what way did peerages, as titles of nobility, become hereditary in England; and on what ground are the attendant privileges confined to the actual possessors of the title instead of descending to the whole family?"

"The English House of Commons consists of 'knights of the shire', and of 'burgesses'; show how far these elements are distinct from one another ...".

"Anglo-Saxon society has been divided into Thanes, Ceorls and Thralls: give an accurate account of the status of each, and the circumstances under which men passed from one into another of them."

"Give particulars of the famous discussion which took place in the time of Charles the First, as to the interpretation of the words - 'Nisi per legale iudicium parium suorum vel per legem terrae': what were the means taken by Parliament for vindicating ... the true constitutional sense of these words?"

One can only imagine how difficult it must have been for the boys (especially the Dutch-speaking ones) at school in remote areas such as Colesberg to relate to subject content of this nature. The 1860 examination for the same Certificate<sup>11</sup> contained similar questions:

"State the primary principles of the English Constitution; prove that the Constitution is coeval with our nationality, and that our true nationality commences in the thirteenth century".

"Give an account of the British element of our nation, the Romanized Celts, and show how far the Saxons exterminated the British, or to what extent the two populations were blended together."

"Sketch the character of King John, and show its influence on our history".

The examination paper for the Second Class Certificate of 1860 is

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10 S.A.L., Report of the Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science 1860, Annexures, p.12.

11 Ibid, pp.22-23.

headed "The English Constitution and the Constitutional History" based on Creasy's Rules and Progress of the Constitution and Hallam's Constitutional History of England. The following example of the questions asked illustrates that candidates were expected to have a detailed knowledge of British constitutional affairs:<sup>12</sup>

"Write down the various clauses in the Act of Parliament, and give a full account of that one, which excludes from Parliament persons holding offices or places of profit under the Crown, and pensioners of the Crown".

On the recommendation of the Watermeyer Commission of Inquiry tabled in 1863, the Public Service Examination was taken for the last time in January 1864 and replaced by the Third Class Certificate for which the history of England was also compulsory. The Education Act, No. 13 of 1865, incorporated the syllabuses, including "English Literature and History".<sup>13</sup>

For the Second Class Examination, candidates were to be examined on the "History of England. The rise and progress of the English Constitution", while candidates for the First Class Examination were expected to master "the Constitution and the Constitutional History of England. Hallam's Constitution History to the death of George II."<sup>14</sup>

The first effort to make a local history textbook available for use in Cape schools was made in 1823 by Joseph Sucisso de Lima, schoolmaster of the Evangelical Lutheran School in Cape Town. His Geschiedenis van de Kaap de Goede Hoop, although a rather modest little book, containing many factual errors, expressed what must have been felt then to be the need for a book on local history. It was to be many decades before such books became available and

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- 12 S.A.L., Report of the Board of Public Examiners in Literature and Science 1860, Annexures, p.12.
- 13 S.A.L., Report of the Education Commission 1863, pp. lxxv-lxxvi; Report of the Education Commission 1865, p.8.
- 14 S.A.L., Rules and by-laws (Section VI of the Report of the Board of Public Examiners 1864, pp.48, 50, 59.



even longer before they were to be available in Dutch.<sup>15</sup>

It is interesting to note that, although Motley's Rise of the Dutch Republic had been included in the syllabus since 1858, it was examined for the first time in 1867. This concession to the Dutch-speaking Cape population after ten years is significant, recognizing as it does their Dutch roots and heritage. The 1867 "Literature" examination was based on Hallam's and Motley's books.<sup>16</sup>

What is noticeable about history taught in Cape schools in this period was the heavy emphasis on English history to the exclusion of all other. Even general European history was excluded, let alone Cape history. This was the period of conscious Anglicization, a process set in motion by Somerset in the 1820's. English was the sole medium of instruction in Government schools.<sup>17</sup> In fact only those schools with English as medium qualified for Government grants.

In the report on his tour of inspection in 1863, the Superintendent General<sup>18</sup> notes that in the first class school at Swellendam "they read Corner's History of England", at Port Elizabeth the Class III boys read "British History", and at Colesberg "English History". His 1865 report mentions that all senior boys in Worcester were examined in English history.<sup>19</sup> In 1867<sup>20</sup> Class I at Cape Town New-Street "read English history well".

From the late 1860's, the reaction from the Dutch colonists

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- 15 F.A. van Jaarsveld, and J.I. Rademeyer, Teorie en Metodiek van die Geskiedenisonderrig, p.74.  
16 S.A.L., Report of the Board of Public Examiners, 1867, p.1.  
17 E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa. Volume I, p.9.  
18 G.A.C.T., (1/3/1/13). Cape of Good Hope. Report of the S.G.E. for the year 1863, pp.85-97.  
19 S.A.L., Report of the S.G.E. for the year 1865, p.126.  
20 S.A.L., Report of the S.G.E. for the year 1867, p.131.

became increasingly vociferous. The newspaper De Zuid-Afrikaan, and the synod of the Dutch Reformed Church, amongst others, agitated for the establishment of private schools where Dutch would be the medium of instruction. By 1872 a considerable number of such schools had been created.<sup>21</sup>

The Cape Afrikaners gradually came to enter into and share the feelings of their distant kinsman north of the Orange. Reflection on current events and growing indignation at what they perceived as British injustices led to the awareness and appreciation of the Republican northerners and themselves as an entity. Common ties of blood, a common geographical territory and a common sense of destiny (see Chapter 1) again overrode geographical barriers and brought about a feeling of unity. The Afrikaner Bond was the outcome of the Cape Afrikaners' analysis of their situation, directing particular attention at the political role of the Afrikaans-speaking population and the danger of Anglicisation.

Language and history were the means by which their continued existence could be secured. Die Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners articulated the new determination to establish a specific identity with a specific past. Die Patriot had a special column for Afrikaans history with the implicit intention of fostering self-esteem and pride. British and Cape history were deemed hostile to the Afrikaner, and the works of Wilmot, Chase, Holden and others as one-sided and libellous.

Increasingly, a demand was felt for "true history" to be taught at school. Self-discovery directed attention to history and the indignation aroused by what was perceived to be a unjust view of the past, led to a demand for an "accurate" presentation of the past.<sup>22</sup>

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21 J.C. Coetzee (Ed.), Onderwys in Suid-Afrika 1652-1960, pp.71-77.  
22 F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History, p.41.

The first Afrikaans history book, Di Geskiedenis fan ons Land in di Taal van ons Volk (1877) testifies to the wounded self-esteem of especially the Cape Afrikaner. The essence of its content is the struggle between Boer and Briton. It attempts to defend the Afrikaner, refute charges laid against him, and to act as exoneration and a corrective of wrong presentations. It was designed to serve as a cohesive force, to bolster the awakening of national consciousness of which it was an emotional product. The enthusiastic reception given to the book testified to the need felt by many Afrikaners for such a history.<sup>23</sup> De Zuid-Afrikaan expressed this need in an article ridiculing the British history taught at Cape schools: "A list of names of all the British kings with their exact date of birth, coronation, marriage and death, of intrigues and conspiracies, of ministries and wars".<sup>24</sup>

The passing of the Constitution Ordinance Amendment Act in 1872 saw the ending of the Cape's constitutional struggle of nearly twenty years. The first "responsible" cabinet was formed on 1 December 1872. Responsible government radically altered the Governor's position and curtailed his powers. Henceforth the colony would be responsible for its own defence and for the maintenance of domestic peace. The new constitution encouraged a greater political maturity, as witnessed by the appearance of formal political parties.<sup>25</sup>

The increasing maturity of the Colony was reflected in spheres other than the political: in 1873 legislation was passed making provision for the University of the Cape of Good Hope, modelled on the University of London. This was purely an examining body which laid down standards, formulated syllabuses, set down examinations and awarded degrees. It also controlled the

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23 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Geskiedkundige Verkenninge, p.61.

24 De Zuid-Afrikaan, 21 March 1874.

25 C.F.J. Muller (Ed.), Five Hundred Years. A History of South Africa, p.188.

Matriculation and Junior Certificate Examinations.<sup>26</sup> It is significant that, within a few years of the Cape being granted responsible government, Cape history was being included in syllabuses of Cape schools.

The Matriculation syllabuses of the University of the Cape of Good Hope from 1875 to 1911 made provision for the "History of England" and then for the "General History of Modern Europe from 1517 to 1815". History was an optional subject for Matriculation. The School Examination of 1876, however, also prescribed the "Outlines of the History of England and of South Africa". In fact the heading of the 1876 paper was "English and Colonial History". While the questions on English history covered the usual areas of constitutional and military history (e.g. "Name all the Plantagenet kings who met with violent deaths."), the questions on Cape history were more varied:

- "1. State how the following names are connected with the history of this Colony :- Vasco di Gama (sic), Bartollomeo Diaz, Sir David Baird.
2. Give some account of the persons from whom the following places derive their names:- Tulbagh, Stockenström, Graham's Town ...
3. Give a brief account of :-
  - (a) The immigration of French Refugees
  - (b) The disturbances under the younger van der Stell(sic)
  - (c) The immigration of the Albany settlers.
4. (a) What were the chief events in the Kafir War of 1850 to 1852?  
(b) What attempt was made to renew the war in 1856?".<sup>27</sup>

The 1877 School Examination paper on Colonial History included questions on military history (the War of the Axe, the Battle of Muizenberg, the Battle of Blaauwberg), and the arrival of the various European settler groups, Dutch, French and British.

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26 See J.C. Coetzee (Ed.), Onderwys in Suid-Afrika, pp. 73-76.  
27 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Year 1876, p.169.

Candidates are also asked "to name the present Colonial boundaries", reflecting a desire to establish a national identity within fixed national boundaries.<sup>28</sup>

Similarly, the questions in the 1878 paper<sup>29</sup> concentrated on the "discovery" of the Cape, the settlement of the Cape by the Dutch, French and British, the "various elements of the Colonial population", the "Constitutional form of Government established at the Cape": ("Say when the Colony received its constitution, and by whom the first Parliament was summoned and state any facts which appear to illustrate the progress of the Colony in extent and productions"). Discovery and settlement point to a desire on the part of the colonists to orientate themselves and to establish an identity of their own. In other words, they saw themselves as a unique mix of European strains, obviously different from those of Australia or New Zealand. This is evidence of a greater national consciousness. The emphasis on constitutional development and other progress illustrates a desire to legitimize the new "responsible" government.

Examination questions in the 1879 and 1880 papers likewise point to the growing self-consciousness of the Cape Colony: there are questions on the "Introduction of Responsible Government",<sup>30</sup> the "Establishment of the Free Press" and the "Meeting of the First Parliament".<sup>31</sup> These papers for the first time examined "the reasons assigned by the Dutch farmers for the great emigration from the Colony to the interior ..." and also "the early history of the Colony of Natal".<sup>32</sup> References to the non-White

- 28 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Year 1877, p.c1xxvii.
- 29 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Year 1878, p.c1xxx1.
- 30 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Year 1879, p.175.
- 31 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Year 1880, p.186.
- 32 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Year 1881, p.185.

population are confined to the context of the frontier wars<sup>33</sup>:

"Write an account of the Kafir War of 1819".

"Give the dates of the several Kafir wars in the present century ..."

By 1880 the S.G.E. was noting that history, both British and Colonial, was being taught in all the higher and a few of the elementary schools.<sup>34</sup>

The position of colonial history was still tenuous, however. In 1883 colonial history was discarded in favour of the history of England and France for the purposes of the 1884 examination.<sup>35</sup> From 1884 it was included again as the "History of the Cape Colony", together with the "Outlines of the History of England".<sup>36</sup> This syllabus content was to remain for the next decade or two. In 1888, the S.G.E. reported that history (Cape and British) was taught in 72 schools: "The Text Books in common use are Collins' British Empire, Nelson's Royal History, and Wilmot's History of the Cape Colony".<sup>37</sup> (Wilmot's text is considered in some detail below.) The School Elementary Examination of 1896 tested knowledge of the "Outlines of the History of England and the History of the Cape Colony", with 120 marks being awarded to English and 80 to Colonial history. The School Higher Examination, however, tested English history only, from Green's Short History of the English People.<sup>38</sup> The 1900 School Elementary Examination contains questions on aspects of Cape history, such as representative government, the

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33 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Year 1879, p.175.

34 G.A.C.T., (1/2/1/45), Supplement to the Report of the S.G.E. for the Year ending 30th June 1880, p.14.

35 G.A.C.T., (1/2/1/55), Supplement to the Report of the S.G.E. for the Year ending 30th June 1883, p.140.

36 Ibid., p.140.

37 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Year 1884, p.97.

38 S.A.L., (1/2/1/73) Supplement to the Report of the S.G.E. for the Year 1888, p.7.

Huguenots and British Settlers, "native policy" and the frontier wars. The 1846 clash is called a "Native war", revealing that the term "Kafir" was being replaced by "Native".<sup>39</sup>

By 1902, with the formal Boer surrender signed at Melrose House, all four South African states were indisputably under British control. The dissolution of the two Republics that began in 1900, was now complete. The Republics became the Transvaal Colony and the Orange River Colony. British paramountcy over all four states is reflected almost immediately in the Cape history syllabuses.

The 1903-4 School Elementary Examination syllabuses refer for the first time not to the history of the Colony, but to the "Outlines of the History of South Africa".<sup>40</sup> This is one of the watersheds in history teaching in this country, of the same magnitude as when Cape history was introduced for the first time. Thus the focus of history teaching in the Cape (and in the other three states) shifted from the local history to that of the entire subcontinent, or British South Africa. One recognizes here an increasing national awareness of a common White South African identity and of South Africa as a political entity.

The 1904-1905 and 1905-1906 School Elementary Examinations provide an example of the "South African History" tested:

"Give a short account of the origins of one of the following:  
(a) The Matabele nation  
(b) The Basutos  
(c) The Zulus."

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39 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Year 1896, pp. cxxii-cxxiv.

40 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1904-1905, p.782.

There are also questions, not only on Cape constitutional development, but also on constitutional affairs in the Orange Free State and Natal.<sup>41</sup> "Give a list of the Presidents of the Orange Free State or the Transvaal, with the years in which they held office". As before, there is a heavy emphasis on military history:

"Give a brief account of two of the following events:  
(a) The War with Hintza  
(b) The War with Ceteswayo  
(c) The Basuto Rebellion." 42

As before the Intermediate Examination made no allowance for South African history - candidates were examined on the "Outlines of Medieval History".<sup>43</sup> In the 1905-1906 Calendar this changes to either the "Political and Constitutional History of England to 1485", or the General History of Europe 1315-1517.<sup>44</sup> The latter section dealt with topics such as "Christianity among the Teutonic Races" and the "Struggles and Progress of Christian Civilisation".<sup>45</sup>

The inclusion of Cape history and later South African history in Cape school syllabuses, significant as it was, did not yet imply an equal status with British or European history. This is evident both from the imbalance of marks awarded to the latter two, as noted above, as well as from the fact that Cape history was only required for the School Elementary Examination, and not the School Higher or Matriculation. Basic orientation was still toward the British Empire and Britain as the mother country.

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41 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1905-1906, p.334.  
42 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Caledendar for the Years 1903-1904, p.452.  
43 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1905-1906, p.333.  
44 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1906-1907, p.99.  
45 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1900-1902, p.226.



Until 1909 the syllabus for the School Higher Examination, as an example, provided for "English History from 1714 to 1871 with reference to the leading events in general history during this period".<sup>46</sup> After 1909 the School Higher became known as the University Junior Certificate Examination for Schools,<sup>47</sup> and significant for the purposes of this study, made provision for "English and South African history from 1756 to 1871, with reference to the leading events in general history during this period".<sup>48</sup>

For the University Senior Certificate Examination for schools there was still no South African history required. In 1911 the Senior Certificate was replaced by the Matriculation Certificate; and, what is most important to note, for this examination a knowledge of South African history would henceforth also be required. The growing national and historical consciousness of the new state is evident here. The new syllabus covered aspects of Dutch and British history, and the following South African themes: the decline of the Dutch East India Company; the first British occupation of the Cape; the Batavian period; the second British occupation; relations between English and Dutch; native policy; the missionaries and slave emancipation; the Great Trek; the rise of the Zulu, Matabele and Basuto powers; the colonisation of Natal; the political consequences of the Great Trek; the relations between Britain and the Republics; and the Union of South Africa and its constitution.<sup>49</sup>

Several interesting aspects are revealed by this Matriculation syllabus: South African history is treated in the context of the British Empire; South Africa is seen as an integral part of the Empire together with Australia, Canada and India. These

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46 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1909-1910, p.339.  
47 Ibid., p.335.  
48 Ibid., p.351.  
49 Ibid., pp. 72-73.

sister colonies were mutual elements in the syllabus, bound together by the "general outline of British colonial policy".<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, the two major Anglo-Boer conflicts, 1880-81 and 1889-1902 are omitted. The inclusion of South African history in all school syllabuses by 1911 mirrored the most significant constitutional event in South African history up to that time, namely the fusion of the four South African states into a political union in 1910.

It was inevitable that the new state would expect its own history to be taught to its future citizens. On the other hand, Union had come about through the considerable efforts of both language groups to achieve reconciliation. Just how tenuous these new bonds of friendship were, became clear soon after Union, with events such as the founding of the National Party, and the Rebellion. The delicate rapprochement needed to be encouraged, not disturbed; thus any mention of the military confrontation between the two white groups, especially the traumatic Anglo-Boer War, was to be avoided at all costs. This was, of course, the official view only. In later chapters the reader will see that there were others within the new state for whom it was not only politically expedient, but politically essential to remember, and to entrench the memory of these conflicts.

Although not directly concerned with school history, it is interesting that the revised B.A. Examination from 1910 also provided for certain themes in South African history, albeit solely as subsections of the firmament of British Imperial history. Up to 1910 only British and General History had been required. The syllabus covered: "(a) Colonization in General; (b) Modern Colonization; (c) Colonial Federal Constitutions (Australia, South Africa, Canada); and (d) the Colonization of

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50 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1911-1912, pp.72-73.

Africa in the Nineteenth Century".<sup>51</sup> Just one year later, in 1911, a third paper was introduced for a B.A. on "Political and Constitutional history of South Africa to A.D. 1881". The need for the new state to legitimize itself was irresistible. Thus by 1910 or 1911 South African history was being examined at all levels of Cape secondary schools as well as at the university level, even though still in a British context.

The Intermediate Examination in Arts and Science through which candidates gained admission to British universities had, up to 1916, covered only European history. In the 1916 syllabus, for example, the only reference to South Africa was in the context of European voyages of discovery.<sup>52</sup> From 1917 provision was made for the first time for South African history, albeit indirectly as the influence of world events on South Africa, or as part of British colonial policy and history.<sup>53</sup>

The history syllabus for the Matriculation Examination before 1917 covered South African history up to 1910, although only in a sketchy manner. Section A of the new 1917 syllabus covered the growth of the Cape Colony to 1795, Section B the Cape from 1795 to 1814 and Section C the growth of South Africa to 1892. Section C also allowed for a comparison of the Union constitution with those of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The events after 1892, most important of all, the Anglo-Boer War, are not covered for the reasons stated above.<sup>54</sup>

It would be appropriate at this stage to look at history teaching in the Cape's sister colony of Natal during the same period to illustrate how similar developments were in the two territories.

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- 51 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1910-1911, p.186.
- 52 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1915-1916, p.95.
- 53 S.A. L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1916-1917, p.102.
- 54 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the years 1917-1918, pp. 90-91.



### 3. THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN NATAL SCHOOLS TO 1918

The spirit and content of history teaching in schools in the Natal Colony is little different from that of the Cape in the same period. This could hardly be otherwise as both were British colonies firmly embedded in the context of Empire. The White population was overwhelmingly English-speaking with an unwavering loyalty to the British Empire. As in the Cape Colony, teachers were imported from England and Scotland, and those countries, therefore, influenced policy and to a large extent subject content.

Just as with Cape schools, in the early period, Natal had no formal or detailed syllabuses for history. Government schools in Natal had their origin in Government Notice No. 35 of 1848 which invited tenders for the erection of a "government free school" in Pietermaritzburg. This first government school in the Colony of Natal was declared officially opened in July 1849. Hard upon the heels of this event was the opening of the first government school in Durban in 1850. In the absence of a centrally prescribed curriculum, it is not easy to obtain an authoritative picture of what was taught in the government-aided schools. Although subject to inspection, they were "free in the matter of curriculum, staffing, and the general running of the school".<sup>55</sup> According to Steenkamp the curriculum in the Pietermaritzburg Government School comprised quite simply English, Dutch, and Latin. The subject matter embraced by English included not only the rudiments of reading and writing, but also arithmetic, grammar, geography, history, the use of the globe, the principles of science, and the scriptures.<sup>56</sup>

In 1856 Natal became a colony separate from the Cape, with its own governor and a legislative council of 16 members. Soon after

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55 L.S. Steenkamp, Geskiedenis van die Onderwys vir Blankes in Natal, 1835-1893, pp. 41-42.

56 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent of Education for 1859, p.2.

an Education Department with a Superintendent at its head was established. In 1859 the first Superintendent of Education, Mann, reported his intention of preparing a book for use in schools which would include history, geography, and other subjects. The curriculum laid down by Mann was elaborated in the publication, Notes on the Essentials of Elementary Instruction for the use of the Teachers in Public Schools of Natal, 1863. History was allocated 2 hours out of 18 per week.<sup>57</sup> Only English history was required at this stage, Ince's Outlines of English History being the most commonly used book.<sup>58</sup>

The Report of the Education Commission of 1874 made provision for "History of the British Empire".<sup>59</sup> The Superintendent's report for the same year<sup>60</sup> noted the following books being in use in Natal schools:

Collier's History of the British Empire  
New School History of England  
Catechism of English History  
Henry's First English History  
Little Arthur's History of England  
Smith's History of England.

As in the case of the Cape, the content of the syllabus can to a certain extent be gleaned from examination questions. Candidates for the collective examinations in May 1876,<sup>61</sup> for example, were asked the following questions:

"Name in order the Sovereigns of England from Egbert to Victoria, giving the dates of accession.  
Write an account of the reign of one of the Saxon or Tudor sovereigns."

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57 R.O. Pearse, Early European Education in Natal, pp.51-52.  
58 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent of Education for 1861, p.201.  
59 R.O. Pearse, Early European Education in Natal, p.77.  
60 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent of Education for 1874, pp.31 following.  
61 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent of Education for 1876, p.68.

Questions set for the Government Examination for Teachers of Primary Schools in July 1878<sup>62</sup> included some on the English constitution, the Spanish Armada, Waterloo, and the rise of British power in India. On English history 1688-1878, candidates were invited to tell what they knew of these figures: Sir Robert Walpole; Henry M. Stanley; Sir Isaac Newton; Sir Francis Chantrey; the Earl of Beaconsfield; Hugh Miller; Henry Hallam; John Wilkes; Thomas Gray; Alfred Tennyson; David Hume and James Thomson.

In 1876 the history syllabus for Std 3 was simply "Outlines of English History", for Std 4 the same but more detailed, for Std 5 English history and the outlines of general history, and for Std 6 "more advanced English and General History".<sup>63</sup> The examination for the school leaving certificate for Natal candidates was, as in the other southern African states at the time, conducted under the auspices of the Cape Examination Board: Natal was formally linked to this Board in 1876.<sup>64</sup>

By 1888 Stds 3 and 4 were expected to study the "History of the English", but, significantly, for Std 5 the physical and political geography of Natal, and South Africa generally, was prescribed.<sup>65</sup> The breakthrough in school history came the following year when, amongst subjects prescribed for both the Collective Examination and the Bursary Examination for 1890, the candidates were for the first time expected to write on the outlines of the history of Natal, in addition to the customary English history 1377-1603.<sup>66</sup>

The Superintendent Inspector reports in 1891-92 that Russell's

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62 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent of Education for 1878, p.28.

63 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent of Education for 1876, pp.74-5.

64 R.O. Pearse, Early European Education in Natal, p. 53.

65 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent Inspector for Schools for 1888, pp.12-13.

66 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent Inspector for 1889, p.12.

Natal (examined later in this chapter) was being studied in Stds 4 to 7.<sup>67</sup>

These developments mirror the constitutional growth of Natal from a Crown colony to a self-governing colony: in 1893 Natal was granted Representative Government. As was considered in Chapter I, historical and national consciousness go hand in hand. This symbiosis is once more evident in the inclusion of Natal history, as well as that of South Africa, in Natal school syllabuses, as the colony's self-awareness increased. From 1903-4, Departmental reports included inspection reports on history as a separate subject. In his report of 1906 the Inspector for the Midlands District suggests that "more South African history should be done than is generally the case".<sup>68</sup>

The Superintendent reported in 1912<sup>69</sup> that South African history in Std 4 had been "a wearisome and barren study", but that this state of affairs was likely to be improved on the introduction of "a more suitable text book". The following year it was reported that a "pleasant story reader" (probably Synge) was a great improvement on the book formerly used (i.e. Russell), but South African teachers needed to be reminded that the book was written for British boys and girls, and a much fuller and more exact account of South African history was required for young South Africans.<sup>70</sup>

In an official publication of 1913 the Natal Education Department was still stating that "Natal is essentially a British Colony and its educational destiny has been shaped by British educators."<sup>71</sup>

The history syllabuses for the lower standards that were compiled

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- 67 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent Inspector for 1891-92, p.6.  
68 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent of Education for 1906, p.11.  
69 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent of Education for the Province of Natal for 1912, p.11.  
70 G.A.P., Report of the Superintendent of Education for 1913, p.12.  
71 N.E.D.A., Monograph on Primary Schools, Part I, 1913, p.1.

by the Natal Education Department are very similar to those of the other provinces at the time. The 1915 syllabus for Stds 1 and 2<sup>72</sup>, for example covered, in the South African history section, the Portuguese "discovery" of the Cape, van Riebeeck, van der Stel, the Huguenots, prominent Boer and British figures from the time of the Great Trek and the like. Many of the historical events or figures mentioned in the syllabus pertain to Natal. Examples are Cetshwayo, Isandlwana, Rorke's Drift, Ulundi and the Prince Imperial. The other half of the syllabus embraced both general and "English history". The work for Std 3 was simply described as "the History of Natal as set forth in Bryan's 'Our Country'".

It is interesting that for Stds 5 and 6,<sup>73</sup> history "as set forth in Warner's 'Brief Survey of British History'" was prescribed, while in "Dutch schools" Macmillan's South African History. Book III, was to be studied. Thus in 1915 English-speaking pupils in these standards were studying British history, while Dutch-speaking pupils South African history. As mentioned above, they would both have followed the Cape course.

To 1918 the school history syllabuses in Natal still reflected the same spirit and content as those of the Cape. In Stds 8 to 10 the work in history was determined by the requirements of the Cape University, which prescribed two courses dealing with the history of colonisation with its European background and with special reference to South Africa. Std 8 generally studied an outline course of European history, while Stds 6 and 7 studied English history. There was no definite teaching of the history of the Province of Natal in the Secondary School Course.<sup>74</sup>

As in the Cape, there were no prescribed history textbooks in the

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72 N.E.D.A., Education Department, Natal, Standard Syllabus August 1, 1915, p.5.

73 Ibid., p.6.

74 N.E.D.A., Monograph on Preparatory and Secondary Schools, Part II, 1913, p.10.



contemporary sense of the word. Among the books thought useful to teachers for reference on South African history were Cory, Theal, Bryan, Motley, and Aitton; in other words the standard texts of the time.<sup>75</sup>

#### 4. CHARACTERISTICS OF CAPE AND NATAL HISTORY SYLLABUSES TO 1918

The orientation of history teaching as reflected in these syllabuses was unequivocally British. The British Empire or Imperial Idea provided orientation even after the two colonies had achieved responsible government. The growing awareness of their own identity, and their increasing self-confidence in no way weakened their links with the Mother Country.

Thus while the heavy emphasis on British history, to the exclusion of all other, gradually gave way to a more balanced offering of both British and Cape history, the latter was also firmly British orientated, and taught within the context of Empire.

Toward the end of the period under review, particularly after Union, a broader South Africanism becomes evident, and syllabuses increasingly included the history of the whole country.

The colonial syllabuses, and the examination questions based on those syllabuses, place much emphasis on political or constitutional history and on military conflicts. Wars, battles and British military exploits generally, were central to the history learned by Cape and Natal pupils. This is natural in a frontier society which feels itself threatened. Candidates were expected to have a detailed knowledge of the genealogy of the British royal houses, constitutional affairs and various battles. Afrikaner objections to this type of history are understandable. Social and economic history was given only cursory attention.

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75 N.E.D.A., Standard Syllabus, August 1, 1915.

## 5. ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS IN USE IN CAPE AND NATAL SCHOOLS UP TO 1918

### 5.1 Common Characteristics of the Textbooks Examined

In comparison to the contemporary situation in history teaching in South Africa, the period up to about 1918 was characterised by the very small number of history textbooks available for use in schools. Wilmot, Noble, Whiteside, Sidwell, Russell, and Bryan were virtually the only books obtainable in English on South African history. There were many more standard works on British and General History, but these do not concern us here. Books on South African history published in Dutch are discussed in the following chapters. Most of the above authors were British-born and all were firmly loyal to the idea of Empire. The great similarity in their approach to history, their pro-British interpretation of historical events, in other words, their typical late nineteenth century colonial historical perspective, including their attitudes towards groups other than their own, will become apparent to the reader in the following pages. All were educated, articulate men, but their competence in the art of writing history varied.

These pro-British authors whose works are reviewed, could be expected to employ the most favourable language when describing the British role in South Africa. The benefits of British rule are extolled as are the virtues of the British settlers. Thus British soldiers are always "gallant" and the British colonists "industrious". Imperialist expansion in Southern Africa is legitimated in every case. It is always Britian's enemies who cause the wars. These opponents of British expansionism are portrayed in the most negative terms, whether they be Black tribes or the Boers.

There are negative assessments of the physical appearance, habits and character of all non-White peoples. The stereotype or master-symbol of the lazy, fickle, and drunken Hottentots, of the

murderous, thieving, animal-like Bushmen, and of the treacherous, plundering, bloodthirsty Black savages are firmly established in the works of Wilmot, Noble and the other authors reviewed.

The Khoi, San, Xhosa, Zulu and other tribes are variously described as "lazy", "filthy", "repulsive", "savage", "treacherous", "bloodthirsty". The Boers, when challenging British power, are viewed as "recalcitrant", "backward", "rebellious", and the like.

Yet when discussing conflicts between the Boers and the various non-White peoples, these authors tend to side with their fellow Whites. It is also noteworthy that the authors do not hesitate to take the colonial authorities to task when their actions are deemed detrimental to the interests of the colonists.

The authors' British bias is everywhere clear. Events important in Afrikaner history are either treated disparagingly, under-emphasized or ignored completely. There are numerous examples of such bias by emphasis or bias by omission.

## 5.2 Analysis of the Texts

### (a) A. Wilmot: History of the Cape Colony, (1871)

Wilmot was a British born member of the Legislative Assembly of the Cape Colony and ardent admirer of Cecil John Rhodes. His prolific writings manifest throughout an imperialist approach to South African affairs.<sup>76</sup> This 122 page study, the standard work in Cape, Natal, and even Republican schools for two decades or more, opens with the "discovery" of the Cape by the early Portuguese navigators and ends with the frontier war of 1856.

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76 Dictionary of South African Biography Vol. II, p.850.

Van Riebeeck is described as an "energetic", "faithful" official (p.5) who had a "successful" ten year term at the Cape. The first Dutch settlers are portrayed as "industrious" and "energetic" (p.6). The favourable image of the first European settlers is reinforced by references to their supposedly benevolent attitude toward the indigenous people: "They had no desire to ill-use or quarrel with the natives, neither was there any disposition to despoil them of land or cattle" (p.6).

South Africa's first folk-hero is acknowledged in the "ever-memorable heroism of Woltemade" (p.34). Wilmot devotes only one paragraph to the Huguenots, and is highly critical of the Company's regime at the Cape, and of the Dutch inhabitants who by the end of the Dutch period had become "too proud" or "lazy" to engage in any manual labour"(pp.42-44). On the other hand, he extolls the virtues of the British administration: "The colony ... advanced to a degree of prosperity which it had never known under its former masters"(p.46). In contrast to the briefest mention of the Huguenots, Wilmot devotes five pages to the arrival of the British in 1806, describing the Battle of Blaauwberg in considerable detail (pp.52-56). His British bias is further illustrated in his treatment of Slagters Nek: in contrast to later Afrikaner writers, Wilmot talks of the participants in that incident as "insurgents" who were "inflamed" by Frederik Bezuidenhout's "harangue". Wilmot devotes a mere half page to the Great Trek, both causes and course (p.84). The events after 1838 are not mentioned at all. Wilmot simply states that in 1844 "letters patent from England were issued, annexing Natal to the Cape of Good Hope" (p.89). The Dutch emigrants north of the Orange were "determined to resist the British Government"; their declaration of independence was a "revolt". However, the "rebels" were defeated at Boomplaats (p.97).

The positive self-image of the British settlers is further reinforced by the description of the 1820 Settlers as the best

thousand, "carefully chosen"(p.71), from among ninety thousand applicants. The favourable representation of the British continues in the description of Sir Harry Smith riding "gallantly" to save King William's Town, the "noble" defence of Whittlesea by its "gallant" defenders (p.104) and the exploits of the "gallant" Fordyce (p.105). The wreck of the Birkenhead is given a whole page, important as it is the folklore of the British Empire and British military tradition.

The terminology used by Noble to describe the indigenous inhabitants is in marked contrast to the flattering language used in reference to the Whites and the British in particular. From the beginning the non-Whites are regarded as a threat. Noble thus establishes stereotypes or master symbols which have endured to the present day. During the first few years, contact with the natives was limited to "successful barter" (p.6). Thereafter, however, they had "difficulties" with the Hottentots who had "frequently given trouble". A serious quarrel arose "in consequence of their hostile attitude"(p.7). Wilmot makes specific mention of the "purchase" by the Company of tracts of land from "Captain Schacher" and "Prince Dhouw", thereby justifying or legitimising the expansion of the Dutch settlement (p.8).

The Feindbild of the Khoi is continually reinforced by derogatory reference to their language ("the peculiar click ... of the savages"), their religious beliefs ("the most singular religious custom of the savages" was their veneration of the praying-mantis), intelligence (which was "considerable"), and sobriety, or lack thereof (they were "intensely fond of spirituous liquors") (pp.10 - 11).

The San are portrayed in even more disparaging terms, as being proverbial for their "troublesome character" and "universally outrageous conduct". They were "strangers to law", looked upon

every stranger as an enemy, "unforgiving", and "exceedingly deceitful and treacherous". Their eating habits were characterised by "brutal gluttony and intemperance". When no meat was available "they ate larvae and roots". Their religion consisted of "the meanest superstition". (pp. 11-12).

In summing up the short section on the "natives", Wilmot writes: "Such were the people with whom the Dutch came into contact" (p.13). The "natural result" of the hostilities between the settlers and the natives was that the latter were "driven some distance from Cape Town"(p.13). The decay of the "Hottentot race" could be traced to a very early date and "may to a great extent be attributed to an excessive indulgence in brandy and tobacco, which soon became Hottentot gods, to which they sacrificed health, honour and independence" (p.17).

The Xhosa are described as "barbarians", a "ferocious race". Wilmot's tenuous grasp of customs strange to a Westerner leads him to write that the Xhosa possess "no code of laws to appeal to" (p.60). Of their religious beliefs he is equally contemptuous; as is the case with all other "savages", their religion "is a superstition which degrades woman to the lowest level ... witchdoctors offer sacrifice and carry on the nefarious business of their religion"(p.60). They were "fierce and warlike savages, whose chief occupation was pillage", and in 1802 Ndlambe released his "kafir bands" to "ravage" the colony. The Xhosa "totally disregarded" (p.62) engagements, agreements and boundaries. Despite the British policy of conciliation "thefts by Kafirs" continued; they were, Wilmot concludes, indeed "irreclaimable, barbarious, and perpetual enemies" (p.63).

As the "robberies" and "depredations" of the Xhosa increased, and they "showed themselves obstinately determined to retain a portion of the Colony, "to which they had neither right nor title", Col. Graham was despatched to drive them over the Great

Fish River (p.63). In the wars of 1834, houses were burned, farmers killed or "murdered" in defence of their homes and large numbers of cattle stolen; ultimately the White men proved "their superiority" against "fearful odds". By the following years "savages" were retiring with their "plunder" (pp.77-78). The next frontier war was caused by the "frequent outrages and robberies" committed by the "Tambookies"; "robberies and assaults by the Kafirs continued" (p.89). Sandile's conduct was "markedly insulting", and he is given the full blame for the outbreak of the war, which released a "torrent of invasion flowing from Kafirland into the Colony" (p.91). The "crafty" Kreli misused the truce to muster his strength.

The War of 1850-52 saw the inhabitants of the frontier military villages "cruelly butchered". The "massacre" at Auckland is described in graphic detail: twenty-eight men were "butchered" in the presence of their wives and children (p.102). To further illustrate the allegedly treacherous nature of the Xhosa, Wilmot quotes a soldier serving in the war:

"I have been speaking to one of the women that escaped (from Auckland). She told me that it was customary for the Kafirs to visit at Christmas, and as usual they came ... She had as guests a petty chief and five or six others ... at a given signal they all rushed on and murdered the people." (p.103).

The "treachery of the Kafirs" was compounded by the "treachery" of the Kat River Hottentots and the Hottentot police. In 1856 a British private was "barbarously murdered" (p.115) and robberies were once more frequent. The frontier police proved useful in checking "the predatory incursions and thefts of the natives" (p.112). In his "conclusion", Wilmot writes of the struggles with a "restless savage race". The "coloured population had been trained to habits of decency", yet "there lingered, of course, the distinguishing traits of indolence and self-indulgence" (p.120).

The fusion of British, French, Dutch and German elements had

contributed "to make up our composite community of colonists" of this "large" Colony. Wilmot was, therefore, conscious of the birth of a new nation with its own identity at the Cape. His narrative of the colony's history concludes with an optimistic view of the Cape's future "commercial greatness", something which augered well for the future. Wilmot's book is evidence of the growth of the historical and national consciousness of the White settlers at the Cape as a distinct group, an embryo nation as it were. In this, one of the very first South African school history textbooks used in Cape schools, several master symbols are already firmly established: the lazy drunken Hottentots, the savage, treacherous Bushmen, the thieving, barbaric Xhosa, and the lazy, recalcitrant Boers. The use of disparaging and emotive language effectively creates hostile images of "the others". Furthermore Wilmot's historical perspective is, as is to be expected, that of a British-born colonial politician.

- (b) J. Noble: South Africa, Past and Present. A Short History of the European Settlements at the Cape, (1877)

This textbook also appeared in a Dutch translation as Zuid-Afrika, zijn verleden en heden: een beknopte geschiedenis van de Europeesche volksplantingen aan de Kaap (Cape Town, 1878).

John Noble was a Cape parliamentary official and author of Scots birth. Whereas Wilmot's book deals only with the Cape Colony, Noble's book, published six years later, although largely on Cape history, treats in its concluding section the other three South African states too. This book, also a standard work in South African schools in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, is almost three times the length of Wilmot's, being about 350 pages long. The very title betrays the Eurocentric perspective from which Noble approaches South African history - it was the history of the European settlement.

In his preface, Noble mentions the record of colonial progress



and prosperity and political development, as well as other "remarkable" incidents, and states that his principal aim had been to provide a narrative of the progress of European colonisation. Writing in 1877, he is acutely conscious of Carnarvon's federation plans, and seems optimistic about their chances of success. He writes of "South Africa", as if it were already a political entity, and talks of the past and present of "the land we live in". In a postscript to his preface, Wilmot mentions that the Transvaal Republic had since "submitted to British authority and that the Imperial flag now floats over Pretoria... and (we may hope) assuring peace and goodwill towards men, to all the regions south of the Zambezi."

To colonial writers of Wilmot's generation the benefits of British rule as implied in the above postscript were obvious. The lack of government control over the population towards the end of Company rule produced a "state of anarchy"(p.18). Yet "an unexpected solution" was at hand in the form of the first British occupation (p.19).

Just as with Wilmot, Noble's British bias (and bias by disproportion) is evident from the number of pages he devotes to various epochs : the Dutch period from 1652 to 1806 warrants one chapter, a mere twenty out of the total three hundred and fifty pages. He compares the slow progress at the Cape under Dutch rule to "the remarkable advance of the Anglo-Saxon communities in America and Australia"(p.4). Noble has little sympathy with those involved in the Slagters Nek "rebellion", which was the result of the "passionate and revengeful feelings of a few individuals" (p.33).

True to his exclusively pro-British outlook, Noble is not only derogatory of the non-Whites: he describes the Great Trek as an exodus into the wilderness of the "primitive colonial Boers" (p.73), and the Trekboers who had previously crossed the Orange as "de la plus basse classe" (p.75). The frontier Boer "regards

with disdain, the grand, but to him unintelligible results of combined industry, the beauty and excellence of which he cannot know ... he tosses up his head like a wild horse, utters a neigh of exultation, and plunges into the wilderness" (p.77). This nineteenth century British view of the Boers was to prove one of the most enduring of master symbols in British and Colonial writing.

The British annexation of Natal is regarded by Noble as in the interest of both Zulu and Boer. The Boer siege of Port Natal was resisted with "enduring courage and true military spirit" and "great gallantry" by the British troops. The Boer "insurgents" and "hostile bands", were "misguided men", many of them "the more violent and evil-disposed Boers" who endeavoured "by threat and clamour to intimidate the loyal and well-affected parts of the community". Thus Natal was declared a British colony "for the peace, protection and salutary control" of its inhabitants (pp. 102-103). The Trekkers who left Natal after the annexation were the "lawless, rebellious elements" (p.104).

Yet in clashes between Trekkers and tribesmen, Noble is always on the side of his fellow Whites. He writes of parties of Trekkers being "barbarously murdered" and "massacred" by their "savage" Matabele assailants (p.80). Shaka was a "native Attila" responsible for the extermination of "not less than one million human beings" (p.84). Dingaan was "treacherous and bloodthirsty", characteristic of a "savage barbarian". "Base and treacherous ... he massacred them clandestinely"(p.87). The Retief massacre is described in vivid detail, as are the subsequent events at Blaauwkrantz; the outposts were "butchered", the Zulu "barbariously speared old and young alike, seizing even helpless babies and dashing their brains against the wagon-wheels"(p.90). The Vlugkommando "gallantly" pursued the Zulu.

The Orange River Territory was "threatened with all the evils of

anarchy, confusion and violence" the natural consequence of "the absence of any superintendent (i.e. British) authority among the various races, civilized, semi-civilized and barbarian". The situation was aggravated by the arrival of the "discontented and disaffected" from Natal, the more "violent" of whom, such as Mocke's "hostile band" endeavoured to "incite" the others (p.107). As with the annexation of Natal, Noble is at pains to legitimize or justify the extension of British authority to the Trans-Orange. Pretorius led the "violently-disaffected" and "evil-disposed" elements against the British at Boomplaats (pp.128-129).

Noble makes much of the Transvaal Boers' alleged "natural antipathy to law and restraint", their "peculiar" and strong "prejudices"; they "made little scruple about indenturing Native children, sometimes by mere violence." In contrast to the innocent British settlers of the Eastern Cape described above, the Transvaal Boers committed "acts of cruelty and wrong" and "outrages" which naturally provoked Native retaliation. The image of the ignorant destructive Boers is elaborated upon to justify the imminent British annexation of the Transvaal. Noble's book was published in 1877. Noble even refers to the "South African Republic" between inverted commas, thereby questioning its legitimacy. This region was the "finest stretch of land in all South Africa", but unfortunately, inhabited by the patriarchal Boers "living in darkness" and "mutual strife" (p.172). This led to incidents such as the "barbarous murder" of the "lawless" Hermanus Potgieter "who was pinned to the ground by his savage foes who actually skinned him alive" (p.173). M.W. Pretorius' letter describing the mutilated bodies in lurid detail is quoted in full, a highly inflammatory piece of writing to be included in a school textbook.

His attitude towards the indigenous peoples is typical of the literature of justification throughout the Colonial world at the time: the "Bushmen" and "Kafirs" were "savages of a less

tractable character than the Khoi: they were "frequently annoying the settlers", "murdering their herds, carrying off their cattle, attacking their homesteads, and setting fire to their dwellings".

The frontier farmers had to be continually on the watch against "hostile attacks", their isolated position offering the strongest temptation to the "savage aborigines" to commit "atrocities upon them" (p.17).

The image of the Xhosa as the "enemy", as "hostile savages", as a threat, is expanded upon throughout Noble's textbook. The Xhosa became "lawless and daring, attacking the colonists, and spreading terror" (p.22). Following complaints of "outrages of the most atrocious kind" committed by the Xhosa, it was resolved to "clear the Zuurveld" (p.30). The massacre of Stockenström and his party is described in some detail, as is the discovery afterwards of "the mangled remains of the murdered men" (p.32).

Sir Andries Stockenström "knew the Kafirs ... and their marauding propensities"; the Xhosa chieftain Makanda's conduct was "inexcusable" and the colonists' cattle offered temptations to the "predatory habits" of the Xhosa. The unexpected and "unprovoked" invasion was an attack on the "unoffending" inhabitants, fifty of whom were "brutally murdered" (p.54). The missionaries "who happily were not attacked by these highly excited savages", were however compelled to listen to the "cold-blooded tales of murders which the Kafirs recited"(p.53). The many vicissitudes which befell the 1820 settlers were matters "which colonists in succeeding generations should never forget"(p.37).

Before the close of 1841 the "Kafirs" returned to "their former predatory habits", indeed "young Kafirland was ... always ready for plunder and ripe for war". The Ngqikas were "haughty and audacious", committing "robberies and murder" (p.64). During the War of the Axe "several valuable (i.e. British) lives were lost" (p.66). The frontier districts were overrun by "predatory

detachments" of the "savage foe", but the "brilliant" successes of British arms resulted in the Kafirs fleeing "utterly broken and dispirited" (p.67). In one skirmish "the brave Fordyce" fell, and in others "many a noble life was sacrificed" (p.70). Krelis is called a "contumacious" chief (p.71).

As a colonial Noble does not hesitate to take the Colonial Office to task when in his opinion, the interests or standing of his fellow colonists are at stake. He criticizes Glenelg's concern for the indigenous peoples: the colonists were not out to conquer or enslave the Natives; they were "advancing unarmed into the wilderness" and settling down as "peaceful" shepherds, traders, etc., in the immediate presence of "uncivilised tribes" who viewed them with "jealousy" and their growing wealth "with covetousness" (p.57). Glenelg became the apologist for "these barbarians", sending an "obnoxious despatch" which enraged the frontier settlers, most of whom were "loyal, good, Christian men, well and kindly disposed towards the natives, who had never participated in any aggressions" which could have caused the "barbarian inroad" (p.58).

On the Eastern Frontier, Sir Harry Smith was "placing his foot on Macomo's neck" and compelling the "rebellious Sandilli (sic) to kneel and kiss his toe"(p.121). In the following pages Smith emerges as a heroic, colourful, larger-than-life figure:

"'Fearless through Kafir bands  
On mortal conflict bent,  
The Hero spilt no savage blood  
Yet conquered as he went'" (p.122)

The war against the Basuto, caused of course by Basuto aggression, was as usual characterised by the "admirable discipline" of the British infantry, the "daunting steadiness of the troops" and the "heroic" deaths of "noble and Christian" officers and men (pp.152-153).

Adam Kok's Griqua lands were "legally annexed" to the Cape Colony in 1875 (p.163). The Diamond Fields dispute came to a "satisfactory conclusion" and Waterboer's plea for British protection was heeded : he was "accepted as a British subject". In this way Noble provides legitimacy for the expansion of British power in these regions (p.160), disregarding the immense dissatisfaction of, amongst others, the Transvaal and the Free State.

Noble devotes about fifty pages to the Cape's constitutional development. The anti-convict agitation figures prominently. These chapters illustrate the growing self-consciousness of the Cape as a maturing, more self-confident young state, able to take care of its own affairs. Issues such as responsible government, separation and other constitutional matters reflected "a country just beginning to develop itself" (p.250). Noble refers to the "gifts of representative and responsible government" (p.277).

In the final chapter Noble, a product of his times, pleads for a federation of the South African states in which the internal affairs of South Africa would be placed "in the hands of its own people - in allegiance to and under the guardianship of the Crown of Great Britain"(p.308).

While Noble's book was at the printers, the British annexed the Transvaal. In an appendix, Noble reveals many of the colonial views held at the time, for example a superior, paternalistic attitude towards the Blacks: "The natives have been treated in all respects with justice and consideration. Large tracts of the richest land are expressly set apart for them under the name of 'reserves' and 'locations'. The greater body of them live in those locations, under European magistrates or missionaries, who set an example of consistent moral conduct, impart instruction, and assist them in everything tending to advancement in civilization ... they are now enjoying greater comfort and prosperity than ever they did in their normal state of barbaric

independence ... the aim of the Colonial Government ... has been to maintain peace, to diffuse civilization and Christianity ... . The agencies employed are the magistrate, the missionary, the schoolmaster, and the trader ... . The changing of the habits and customs of a barbarous people cannot be carried out in a day ... .

"The advantages and value of British Rule have of late struck root in the native mind ... ere long Her Majesty's sovereignty will be extended over fresh territories, with the full and free consent of the chiefs and tribes inhabiting them!" (pp.335-336).

The contrast between such optimistic pronouncements on the pure benefits of British rule, and the judgements of Black writers on that same rule written a century later (see Chapter 8) is startling.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, nations use the interpretation of their past as a means of orientating themselves in time, and placing themselves in a continuum into the future. Noble's work has the following lines as frontispiece:

"'Land of Good Hope! Thy future lies bright 'fore my vision as thy skies'".

The young nation at the Cape could, in Noble's view, look forward to a bright future. In conclusion Noble gazes to the future, trusting that Black and White will be able to co-operate in the development of "the capabilities and resources of this vast continent" (p.336).

(c) G.R. Parkin: Round the Empire for the Use of Schools (1901)

The book was probably used at some time in certain Cape and Natal schools. Be that as it may, it is an important work in that it expresses so unequivocally the spirit of British imperialism prevalent at the turn of the century. Nor does it make a

secret of its purpose.

The map as frontispiece is captioned "The British Empire throughout the World", with British possessions coloured red. The preface is by the Earl of Rosebury: "It is on the character of each child that grows into manhood within British limits that the future of Empire rests ... the time, indeed, cannot be far remote when the British Empire must ... by growth of its population and its ubiquitous dominion exercise a controlling authority in the world. To that trust our sons are born ... I hope ... that the youth of our race will learn from this book how great is their inheritance and their responsibility. Those outside their islands may learn the splendour of their source and their 'home' ... Imperial unity ... can only be furthered and fostered by this little book."

In his introduction, Parkin states that the object of the book is to give children an account of "those parts of our great Empire which are outside of the British Islands ... It is hoped that this little volume may find its way into many schools, and prove helpful to teachers who are interested in building up British patriotism." The British Empire, boasts Parkin, covers a much larger part of the earth's surface than was ever held by any other nation (p.1).

According to Parkin, the British Government tried unsuccessfully to have the Uitlanders' grievances remedied. The Boers were defeated and their land once more annexed to the British Empire (p.176). The Empire gained its different parts sometimes "by hard fighting", sometimes "by treaty or purchase", sometimes "by merely occupying lands previously waste or held only by scattered savage tribes" ... but in all cases ... "our right to possession" has been established (p.260). No nation "ever had such great opportunities for doing noble work" and "no other mother land has ever turned towards it so much of affectionate thought" (p.263).



This book expresses exquisitely the consciousness of Britain's civilizing mission in the world.

- (d) R. Russell: Natal. The Land and its Story: A Geography and History for the Use of Schools, (1899)

Russell was Superintendent of Education for Natal in the 1870's.

The edition examined was already the sixth of this standard work which was used in Natal schools for several decades. Roughly two-thirds of the book's 300 odd pages deal with Natal history. The purpose of the textbook is stated in the preface: "This outline ... is intended to help the young people of the Colony to acquire a knowledge of their homeland and to encourage them to take an intelligent interest in all that makes for its welfare and progress." Russell orientates his readers to Natal as their homeland, set against the wider background of the Empire. In the Geography section we read: "Natal, the land we live in, is one of England's colonies. It forms a part of 'Greater Britain', and of that widely-scattered and powerful empire on which the sun never sets" (p.1).

Russell's description of the frontier Boers is as unflattering as Noble's: the "isolation from their fellows and from all civilizing influences was most injurious to their moral and social condition ... . Had it not been for their pious national habit of reading the Bible ... they must speedily have lapsed into the degraded condition of the Hottentots ... who surrounded them" (p.95). Yet when his fellow Whites are pitted against the Blacks, they are viewed in a more favourable light. Thus the Voortrekkers' leaders were "grave, stern men imbued with the spirit of the Dutch burghers who had defeated Alva" (p.145); Andries Pretorius was a "brave man" of "great shrewdness and ability" who led a force of 460 "resolute hearts"(p.158). Martinus Oosthuizen was "gallant", and a "hero" (p.154).

The Boer plan to remove all tribesmen to the area between the Umtumvuna and Umzimvubu Rivers was regarded with alarm by the British authorities who were, of course, "ever regardful of the interests of the Native races" (p.170) "the British lion woke up at last", and the "ensign" was hoisted at Durban. The "irritating conduct" of the Boers exhausted Captain Smith's patience; the British were rescued through the efforts of Dick King "that doughty Englishman", his feat "scarcely ever equalled for pluck and endurance" (p.175). The relieving force ran up "the Ensign, never again to be lowered (original emphasis)" (p.180). Following the annexation there was still a "spirit of resistance to English authority alive among the more ignorant and discontented" Boers who were "conspiring with their lawless and turbulent countrymen" across the Vaal (p.183). Pretorius, with "hatred of the English Government raging in his heart" led the "malcontents" out of Natal (p.190). The Young Transvalers at the outbreak of the War in 1880 were "densely ignorant and prejudiced".

One sees here another example of British-orientated writers taking an anti-Boer stance in British-Boer conflicts, but siding with the Boers in Black-White clashes of interest.

Typically, Russell refers to not only the Boers, but all other non-British inhabitants in scornful terms. Thus the Bushmen were "savages, pure and simple", in colour a "muddy yellow" ... with crafty deep-set eyes" (p.108) and their language more resembles "that of animals than articulate human speech.". Though "so low in the scale of civilization" they did possess the "power of graphic illustration" (p.109). In the 1840's Bushman "banditti" still "infested" the Natal mountains (p.191). The Hottentots, who had "slain" D'Almeida's party, gradually sold their birthright for "brandy and tobacco". They were a "dirty indolent people, fond of feasting, singing and dancing" (p.111).

The Xhosa, in "moonlight raids", "plundered and burned and murdered without mercy" (p.96). Russell further talks of "kafir marauders" and "warlike kafirs" being the only "cloud on the prosperity of the colony" (p.97). The Xhosa tribes were to cause "much suffering and bloodshed before they were finally subdued" (p.99). Only in 1877 did "savagery receive its final blow on the Cape frontier" (p.98).

Turning to the Zulu of his native Natal, Russell describes how quarrels among them were settled by a kind of "savage tournament." Shaka was a "merciless savage" who destroyed his enemies, especially women and children with the most "atrocious cruelty" (p.119). Fynn, Farewell and King ("the dauntless three") were forced to witness "sickening cruelty" at Chaka's kraal. "No more merciless master stains the pages of history" (p.133). Dingane was "Chaka's equal in cruelty" and "excelled him in cunning and treachery". The Matabele were "desert robbers", who roamed about seeking what they might devour"(p.147) and Mzilikaze was a "lawless robber" (p.148). At the Bushman's River "the savages spared nothing ... family after family was butchered without mercy" (p.154).

Before the Langalibalele Rebellion, the "attitude of the Kafirs was defiant in the extreme" (p.213). Cetshwayo too, was "insolent" and "defiant" towards British authority. In short, the British "came to the conclusion that the condition of Zululand was a disquietening and disturbing element in the peace and progress of South Africa and that the English Government could not allow it to continue". Thus the British invasion of Zululand was legitimate.

The comfortably benign self-image is expanded constantly: at Isandlwana the British fought "gallantly and well" with "cool and determined courage" but were "done to death with savage spears" (p.231). At Rorke's Drift the Zulus were "splendidly repulsed by the little garrison of "heroic defenders" (p.231). At Hlobane

many deeds of bravery were performed by the "gallant troopers", finally the British were victorious in the great conflict with savagery in South Africa" (p.238). During the Anglo-Transvaal War of 1880-81, at Laing's Nek, the British merely "retired" and at Ingogo they "moved back" as opposed to retreating. At Majuba Colley's grave was surrounded by "many gallant men" (p.251) and the besieged British garrisons in the Transvaal endured with "heroism" (p.252). Russell does, however, regret this "ever-to-be lamented conflict between the two white races in South Africa." p.252).

The establishment of "agricultural shows, cricket clubs and races" showed that by the 1850's "English people in Natal were a stirring though small community and healthy in mind and body" (p.198). Attention is paid to the economic, social, cultural, and particularly the constitutional development of the young colony. In this way the consciousness of the Natal settlers of being a group with its own colonial identity is expressed. Russell's narration ends in 1888.

(e) J. Whiteside: A New School History of South Africa with Brief Biographies and Examination Questions, (1907)

In the scope of its some 155 pages, Whiteside's much-used standard school textbook (the edition reviewed is the sixth) covers the traditional period beginning with the "discovery of the Cape" and ending with the granting of responsible government to the Transvaal in 1906.

Whiteside's treatment of the indigenous peoples is in the traditional mould: the Cape was occupied by "strange looking Hottentots and Bushmen" (P.15); the San were "an inferior race" living off "roots, locusts and game", in caves adorned with "rude paintings"; who had "generally proved to be untameable" (p.21). The "indolent and barbarous" Khoi "robbed and murdered" the Dutch

burghers (p.22). Much later the Khoi at Bethelsdorp were characterised by their "slothful, degraded habits"; Stuurman's settlement soon became "a nest of thieves, and had to be destroyed" (p.15).

For many centuries there had been "constant and deadly strife" between the San and Khoi (p.15). Similarly the "Bantu or Kafir tribes" were often at war with one another. The idea of the indigenous inhabitants being in a state of incessant warfare before the arrival of the Whites is another of the enduring master symbols in South African historical writing, derived from Theal (see Chapter 4). A further enduring master symbol perpetuated by Whiteside is that of the empty interior into which the Trekkers entered : "Inhabitants they saw none, for the numerous tribes of Natives had been destroyed by Chaka's warriors" (p.103).

Offensive in reference to the Xhosa abound in Whiteside's book. Xhosa women "rudely cultivated the soil" with "clumsy" implements (p.27). Persons accused of witchcraft were "horribly tortured by being roasted alive, or pinned down to the ground and slowly devoured by ants" (p.27). Emotive, graphic language such as this (and the other examples which follow) was bound to reinforce stereotypes and arouse hostility toward other groups. In 1793 they once more "swarmed" across the frontier to "burn", "lay waste", "kill" and "plunder" (p.42). In 1799, they "ravaged the country", "plundered" cattle and "burned farmhouses as they went". Finding "nothing more to steal", they withdrew (p.48). The master symbol of the thieving, ravaging, plundering Xhosa hordes, established so firmly by these early writers was to persist in school textbooks up to the present time. It was always the Xhosa who broke the frontier agreements, thus sparking off hostilities: "notwithstanding their promise to be quiet, they continued their plundering expeditions" (p.48). In 1811 the Xhosa had "ruthlessly plundered" far and wide, committing the "most barbarous murders" (p.56).

Colonel Graham naturally was "a brave Scotch soldier", and the 1820 settlers "struggled bravely" against the odds, to become "by industry and perseverance" prosperous (p.63). Like other colonial historians Whiteside does not fail to mention the episode of the Birkenhead - "they died without flinching" in the shark-infested surf, leaving a splendid example of heroism and self-control" (p.78). The British infantry in the Basuto Wars performed their duty with "coolness and bravery" (p.98). In the same way affirmative language is employed to describe non-British Whites, such as Woltemade, "the brave Dutchman" (p.37), and the "very brave and able" Tjaart van der Walt (p.49). Nowhere is the black-white, hero-villain dichotomy clearer than in these early textbooks. Maqoma and Tyhali "were of a restless and cruel disposition" (p.65) and "sought war". The traders in Kafirland were "barbarously murdered" (p.66). Whiteside regards Glenelg's actions after the 1834 war as "iniquitous", allowing as it did the Xhosa to "swarm" back to their old haunts and "resume their thieving practices" (p.68).

The chiefs "rejected Christianity and clung to heathenism and witchcraft", "refused to observe boundaries", wandered where they pleased "killing and thieving in broad daylight". Treaties with them were "of no more use than waste paper". The War of the Axe "thus ensued". The view of the non-Whites as fickle, unreliable and treacherous is ever present in these early (and even some later) works. British soldiers captured by the Xhosa were treated "with great barbarity and some soldiers were lashed to wagons and roasted alive" (p.72). The War of 1850-53 was inevitable as the chiefs "brooded sullenly" in their fastnesses over their recent defeat (p.75). It is always the other side that is responsible for the outbreak of war.

Whiteside's negative views on the Boers of the interior are typical of his school of writing: they lived a life "little removed from barbarism" (p.14). Yet his treatment of Slangers Nek is more sympathetic than either Wilmot's or Noble's, possibly

reflecting a more conciliatory approach to issues in the past deemed to be divisive between English and Afrikaans speakers: Whiteside was, after all, writing in 1907, with the Anglo-Boer War recently fought and strong moves countrywide toward political unification being made. He is also more sympathetic to the Voortrekkers than some of his predecessors. Whiteside stresses the help given the Voortrekkers by the Port Natal English: he writes of the "little band of Englishmen" that "rallied to the help of the Dutch" (p.104). Once more the past is recalled to serve a political need in the present. Yet in the clash between the Natal Boers and the British, Whiteside unhesitatingly takes the British side : King was a "sturdy English farmer" who "bravely" volunteered, and much is made of the British defence of Port Natal (pp.106-107). Significantly, Whiteside's plays down the alleged looting of Livingstone's house by the Transvaal Commando mentioned in Noble and Wilmot. He simply states that the house was looted without mentioning who the alleged perpetrators might have been (p.78).

The annexation of Pondoland is justified by the "horrible atrocities frequently perpetrated" by witchdoctors. Rhodes visited the chiefs to inform them "that their authority was at an end" and their followers welcomed the change, according to Whiteside (p.93). Once again such pronouncements are in startling contrast to Black interpretations of the same event. Whiteside contends that after the annexation of Basutoland, "under the new rule the Basutos prospered" - "money became plentiful, and a period of prosperity and peace set in, such as these valleys had never before known" (p.99). This idyllic Pax Britannica is in direct contrast to the views of radical Black (or White) historians who accuse the British of exploitation, dispossession, under-development and so on.

In his explanation of how the Zulu War began, Whiteside talks of the "dark cloud" and "dread of a Zulu invasion". Cetshwayo "did not keep his word" on the military system, and did not reply to

the British ultimatum (pp.109-110). In this way the British invasion of Zululand is also justified. In the resulting war "23 000 Zulus poured over the hill, and swept down in solid masses on the defenceless camp" at Isandlwana. The British troops as always "fought bravely" till the "massacre was over". He writes too of the "splendid defence" of Rorke's Drift (pp.111-112). The Prince Imperial "died fighting bravely" in a skirmish with "a handful of savages" (p.112). After the war, strife still continued among the Zulus, so "the rest of Zululand was taken over as British territory" (p.113). Following this "the Zulus settled down peacefully to pastoral and agricultural pursuits" (p.114).

Similarly, the annexation of Bechuanaland, and earlier, of the Diamond Fields and Griqualand West, are justified in the name of keeping open Great Britain's trade route to the interior. Rhodes "conquered Matabeleland and destroyed the awful tyranny that had its centre there" (p.95).

Just as Blacks scarcely feature in Whiteside's work except as thieves or enemies, so the Indians warrant no more than four lines. They had spread over South Africa "injuriously affecting the trade carried on by White men" (p.108).

Whiteside devotes three lessons to the history of the Orange Free State. True to the spirit of reconciliation between the two White language groups at the time, he plays down the British-Boer clashes. Whiteside quietly legitimizes the annexation of the Diamond Fields: the Dutch farmers actually "gained" by the "arrangement" which settled the Diamond Fields dispute. President Steyn and his Raad, by supporting the Z.A.R. "plunged the country into war in 1899" (p.124). It is always the other side that causes the war.

The Transvaal is given twenty pages: here too Whiteside's British bias is patently obvious. Shepstone "hoisted the English flag at



Pretoria", believing that this was "the only way to save the country" (pp.128-129); Whiteside does, however, concede that this was a violation of the Sand River Convention. He acknowledges that the Annexation was "unfortunate", and that resistance was inevitable (p.130). Many of the Dutch farmers who took up arms were "ignorant and uneducated" (p.130). In keeping with most school history textbooks of the time, Whiteside heavily emphasizes military history - the 1881 War warrants three full pages.

In his treatment of the Anglo-Boer War, Whiteside is conciliatory towards the recently defeated Boers, although his sympathies lie with the Uitlanders in the clash between Kruger and British demands. Though the newcomers "had saved the Republic from bankruptcy, built Johannesburg, and were paying four-fifths of the taxation", they were not allowed to have any voice in the government of the country. English schools were denied State aid, and "many officials were corrupt" (p.136). Whiteside is, however, highly critical of the Jameson Raid, which he calls "the little blundered revolution", "flagrantly illegal" and "foolish in the extreme". The Raid "rendered a peaceful solution ... almost impossible". This is a remarkably objective judgement coming as it did only five years after the Treaty of Vereeniging (p.138).

Nevertheless the overall tone of Whiteside's treatment of the Anglo-Boer War is pro-British. The military preparedness of the two Republics, he writes, "revealed long and carefully laid plans", and it was soon apparent "that the object of the war was not simply the defence of the Republics." The advancing Boers "annexed the country they occupied to one or other of the Republics, "looted" farmhouses, "swept off" cattle, broke up railways and destroyed bridges. The British offered "stubborn" resistance. The Republican forces were "defeated" at Belmont, but the British were only "repulsed" at Magersfontein and Colenso (p.145).

In a section headed "Cape Colony today", Whiteside emphasizes the Cape's expanding frontiers, economic power, communications network and education facilities: "Everywhere there are signs of vigorous and healthy life" (p.97). Here Whiteside is optimistically orientating his readers toward a prosperous future.

In Chapter 2 it was pointed out that it is often what is left unsaid that contributes most to bias in textbooks. Whiteside is a case in point - nowhere in his discussion of the War does he even mention British policy involving the destruction of Boer farms in the Republics. This is an example of bias by omission at its worst. No wonder Whiteside's book was so strongly resented by Republican-minded Afrikaners in the Transvaal after 1902 (see Chapter 5).

Whiteside concludes with the hope that there would never again be war "between the two great European races in South Africa" (p.146). Throughout the book one is conscious of Whiteside writing very much with the South African situation of the time in mind.

(f) H.B. Sidwell: The Story of South Africa. An Outline of South African History (1910)

Henry B. Sidwell was a history teacher in the Cape. His story of South Africa was one of the perennials in South African schools for many years. The particular copy consulted is one of fourteen editions published to 1910.

The Eurocentric approach is typical of its time: for ages Africa was "unknown, impenetrable" and not till 1400 was "the veil lifted, and the mystery removed which for ages had concealed the outline of the Dark Continent" (p.2). The master symbol of the indigenous peoples, whether San, Khoi or Black as a threat, is reinforced continuously. The Portuguese had no desire to have any

dealings with the "savages" on the shore. The skirmish in which D'Almeida was killed foreshadowed "the long and bloody struggle ... between the European and the savage" (p.3). Sidwell uses the term "savage" four times on pages 2 and 3. In a chapter headed "The Natives of South Africa", Sidwell deals with "the Kafirs", "the Hottentots" and "the Bushmen" in the by now standard stereotyped and clichéd manner. On the Bushmen: of religion they knew nothing; their language was not so much like human speech "as like the chattering of apes"; the "rude pictures" they left behind "tell of some higher instinct in the minds of the poor savages who drew them" (pp.72-73). The Khoi are described as "very dirty", "lazy and light of heart, their chief amusements were eating, sleeping and dancing"; in their "wild state they had no clear ideas of religion of any kind" (p.74).

The favourable language employed when describing the White settlers is in marked contrast to the offensive terms used in relation to those who are not White. For example, van Riebeeck and his "little band of pioneers" set "vigorously" to work and his "sturdy handful of Dutchmen kept stoutly to their task" in the face of great danger and hardship: the "native trouble" that dark cloud which so often dimmed the fair prospects of South Africa" soon flared up (p.13). As early as 1653 "the Hottentots raided the White men's cattle" and from that time forward "continual strife ensued between the settlers and the savages" (p.14). The interpretation of South African history as a never-ending struggle of the White against the savage, the barbarian, and conversely of then non-Whites as a threat, as a master symbol was already well established in Sidwell's time. In 1672 "natives gave the colonists much trouble": they "seized and murdered eight whites", but the "fleet- footed savages" got away (p.22). The eighteenth century saw the slow but steady advance of the White man, "pressing ever forward into the wilderness". The Khoi and the Xhosa "again and again swept down on the White man's herds", trying in vain to stop his "onward march". Ultimately, however, the "beaten savages" became by degrees the

"slaves of their conquerers"(p.33).

The master symbol of the thieving, cowardly, bloodthirsty Xhosa is reinforced almost ad nauseum in these early works. The Xhosa would not go back to "their side of the river" and "half ruined" the frontier farmers by "constant thieving" - "nothing was safe from them" (p.58). By 1811 "the Kafirs had become so troublesome" that it was resolved to drive them "clean over the river into their own country" (p.59). This war was marked by "one of those cowardly murders which savages delight in" (i.e. the murder of Stockenström): "the fierce thirst for blood set all the savage nature of the wild men on fire ... the war-cry pealed high above the dry and tangled bush, the assegais gleamed for a moment in the sun, and all was over" (pp.56-60).

A further master symbol relating to the indigenous inhabitants common throughout colonial historiography is that of the incessant warfare before the arrival of the Whites. As always, "the great kafir tribes were restless and disturbed": they were "jealous of each other, ready to quarrel on the least excuse, and to commence the fiercest of civil wars, in which mercy to the conquered was unknown" (p.60).

In works such as Sidwell's there are no nuances. There are only villains and heroes - the Blacks being the villains and the Whites all heroes. So, for example, at Maqoma's urging "the savage armies swept down upon the colony" (p.65), but his "dark tide broke and shattered" like a wave against the "discipline and courage of the English soldiery" (p.66). The "sturdy farmers" (1820 Settlers) also fought "gallantly" against the "plundering savages of Kafirland" (p.69). Similarly, at Woburn during the Sixth Frontier War, the settlers "stood up boldly to meet the savages' rush", and at Auckland the "murderous band of savages", the "pitiless foe" "treacherously" fell upon those that had fed them. With "undaunted hearts the gallant fellows" fought until the "savages thrust them through with their spears"

(p.106). This was followed by the "old story of savage cruelty of blazing homesteads and wasted lands". Many were the "stirring adventures and exploits" that took place during this war, but one "heroic deed" outshines the others, the Birkenhead, to which one-and-a-half pages are devoted (pp.108-109).

This illustrates once more how important a gallery of heroes is to a nation. It is almost as if textbook writers such as Sidwell, Wilmot, Russell and Noble used two sets of terminology: the one reassuringly positive, applied to the Whites, and especially the British, the other consistently derogatory for all those not White, or British.

The Xhosa were "fond of war", and had "very little idea of any Higher Power"; their wives were bought with cattle - they were "slaves", while the men "pass their time in idleness". These vast tribes "have hindered, and still hinder" the progress of civilization (p.76). Time and again they "burst on the unprotected frontier", an "eager, swiftly moving band of savages", their progress marked by "fire and death". Then, "loaded with plunder, the savages poured back through the land they had ruined" (p.81). Meanwhile on the Eastern frontier matters had steadily deteriorated: treaties with the chiefs were of little value as these people had already shown "their faithless character". It was almost a relief when the border farmers beheld the "restless savages preparing for open war" - better that than "the daily theft and violence of a nation of thieves" (p.99). It was never the Whites who broke agreements or violated treaties. This one-sided approach to conflicts in South African history persists all too frequently even today.

In the same way as the Xhosa posed a permanent threat to the Cape, so the Zulu were a constant danger to Natal, which, Sidwell contends, would have become one of the most flourishing of the British colonies "were it not for the vast number of natives around and within its borders" - "dense masses of barbarians"

surround it (p.126). The Zulu armies, numerous, perfectly trained as "bloodthirsty" as ever lay "like a vast thunder-cloud across the horizon of Natal, threatening to burst at any moment in ruin on the colony" (p.127).

Writing in 1910, Sidwell could afford to be magnanimous towards the Voortrekkers, earlier termed "rebels" and the like. The Trek now becomes the "stirring story" of the "gallant Dutchmen marching into the desert" (p.86). The use of laudatory language to reinforce a positive master symbol, in this case the self-image, and the use of uncomplimentary terminology to create a Feindbild is nowhere clearer than in Sidwell's treatment of the Trek: the Trekkers acted "like gallant and resolute men"; they were the descendents of the "heroes of Haarlem"; their leader Retief was an "intelligent, brave and God-fearing" man. The Matabele on the other hand were "cruel foes", "savages"; their attack was "treacherous and unprovoked". The Zulu "savages leapt upon their prey ... and beat out their brains with clubs"; The "savage hosts" were beaten off at Blaauwkrantz. The commandos chased the "flying savages" over the plains, but Dirkie Uys was to die among the "savages". Dirkie Uys becomes a national, and no longer only an Afrikaner, hero: "Long may the memory of that noble deed remain ... the picture of that gallant Boer boy ... is one that should never fade ... from the minds of South African boys, be they English or Dutch" (p.94). This is an appeal for unity expressing the new sense of nationhood after 1910. Dick King of "resolute heart", was a "gallant rider" and "bold horseman" (p.96).

It is interesting that Sidwell does not even mention the Vow: for him, an English-speaker, it clearly had little or no significance, or was best left unmentioned.

As with other British-orientated colonial writers, Sidwell sides with the Boers against the Blacks (of whatever tribe), the Boers being fellow Whites. When the Boers were ranged against the

British, however, Sidwell is critical of the Boers and unhesitatingly pro-British. Thus the Boers north of the Orange who opposed British authority he terms "rebels" and Boomplaats a "revolt" (p.102). Following the Annexation in 1877, "prosperity came with the British flag". At Laing's Nek the British soldiery fought with "heroic valour". Sidwell observes that Majuba was a "disgrace to British arms" (p.130), and in a spirit of conciliation grants that the Boers had fought "nobly" for their freedom (p.131).

The Jameson Raid and the War of 1899 were the outcome of the Transvaal Government's increase of its "already extensive armaments", and the Uitlanders "chafing under the restrictions" on their freedom (p.139). Milner's "very reasonable proposals" were turned down by Kruger. Implicit is the accusation that the ZAR's obstinacy caused the war. The "distress and misery" of the British subjects who had to leave the Transvaal "will never be forgotten" (p.141). During the war, British forces were "compelled to surrender", "retire" or were "repulsed" owing to the "overwhelming numbers of the enemy" (p.142), whereas the Boers were "completely routed" or "defeated". Buller's disastrous defeats are passed off as "failed assaults": he was an "undaunted general" with his "splendid soldiery" (p.146). The Peace of Vereeniging "was hailed with joy by both Briton and Boer" (p.146). (This statement appears ludicrous when compared with the Boers' perception of Vereeniging as their darkest hour). The progress toward Union could, however, not be held up (p.155). This particular edition appeared in 1910, the year of Union.

To orientate his readers, Sidwell gives a vision of the future South Africa: the discovery of vast mineral resources "bids fair to raise South Africa to a high place among the nations in the history of the future"(p.131). The still maturing national consciousness of the new nation is exquisitely expressed in Sidwell's chapter entitled "New South Africa" which opens with

the slogan "Advance South Africa!" (p.132). Matabeleland, the "new land of Promise" where Major Wilson's Shangani patrol "fought splendidly"(p.135), bids fair to be a "valuable addition to British South Africa".

(g) H. Bryan: *Our Country. An Elementary History of Natal (1909)*

First published in 1909, the year before Union, and subsequently updated, Bryan's concise textbook of 130 small pages was the standard work recommended in Natal primary and even junior secondary classes for some decades. Hugh Bryan was an educationist in Pietermaritzburg. The title "Our Country" refers specifically to Natal. The work should therefore be seen as a conscious attempt to establish the identity of Natal as an autonomous political entity, apart from the other South African states. The identity formation function of history in the classroom is apparent here.

The book's contents cover the by then customary topics from the "discovery" of the Cape to the First World War, with Natal the focus or orientation. Characteristic of the school histories of the time, there is heavy emphasis on military history: 13 of this book's 29 chapters deal directly with wars and battles, while several of the others make references to military conflicts.

Bryan's treatment of what he terms the "aboriginals" is conventional, in fact stereotyped. The Khoi were "a lazy, peaceful race" (p.10) who "did not make good servants", as they were "too lazy, and their old ways of thieving were hard to change" (p.10). The San were "the most curious" of the three aboriginal races. There are the usual allusions to their colour, height, and repulsive physical appearance generally. Their language was "very queer", and they could not count "more than two" (p.11). Every other race hated them, "for they were cruel, false, and thievish". The "Bantu" men "spent their time in fighting" while their women worked (p.12). During the last 50



years the "Bantu or Natives" had become "worse in their habits" (p.13). "Coolies" had to be imported because the Zulu enjoyed "the lazy life of his kraal" (p.65).

Shaka is presented as a skilled but cruel chief who outdid all other "cruel and savage" kings of other nations in his "thirst for human blood" (p.31). Dingane was "quite as cruel" as Shaka, but "more crafty" (p.34). In 1872 a British force had to be despatched to bring the "proud chief (Langalabilele) to his senses" (p.69). Bryan finds the usual reasons to justify the British invasion of Zululand in 1879: "it was quite clear that the old Zulu spirit had got the upper of Ceteswayo" (p.79). Again in 1906 there was "trouble with the natives" (p.123), during which "thousands of foolish natives were killed or put in prison" (p.124). During the uprising, of course, "our men did splendid work" (p.124).

Bryan's bias in the conflicts between the Zulus and the Voortrekkers is toward the latter, as fellow Whites. Yet understandably, from his English point of view, his sympathies clearly lie with the British in the conflict with the "Dutch" in 1842, during which the British garrison held out "bravely" (p.53). The Annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 is glossed over in one sentence: "Theophilus Shepstone was sent up, and he managed to get the Dutch to accept British rule in the Transvaal" (p.77). Writing in 1909, it was to be expected that Bryan would be conciliatory toward the "Dutch" - he concedes that they were "better shots" and that they "put their brains into their fighting" (p.56). This conciliatory attitude is further evident in Bryan's discussion of what he terms the "First Dutch War" (1880-81), a conflict he appears to regret. His pro-British bias in the treatment of the Xhosa during the "Second or Great Dutch War" is, however, obvious. His sympathy clearly lies with the "badly treated" Uitlanders (p.108). He notes with pride that Natal "had done her best to help Britain in the war".

The establishment of Natal as a colony in 1843, its eventual separation from the Cape in 1856 and the immigration of British, Indian and German settlers, all receive attention as does the establishment of towns, schools, churches, industries, communications and the like. In a chapter entitled "Natal grows stronger" much is made of the progress and development of Natal in various fields, reflecting an awareness of the separate identity of the Natalians: much of the progress in Natal ... was due to the energy of her own people (p.90). There is a fairly detailed description of the powers and composition of Natal's representative government, granted in 1893, mirroring the self-consciousness of this new "self-governing state" (p.101).

Bryan, like the overwhelming majority of his fellow Natalians at the time, was unwavering in his loyalty to the Crown: he writes of "our good Queen Victoria" showing her interest in Natal by sending out her son, Prince Alfred (p.64). Later he mourns the death of "the great and good Queen Victoria" (p.121).

The readers i.e. White pupils in Natal, are provided with an orientation toward the future. Bryan anticipates the coming of Union a year later: "we must not go on living as four or five different states in South Africa ... if South Africa as a whole could be made to prosper, then Natal and all the other colonies would prosper with it ... with greater effort we shall build up a more lasting prosperity than that of days gone by" (pp.119-120). In the final chapter "The Lessons of Our Story" Bryan provides orientation and inspiration for the present generation by recalling the lessons of "duty, truth, honesty, obedience and purity" provided by the great men of South Africa's and Natal's past, including Dirkie Uys, Dick King, da Gama, the Voortrekkers, Shepstone and Escombe. Names such as these "ought to be written on our hearts", and their deeds "are speaking to you" (pp.128-131).

## 6. SUMMARY

One sees in the syllabuses and textbooks of the period the absolute dominance of the Imperial idea, an orientation of South Africa as part of the British Empire. This is characteristic of the British-orientated Colonial historiography of the nineteenth century.

Yet a growing self-consciousness, an assertiveness on the part of the Cape, and to a lesser extent of the Natal colonists, and later the young Union, is also evident.

There are the first moves toward a South African "White" nationhood, of which those who were not White could not form a part.

The generally anti-Boer tenor of especially the earlier works gradually gives way to a more conciliatory approach to the Afrikaner. The indigenous peoples, however, are relegated to the role of enemies, and described in derogatory and weighted language.

The stereotypes and master symbols which survive today had their origins in this period.

We turn now to history teaching in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, and Orange Free State during the same period, where the second stream of historiography, the Afrikaner nationalist, increasingly manifested itself.

## CHAPTER 4

### AFRIKANER STIRRINGS: NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE TEACHING OF HISTORY IN REPUBLICAN SCHOOLS TO 1900

#### 1 THE AWAKENING OF AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

Until about 1877 the terms "South Africa" and "Afrikaner Volk" had little or no spiritual or political meaning for the Afrikaners, who lacked political unity and national consciousness. The Great Trek had sundered the Afrikaners into a Republican North and a Colonial South, the two having few sentiments in common. The Afrikaners of the Cape, in particular, lacked a sense of identity as the stimulus necessary for the development of national consciousness was not present.

Before 1881 it seemed as if the Dutch-or Afrikaans-speaking element was destined to disappear.<sup>1</sup> Politically, economically, militarily and culturally they were in an apparently hopeless position in the face of overwhelming British superiority. G.D. Scholtz contends that had it not been for external factors, the Cape and Natal Afrikaners would eventually have become completely Anglicised.<sup>2</sup> It was the existence of the two independent republics which in the long run ensured the continuation of Dutch traditions (language, religion, constitutional forms and so on) in South Africa. Here the Afrikaans-speaking child could be taught in his mother-tongue, and the curriculum decided upon by Afrikaner governments. Yet even under these circumstances the lack of national consciousness in the early years was noticeable.

Before 1881 the dispersed groups of Afrikaans-speakers lacked a historical awareness of themselves. The Transvaal War of Independence was to change that: it gave them a common sum of

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1 G.D. Scholtz, Die Ontwikkeling van die Politieke Denke van die Afrikaner, Deel III, p.108.

2 Ibid., p.601.

recollections of illustrious achievements. The vague stirrings before 1881, already given impetus by the Afrikaans language movement, became an awakening on a national scale : "Afrikaans nationalism took root at Majuba".<sup>3</sup> National awareness in turn gave rise to questions about the Afrikaner's past, characteristic of the interconnectedness of national and historical consciousness. The present struggle was extended retroactively, projected into the events of the past to focus on unity, on common roots.<sup>4</sup> The result was the appearance of "national" history, a counter to British or Cape history. From now on, the Afrikaner would be reclaiming his past, so as to justify himself in the present, and legitimate his claims on the future. Common memories were woven together into a whole, a "closed image of the past".<sup>5</sup> After 1881 the Afrikaner national awakening would once more slow down due to lack of external stimuli until the crises of 1896-1902 again fanned the flames of nationalism.

From the apparent emasculation of the Cape Afrikaners as British subjects, we turn now to the growth of Afrikaner historical and national consciousness in the Republican north and in the Z.A.R. in particular. It is obvious that the teaching of history was to play a key role in the stimulation of this consciousness. The growing national self-consciousness of the Republican Transvaalers after 1881 can be traced to several influences: (a) the regaining of political independence through the agreements of 1881 and 1884; (b) pride in their military achievements during the 1880-81 War; (c) greater internal cohesion due to an improved communication system of roads, and subsequently on railway and passes; (d) a steadily expanding education system; increased state and personal wealth through the discovery of gold in the

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3 G.D. Scholtz, Die Ontwikkeling van die Politieke Denke van die Afrikaner, Deel III, p.601.

4 See F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Afrikaners Interpretation of South African History, p.44; and F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Awakening of Afrikaner Nationalism, pp.114,160,190,202.

5 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, p.66 ("geslote geskiedenis-beeld").

eastern Transvaal and later on the Witwatersrand, and the resultant increase in trade and commerce; (e) an expanding state bureaucracy; and (f) last but not least, external threats and stimuli mainly in the form of British expansionism and internal threats arising from the presence of a large foreign-born minority.

From the 1880's many European nations began to compete for the acquisition of a colonial territory in Africa, Asia and elsewhere. Those that already possessed large overseas empires, such as Britain, France, Spain and Portugal, were determined to enlarge them; others such as Germany, Belgium and Italy felt the need to acquire empires commensurate with their newly-found power. The result of this aggressive outpouring of European nationalism was the imperialism so characteristic of the period between 1880 and 1914.

In Southern Africa, Germany, Britain and Portugal divided the subcontinent between themselves. Within a decade, the two Boer Republics found themselves surrounded by British (or Portuguese) territory, with any possibility of expansion blocked. This encirclement was probably less traumatic for the Free State whose northern and southern frontiers had already been fixed in 1852 and 1854, and whose eastern and western boundaries had been agreed upon in 1869 and 1871 respectively. In addition, the Orange Free State did not experience the same rapid expansion in economic power, nor was it threatened from within by a large number of foreigners as was the Z.A.R.

In Chapter 1 four elements of national aspirations were identified and these may be recognized in the Z.A.R. in the period under discussion. These are: (a) the striving for national unity; the striving for separateness usually in the value attributed to a separate national language (i.e. Dutch/Afrikaans); (b) the striving for independence from foreign (i.e. British) domination and internal freedom from unnational

forces (i.e. the Uitlanders); (c) the striving for prestige, dignity and influence (i.e. their own national symbols, impressive public buildings, the N.Z.A.S.M. railway, missions abroad, the Staatsartillerie, and so on).

The efforts of Kruger's Government to expand the frontiers of the Z.A.R to the north, the south-east and south-west were to be effectively frustrated by the British at every turn. Their attempts to push into Bechuanaland (Stellaland and Goshen), possibly to link up with German South West Africa were blocked in 1885; as were Kruger's vigorous efforts to secure the Z.A.R. its own outlet to the sea. By the mid 1890's the Transvaal had been in effect encircled, with the establishment of British hegemony north of the Limpopo. A further powerful stimulus to Transvaal, and indeed Afrikaner nationalism, was provided by the Jameson Raid, together with the proof of an internal conspiracy on the Rand produced at the subsequent trial.

The feelings of Republican Afrikaners, particularly those in the Z.A.R., on the eve of the outbreak of hostilities in 1899 are articulated in no uncertain terms in Een Eeuw van Onrecht,<sup>6</sup> published two days before the war began. Written by J. de V. Roos and General J.C. Smuts, this official pamphlet served as the political manifesto of a whole generation of Republican-minded Afrikaners. Indeed van Jaarsveld<sup>7</sup> contends that "Een Eeuw van Onrecht served as the basis of the Afrikaners' thinking on the past; their historical ideology, historical perspective and view of the past until about 1961". Smuts, author of the introduction, puts Britain in the dock and finds her guilty of a century of crimes committed in a "hypocritical spirit of annexation and robbery".<sup>8</sup>

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6 See F.J. le Roux, (Tr.), 'n Eeu van Onreg.

7 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse Verlede, p.16.

8 F.J. le Roux, (Tr.) 'n Eeu van Onreg, p.13.

According to him "the court of history" ("die regbank van die geskiedenis") could not but find Britain and her imperialistic expansionism guilty.<sup>9</sup> The pamphlet ends on a fiery note:

"May the hope which burned in us in 1880 now also burn in our hearts and be a beacon of light for us on the road that leads us through blood and tears, to a truly united South Africa<sup>10</sup>... Africa for the Afrikaner" (original emphasis).

Within a year the two Republics had been extinguished.

## 2 HISTORY TEACHING IN THE BOER REPUBLICS TO 1900<sup>11</sup>

### 2.1 The content of history teaching in the Z.A.R.

With the loss of independence in 1877 and the British foe in their midst, the Transvalers were forced to reflect on their past, present and future.

Contemplation of their past provided a historical dimension in their new condition of self-awareness and gave the Transvaal "volk" historical stature as well as oneness with Afrikaners elsewhere. Weilbach and du Plessis's Geschiedenis van de Emigranten-Boeren en van den Vrijheidsoorlog (1882) mirrored the Transvaal's achievements. In the Transvaal too there came a demand that national sentiment should be stirred and strengthened by the thorough and inspired teaching of the history of the fatherland.<sup>12</sup> Festivals to commemorate Dingaan's Day, Paardekraal and Majuba helped to keep alive the collective memory of such stirring events.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> F.J. le Roux, (Tr.), ’n Eeuw van onreg, p.65.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p.70.

<sup>11</sup> See M. A. Basson, Die Britse Invloed in die Transvaalse Onderwys 1836-1907, Archives Year Book, Nineteenth Year, Vol II, pp.42-142, and J. Ploeger, Onderwys en Onderwysbeleid in die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek onder Ds. S.J. du Toit en Dr N. Mansvelt (1881-1900).

<sup>12</sup> F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History, p.41.

<sup>13</sup> F.A. van Jaarsveld, Geskiedkundige Verkenninge, p.61.



As a result of the religious nature of the Boer pioneers, it could be expected that reading (of, for example the Bible), singing (devotional), arithmetic, writing and religious instruction would form the basis of the curriculum in the early years of the Transvaal Republic.<sup>14</sup> Besides Biblical Studies, there was no provision made for history until 1859.

As early as 1856, however, Professor Lauts,<sup>15</sup> an enthusiastic supporter of the Republics, was pleading that the history of their Voortrekker forebears be taught in Transvaal and Free State schools: a knowledge of the history of the fatherland as well as the Dutch language was essential for national education. De Kaapsche Landverhuizers in Zuid-Afrika (1847), as well as J. Stuart's De Hollandsche Afrikanen en hunne Republiek in Zuid-Afrika (1854) dealing with the history of Dutch-speaking South Africa, were available at the time.

The School Commission, appointed by the Transvaal Government, drafted a set of regulations in 1859. Article 8<sup>16</sup> read:

"Instruction shall be given in reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar and language study, geography, history of the fatherland, as well as general Bible history."

According to inspection reports of the period, few of these subjects were actually offered at most schools.<sup>17</sup> There is no indication of subject content.

The church schools established by the Gereformeerde Kerk around 1864, did make provision for the history of South Africa, especially of the Transvaal, and general history in their syllabuses.<sup>18</sup> No indication is given of the nature of the

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14 See S.S. Barnard, Blankeonderwys in Transvaal in Histories-Padagogiese Perspektief, p.37; and M.A. Basson, Die Britse Invloed in die Transvaalse Onderwys, 1836-1907, ch. IV.

15 De Zuid-Afrikaan, 28.4.1857.

16 E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, Volume 1, p.229.

17 S.S. Barnard, Blankeonderwys in Transvaal, p.39.

18 Z.A.R. Staats Courant, Nr. 86, 28 February 1865.

material to be studied. The Education Act of 1866 made it compulsory for teachers to teach Bible and "Vaderlandsche" history<sup>19</sup> but the regulations of 1867 make no mention of the teaching of history.<sup>20</sup> It should be borne in mind that there was no secondary schooling offered at that time.

The Burgers Act of 1874<sup>21</sup> made provision for "wyk-skole" (ward schools) which would offer instruction in, amongst other subjects, history. Higher education would offer a comprehensive curriculum which would include history. The content was vaguely described as "principles of history". The Act did also mention a knowledge of the main events in general, as well as South African history as a requirement for teachers' examinations, but did not specify further. In 1877 Britain annexed the Transvaal.

During the British annexation period, 1877-1881<sup>22</sup>, Vacy Lyle, the Superintendent General of Education, devoted considerable attention to the teaching of history. In his Circular Nr. 25<sup>23</sup> he canvassed the opinions of teachers as to the suitability of textbooks. Teachers recommended amongst others Collier's History of the British Empire, and Cleig's One Life of the Duke of Wellington. Predictably, none of the books recommended or used in this period dealt with South African history. This reinforces the impression that there was as yet little evidence of historical or national consciousness among Transvaal Afrikaners. Even had there been the inclination to use history teaching to stimulate national consciousness, there would have been little opportunity to do so - by 1877 only 8 per cent of children of school-going age were actually in school in the Transvaal.<sup>24</sup>

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19 Z.A.R. Staats Courant, Nr. 165, 4 February 1866.

20 Z.A.R. Staats Courant, Nr. 213, 21 August 1867.

21 Z.A.R. Staats Courant, Nr. 560, 13 January 1875.

22 See M.A. Basson, Die Britse Invloed in die Transvaalse Onderwys, 1836-1907, ch. VI.

23 T.E.D.A., Report on the State of Education in the Transvaal, 16 December 1878.

24 E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, Vol 1., p. 249.



Still during the British annexation, Lyle's successor, in 1879, prescribed the following books: Cleig's History of England 1 and 11; Juta's History of England; White's Outline of History, and J.H. Rose's Verhalen uit de Algemeene Geschiedenis voor Scholen en Huisgezinnen (Stories from General History for School and Family) (1877), which included one chapter on the history of "Ons Vaderland"; Theal's Compendium of South African History and Geography; du Toit's Ons Volk; Wilmot's History of the Cape Colony for Use in Schools; and Noble's Zuid-Afrika, Zijn Verleden en Zijn Heden (South Africa, Its Past and Its Present).<sup>25</sup>

Education in the Z.A.R. in the period up to the 1880's was increasingly under English influence,<sup>26</sup> due partly to the shortage of Dutch-speaking teachers and Dutch-language textbooks.<sup>27</sup> For example, in Potchefstroom in 1866, 22 of the 66 pupils were taught exclusively in English.<sup>28</sup> This reflected the lack of a sense of direction and identity in the young Republic. The successful conclusion of the War of Independence in 1881 brought with it a new sense of self-confidence and national awareness.

With the restoration of independence, the Transvalers proceeded to elect their own Government and to put their State in order. The new Superintendent, the Rev. S.J. du Toit,<sup>29</sup> appointed in 1881 was, according to Coetzee<sup>30</sup>, a "protagonist of Christian National education".

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25 P.C. Smit, 'n Histories-Kritiese Studie van die Geskiedenis-leergang van die Transvaalse Middelbare Onderwys, p.5.

26 See M.A. Basson, Die Britse Invloed in the Transvaalse Onderwys, 1836-1907, for a scholarly study of British influence in Transvaal education up to 1907.

27 J. Ploeger, Onderwys en Onderwysbeleid in die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek, pp.42-50.

28 J.C. Coetzee, Onderwys in Transvaal 1838-1937. p.34.

29 See J. Ploeger, Onderwys en Onderwysbeleid in die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek, pp.13-67, on S.J. du Toit's term of office.

30 J.C. Coetzee, Onderwys in Transvaal 1838-1937, p.48.

The Du Toit Education Act of 1882<sup>31</sup> had as the primary aim of formal education, preparation for catechism. In addition to the usual subjects, secondary schools could, if requested, also offer geography and history. No provision was made for history in the primary phase.<sup>32</sup>

A year later,<sup>33</sup> in 1883, however, renewed emphasis was placed on history as a school subject. This would include the history of the Transvaal and South Africa, as well as General History. The following books were to be used :

- Std 4 Wilmot : History of the Cape Colony  
Std 5 De Liefde : Hoofgebeurtenissen der Algemene Geschiedenis  
Std 6 Bosscha : Schets van de Algemene Geschiedenis.

The Std 4 syllabus covered South African history from the Portuguese discovery up to the Bloemfontein Convention of 1854.

From 1884 inspectors of education began reporting on the situation regarding history teaching.<sup>34</sup> From the public examinations of 1880 and thereafter,<sup>35</sup> the following can be concluded:

- a) recent events in the history of the Transvaal (i.e. the Annexation and 1880-81 War) enjoyed most attention;
- b) the Voortrekker period received the next most attention;
- c) the history of the Transvaal between 1858 and 1877 was scarcely dealt with;
- d) Cape history was not dealt with at any great length;
- e) general history was not examined at all;
- f) the implications of the London Convention of 1881 and 1884 for the young state were fully recognized;
- g) current events were treated as history, as were very recent events in the Transvaal.

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31 J. Ploeger, Onderwys en Onderwysbeleid in die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek, pp.330-333.

32 S.S. Barnard, Blankeonderwys in Transvaal, p.72.

33 Z.A.R. Staats Courant, Nr. 116, 3 May 1883.

34 See T.E.D.A., Z.A.R. - Onderwysverslag for the years 1884 and following.

35 P.C. Smit, n Histories-Kritiese Studie, p.8.

Inherent in this treatment of history are several examples of bias by omission and by disproportion. From this it becomes clear that the two poles of Afrikaner history are already apparent, i.e. the Great Trek and the Anglo-Transvaal War. The latter would in time be supplanted by the Second Anglo-Boer War. Furthermore, the above illustrates that recent events were being studied, useful as they were (and still are) for raising the political and national awareness of pupils.

The Education Act of 1892<sup>36</sup> determined that the principles of history, both general and South African (Z.A.R. in particular), were to be included in the school syllabus. Inspectors' reports on the teaching of South African history and especially Z.A.R. history would be obligatory, and history was to be compulsory also at schools for girls.<sup>37</sup> To an increasing extent the Transvaal authorities were fostering a knowledge of their country's own national history. This once again shows the mutually reinforcing effect of historical and national consciousness.

The official history syllabus prescribed for secondary schools in the 1892 Act was as follows:

- Std 4: the history of South Africa from 1486 to 1814;
- Std 5: the "geheele" history of South Africa and that of the Z.A.R. in particular;  
European history since 1789;
- Std 6: repetition and more detailed history of South Africa, and a concise review of world history.

The Act also determined that the "Schoolwedstrijd" would be taken after completion of Std 6<sup>38</sup>, and for this the history of South Africa from 1486 to 1806 was prescribed.<sup>39</sup>

The 1892 Act, while making the history of the Z.A.R. obligatory

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36 Notulen van den Eersten Volksraad, 1892, pp.123-129.

37 E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa. Vol 1., p.281.

38 T.E.D.A., Z.A.R., Schoolgids 1892, p.29-30.

39 Locale Wetten der Z.A.R. 1890-1893, p.607.

in the primary school, provided for history where it was required.

In 1893, 1771 pupils were receiving instruction in South African history and 426 in general history.<sup>40</sup> Two years later these figures were 3652 and 377 respectively,<sup>41</sup> reflecting a growing trend in favour of "national" history. By 1896, 1429 were taking South African history, 4886 the history of the Z.A.R. and only 270 general history.<sup>42</sup>

Under the energetic leadership of Dr N. Mansvelt, education in the Transvaal flourished between 1891 and 1900. Due to his efforts and those of his predecessor, Rev. S.J. du Toit, the number of White pupils in state-aided schools increased from fewer than 700 in 1875 to over 12 000 by 1897.<sup>43</sup> Of importance for this study is that this meant that an ever larger percentage of the Republic's youth was being exposed to history teaching, albeit a majority of them only at primary level.

In 1893, the history syllabus was changed. The syllabus for the South African history component<sup>44</sup> was as follows:

"Beginning in 1835-38: the Great Trek; grievances; first Trekkers; later Trekkers; in Natal; the Zulus; the Trekkers in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal; Pretorius to the Transvaal; coat-of-arms and flag; Keate; Burgers; Dorsland Trek; Sekhukuni; Shepstone annexation; deputations to England; Zulu War in Natal; War of Independence; Conference in Pretoria; western border and the natives; administration of the S.A.R.; Kruger; the mines; Swaziland."

In 1895 the syllabus was again revised, effecting a new approach to the subject. In a memorandum on history teaching, the Superintendent stated explicitly that national ("vaderlandsche") history was intended to arouse and strengthen national sentiment.

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40 Z.A.R. Staatsalmanak 1895, p.74.

41 Z.A.R. Staatsalmanak 1897, p.65.

42 Z.A.R. Staatsalmanak 1898, p.67.

43 Z.A.R. Staatsalmanak 1899, p.71.

44 Z.A.R. Staatsalmanak 1896, p.93.

The suffering and martyrdom ("marteling") of the nation should be faithfully imparted to the young, and should aim to inspire them. Young Transvalers should live in the deeds of their forebears and gain courage and inspiration for the future, to remain upright in the hour of danger.<sup>45</sup> While pupils in the Cape and Natal schools were being taught to be loyal subjects of the Queen, Transvaal children were being taught that they were sons and daughters of the Voortrekkers, fiercely independent of Britain.

For Std 4 the 1895 syllabus prescribed the history of the Republic, beginning with the Great Trek, and the history of South Africa from 1486 to 1600. For Std 5 the entire history of South Africa and the Z.A.R. in particular was required, as well as the history of the Reformation in broad outline. As before, the Std 6 classes dealt with the repetition and extension of the history of South Africa.<sup>46</sup>

The examination papers set by the Raad van Examinatoren in 1898<sup>47</sup> provide considerable insight into the nature of the history being studied in the Z.A.R. at the time. There is a heavy emphasis on conflict and disputes with Britain and on military history generally. In the three examinations (I, II and III Class) for teachers, there are questions on the Great Trek, battles such as Blood River and Ingogo, the War of the Axe, the Diamond Fields Dispute, conditions of citizenship in the Z.A.R. and the "Sister Republic", and the Sand River and Bloemfontein Conventions. In these, as well as the "Schoolwedstrijd" Examinations, there are always questions on the Annexation and the Anglo-Transvaal War, another example of bias by overemphasis, although understandable. The period 1877-1881 must have been covered in considerable detail, judging from the following examples of questions posed:

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45 T.E.D.A., Z.A.R. Schoolgids 1895, pp. 36,61.

46 T.E.D.A., Z.A.R. Schoolgids 1895, p.39.

47 A.I. Raubenheimer, Die Geskiedenis-Handboek op Skool met Besondere Verwysing na Suid-Afrika, p.19.

"What were the explicit promises made by Shepstone in his Annexation Proclamation ... with reference to :

- (a) an own legislature for the people ("volk");
- (b) the official use of the Dutch language?"

"What is the main content of the extraordinary Proclamation issued by the Triumvirate in December 1880?"

It would have been interesting to have been able to discover some of the answers to the following questions posed in the 1898 "Vorbereidend Examen":

"When did the Hottentots gain equality with the whites in the Cape Colony according to the law, and what is your opinion regarding the complete legal equality between black and white in South Africa?"

The questions on South African history contained in the 1899 Examination <sup>48</sup> also illustrate to what degree the British and the Blacks were perceived to be a threat, especially in the military field:

"Describe the first conquest of the Cape by the English"

"Name in chronological order ... the battles during the War of Independence ("Vrijheidsoorlog")"

"What can you tell of the third Basuto War fought by the Free State? And the war against Makapan?"

"Moselalatze (sic) was three times defeated by the Voortrekkers: where, when and under which Commandants did these victories take place?"

"Name the four greatest battles of the War of Independence, referring to (a) the name of our commanders, (b) the day and the month of each battle and (c) the outcome of the conflict in each case."

The dominance of military terminology - wars, battles, victories, struggles, conquests, etc. is strongly reminiscent of Cape Colonial historical writing. In both instances, the new states had been threatened, or had felt themselves to be threatened, by external enemies on their frontiers. By 1899 when the above examinations were taken, the Z.A.R. once more perceived itself to be the imminent victim of further British aggression. The Jameson Raid and complicity of certain Uitlander elements on the



Rand in the attempt to overthrow the Republican Government had raised national sentiment to fever-pitch. The stronger the Imperial pressure on the Transvaal became, the more its citizens drew inspiration from their national history.<sup>49</sup>

The 1899 "Onderwijzerexamen"<sup>50</sup> covered a section headed "Staatsinstellingen, Z.-Afrika" with questions on the legislature, judiciary and executive of the Z.A.R. Government, and the constitutional and political issues in the other South African states, e.g., "Compare the composition of the Executive Council in this Republic with that in the 'Sister Republic'". In the papers for both teacher's certificates the following question was set:

"What are the stipulations of the present constitution of this Republic concerning the equalisation of people of colour ('gekleurden') and whites?"

A knowledge of a state's constitution and political structures is, as had been discussed in earlier chapters, regarded as an essential means of legitimating that state's authority.

## 2.2. History Teaching in the Orange Free State

After the signing of the conventions of 1852 and 1854, the bonds between the Afrikaners of the north also tended to slacken and dissolve; internal dissensions, individualism, local disputes and civil strife were the prevailing symptoms in the Transvaal of the 1860's. There were insufficient binding factors to promote unity and a true national consciousness. The renewed attack by the British government on the independence of the Republics was to alter this. The change first came about in the Free State. Unifying forces such as the wars against the Basuto drew the Free

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49 F.A. van Jaarsveld and J.I. Rademeyer, Teorie en Metodiek vir Geskiedenisonderrig, p.87.

50 Ibid., pp.36-37.

Staters together as a conscious group, with a newly discovered perception of their national personality and their common destiny. It was a spur to national awareness; the Orange Free State became their fatherland. In 1874 the President instructed that the O.F.S. anthem be set to music for use in state schools.

In their indignation at the threat from outside, the Free Staters gave thought to themselves and their history. Questions were posed as to their origin, place and future in South Africa. As a group they were requiring orientation through history. It was in this spirit that the first Free State and Afrikaner historical writing saw the light of day with its essence being the relations between British and Boer, and with the Great Trek as its first pole or starting point.<sup>51</sup>

H.J. Hofstede's Geschiedenis van den Oranje-Vrijstaat (1876) was made possible by the financial support of the Free State Government. The title reflects a limited vision that was not yet extended to the rest of South Africa. At a time of crisis (the loss of the Diamond Fields and wars on the eastern boundary), it created a point of departure in the Free Staters' history which gave them a background and a frame on which they could weave their dreams for the future. It was the product of, and stimulus for, a growing national consciousness.

The Anglo-Transvaal War of 1880-81 broadened Free State patriotism into a more encompassing Afrikaner patriotism. In contrast to Hofstede, C.P. Bezuidenhout's little book, De Geschiedenis van het Afrikaansche Geslacht van 1688 to 1882, provided a common basis for the origins and meaning of the existence of the Afrikaner people. An interest developed in the collection of source material dealing with their forebears and a great veneration of their predecessors. Monies were collected for

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51 See F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History, pp. 33-35; and Die Afrikaner en sy Geskiedenis, pp. 82-92, by the same author.

a national monument to Retief and other Voortrekker heroes. The stronger the national awareness became in the 1880's, the greater was the need felt for "clear and correct" facts on the previous generation in school books, and that these facts should be presented from an Afrikaner point of view.<sup>52</sup>

The aim of education in the early O.F.S., as in the Z.A.R., was to enable children to read the Bible and prepare them for catechism, and thus for acceptance in the community. The first school in Bloemfontein was established in 1849 with an enrolment of 28.<sup>53</sup>

Three years later the first education regulation was promulgated, prescribing reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, Dutch and English. The private English schools offered history among the fourteen subjects in their curriculum.<sup>54</sup> It is not known what history was taught, but one may safely assume that it was the same history as was being taught in Cape schools at the time, i.e. British history.

In 1863 the Volksraad appointed an education commission to revise and supplement the fragmentary education regulations already in existence. The report which was accepted by the Volksraad as the Education Ordinance of 1863 made provision for, amongst others, Bible history and history as such. The spirit and content of this ordinance was very similar to that of the Z.A.R. of 1859. It was not possible to establish exactly what the nature of the subject content was. At Grey College in 1868, for example, we do know that the subjects examined included Bible history, general

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- 52 See F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History, p.36.
- 53 P.S. Malan, Onderwys in die Oranje-Vrystaat (1854-1874), p.26:
- 54 P.A. Grobbelaar, Middelbare Onderwys in die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1910-1952, Met Spesiale Verwysing na Leergange en Leerplanne, pp.6-8.

history (the history of the Netherlands according to Bosscha from 1500, and the history of England up to the end of the reign of Edward II).<sup>55</sup>

Ordinance No. 5 of 1872 also made provision for the teaching of history (Bible, general and "besonder" i.e. Free State) at both Grey College and the Normal School in Bloemfontein and the district schools.<sup>56</sup> All schools receiving state aid were subject to annual inspection. Amongst the subjects to be examined by the inspectors was general history. At this time Free State schools did not have textbooks written specifically for them, and would have been using the same standard British textbooks as the Cape schools (see Ch.3). Brebner, the Inspector of Education, makes no mention of history teaching in his inspection reports of the 1870's, although many other subjects are reported on.<sup>57</sup>

In October 1874, Brebner wrote to the University of the Cape of Good Hope concerning the administration of candidates from the O.F.S. wishing to write the University's examinations. Permission for O.V.S. candidates to enter was granted the following year.<sup>58</sup>

By 1876 however Brebner was reporting that at Winburg the pupils had an "adequate" knowledge of the history of South Africa, and at Ventersburg "a very good" knowledge. At Bethlehem they had studied only Arthur's History of England. At Grey College only general history was examined.<sup>59</sup> In his report for 1878 the Inspector of Education complained that at Kroonstad the pupils were learning "English history instead of Dutch (history)".<sup>60</sup> At the school where H.J. Hofstede, mentioned above, taught,

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55 P.S. Malan, Onderwys in die Oranje Vrystaat, p.306.

56 Ibid., 339.

57 Ibid., Ch.7.

58 Ibid., p.433.

59 Unisa, Verslag van den Staat van het Openbaar Onderwijs in den Oranjevrijstaat over het Dienstjaar 1876-7, pp.9-17.

60 Unisa, Verslag van den Staat van het Openbaar Onderwijs in den Oranjevrijstaat, 1878, p.13.

Brebner reported that the pupils knew only "a little" South African history, while at Grey College the pupils' knowledge of, interestingly, the history of the Cape Colony was "very good".<sup>61</sup>

It is strange that nowhere throughout the reports in the late 1870's does Brebner give an indication as to whether Hofstede's book was being studied, while the titles of textbooks in several other subjects, including those for English history, are mentioned. History teaching appears to have been haphazardly organised, being taught one year in a particular school, but not necessarily the next. Beside the chronic shortage of textbooks, there was also a desperate shortage of suitably qualified teachers in the Free State, as in the other South African states.<sup>62</sup>

From 1879, student teachers studied the history of South Africa to 1806 during their second year of study.<sup>63</sup> From the reports of this period, it appears that South African history was synonymous with Cape history.<sup>64</sup> In the appendix to his 1878-79 Report, Brebner lists the subjects for examinations for each standard: In Std 4, "Geskiedenis van Zuid Afrika" is introduced; in Std 5, "modern" General history, and in Std 6 "De Oude Geschiedenis".<sup>65</sup> By 1883 the syllabus for Std 7 was also being prescribed: the history of Holland from the abdication of Charles V to the death of William III, or the history of England from 1485 to 1702.<sup>66</sup> Just as history teaching in colonial schools at the time was orientated towards the British Empire and its history, so the Republican schools looked to Holland for their history. This

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- 61 Unisa, Verslag van den Staat van het Openbaar Onderwijs in den Oranjevrijstaat, 1878, pp.25-26.
- 62 E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, Vol.1, p.247.
- 63 P.S. Malan, Openbare Onderwys vir Blankes in die Oranje-Vrystaat 1874-1899, p.60.
- 64 Unisa, Verslag van den Staat van het Openbaar Onderwijs in den OVS over het Dienstjaar 1878-79, p.5.
- 65 Ibid., Bijlage A, p.26.
- 66 Unisa, Verslag van den Staat van het Openbaar Onderwijs, in den Oranjevrijstaat 1883, p.35.

remained the content of the Free State history syllabuses until the outbreak of war in 1899. The higher standards, of course, followed the Cape syllabuses to qualify themselves for admission to the University of the Cape of Good Hope examinations.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century in South Africa was characterised by the emotional debate on the language issue. Dutch, English and gradually Afrikaans too, became locked in a three-corned contest for recognition or supremacy. The history of the language issue is beyond the scope of this study. It is sufficient to note that the Free State was no exception, and that right up to the War of 1899, the question of the medium of instruction in its schools remained a most contentious issue. Where the language issue does concern us is the recommendation by an education commission appointed by the Volksraad in 1891, that Free State and South African history be taught through the medium of Dutch and not English. At a teachers congress the following year there were complaints from English-orientated teachers that certain subjects, particularly history, were difficult to teach in Dutch because the available books were unsuitable for school use.<sup>67</sup>

In 1891 President Reitz urged that Free State pupils imbibe more patriotism: by studying the deeds and experiences of their forebears, their heritage, and their country, the danger that the Free State would lose its "oranje-kleur" would be diminished.<sup>68</sup> Again in 1896, at a teachers' congress, it was necessary to emphasize that " a truly national spirit and ardent love of the fatherland" should be inculcated in the schools in order that pupils be willing to defend their homeland.<sup>69</sup> This reflects the awareness of the possibility of war in the wake of the Jameson Raid.

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67 P.S. Malan, Openbare Onderwys vir Blankes in die Oranje-Vrystaat, p.185.

68 Quoted in P.S. Malan, *ibid.*, p.197.

69 De Express, 10 April 1896, as quoted in P.S. Malan, *ibid.*, p.247.

It is difficult to establish to what extent the history of the Free State itself was being taught at the schools before 1899. That it was taught at all is evidenced by the report of First Inspector Kupferburger in which he deplors the poor knowledge of the geography and history of the O.F.S., and of South Africa in general, displayed by the Railway School pupils.<sup>70</sup>

### 2.3. Characteristics of Republican History Syllabuses

It has been seen that from the early 1880's history teaching in the Z.A.R. included recent events which were treated as history. In fact contemporary history received the most attention. In this way the political and national awareness of pupils could be increased, and the policies of the Republican Government legitimated.

The period of the Great Trek and the 1880-81 War of Independence emerge as the main axes of Republican history.

The Government consciously fostered a knowledge of the Transvaal's own national history to reinforce identity and to provide national orientation for the young Republic. By the early 1890's pupils were being expected to study their country's history in the context of South African history. British history was treated as part of general history. The Netherlands, rather than Britain, figured as Mother Country.

In contrast to the history being taught in Colonial schools at that time, history in Transvaal schools placed the greatest emphasis on South African or "national" history.

From the examination questions of the period, it is clear that a detailed knowledge of the events surrounding the Great Trek, the Diamond Fields Dispute, and the Annexation of 1877, was required.

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70 Unisa, Rapport van den Eersten Inspecteur van Scholen gedurende de Maanden Februari-Juni 1898, p.51.

In this manner an acute awareness of British injustices could be aroused. Both the British and the Blacks were seen as threats to the Republic's existence. This anxiety manifested itself in the heavy emphasis on military conflicts. The stronger the British threat loomed, the more the Republic could draw inspiration from its "heroic" past.

The Orange Free State, the borders of which were more secure than those of the Z.A.R., and which did not suffer the trauma of Annexation, a War of Independence or the Jameson Raid, was slower to introduce "national" history into its schools. There was not the same emphasis on current events, but rather an offering of South African history in more general terms. There was, nevertheless, an effort at establishing an identity of its own through the content of history teaching, and a consciousness of an affinity with Afrikaners beyond the borders of the Free State Republic.

#### 2.4. The Availability of Textbooks in the Republics

Until well into the 1890's both republics experienced a chronic shortage of suitable school textbooks. The imported Dutch books were often difficult for Afrikaans-speaking children to understand, and, moreover, their content was not always suited to South African conditions. Neither state produced a comprehensive indigenous history textbook in Dutch until the 1890's.<sup>71</sup> In the absence of proper books in the medium of instruction, British or Cape books in English were standard fare in Transvaal and Free State schools. This had the effect of undermining the status of Dutch as the medium of instruction, and conversely, of enhancing that of English.<sup>72</sup>

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71 Hofstede's little book (1876) was a combined history and geography text.

72 See P.S. Malan, Onderwys vir Blankes in die Oranje-Vrystaat, pp.89-93, and pp.185-188.



As noted earlier, J.H. Hofstede, a teacher, approached the Free State Volksraad in 1872 for financial assistance in the writing of a concise history of the O.F.S. to ensure that the young burghers learned the history of their own country. His request was granted in the form of a £20 gratuity.<sup>73</sup> Many years later, Brebner requested the Rev. Nico Hofmeyr of Bloemfontein to compile a reader on the history of South Africa written in "Afrikaansch-Hollandsch." By 1893, Hofmeyr's Kijkjes in onze Geschiedenis was ready for publication, and the O.F.S. Volksraad awarded him twenty pounds sterling.<sup>74</sup>

During Mansvelt's term (1891-1900), an increasing number of history books met the requirements of the Z.A.R.'s Department of Education. Books were cheaper and more readily available.

In 1893 the Volksraad passed a resolution authorising the Government to appoint a suitable ("bevoegd") person to write the history of the Z.A.R., from its origins to the present.<sup>75</sup> Ten days after this resolution, the report of the bursary commission was approved granting a gratuity of £50 to G.A. Odé for the history book he had produced.<sup>76</sup>

The amount had originally been made available in 1885. G.A. Odé, who was appointed State Historian in 1893, published his Geskiedenis van Zuid-Afrika in Schetsen en Verhalen voor de Scholen in Zuid-Afrika in 1897.

Textbooks for the 1895 syllabus caused fewer difficulties than previously.<sup>77</sup> Theal had been requested by the Cape Parliament to compile a history textbook for school use. His History of South Africa was then published in condensed form in English, as well as in the Dutch translation by President Reitz in 1890 entitled

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73 See P.S. Malan, Onderwys vir Blankes in die Oranje-Vrystaat, p.93.

74 Ibid., p.187.

75 A.I. Raubenheimer, Die Geskiedenis-Handboek, p.8.

76 T.E.D.A., Z.A.R. Schoolgids 1892, p.30.

77 T.E.D.A., Z.A.R. Schoolgids 1897, p.12.

Korte Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika, van 1486 tot 1814, and Korte Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika van 1486 tot 1835, in 1891. President Kruger was apparently persuaded by Reitz to purchase 500 copies for use in the Z.A.R. In both the English and Dutch versions, Theal's books were widely used in all four South African States.<sup>78</sup>

## 2.5 The Influence of Theal on South African Historiography

The influence of Theal on textbook writers since 1890 has been widely recognized. B.J. Liebenberg<sup>79</sup> calls him "the great pioneer" of South African history. According to Ken Smith,<sup>80</sup> no other historian has stamped his authority on the study of South African history to the same extent, while Merle Babrow<sup>81</sup> regards him as South Africa's most prolific and influential historian. Yet all agree that he is also a controversial figure; the severity of his critics was, and is, equalled by the "warmth and ardour of his many admirers".<sup>82</sup> His interpretation of South African history has been so pervasive over so long a period that a brief look at the controversy surrounding some of his views would be appropriate at this point.

According to Saunders,<sup>83</sup> the pro-Colonist, anti-Black stance which Theal adopted was the common position amongst his settler colleagues. As far as his South African audience was concerned, Theal aimed to use his writing to help reconcile Boer and Briton. Theal would have it that the Blacks welcomed White rule; he had

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78 A.I. Raubenheimer, Die Geskiedenis-Handboek, p.11.

79 B.J. Liebenberg, George McCall Theal as Geskiedskrywer, in B.J. Liebenberg et al., Strominge in die Suid-Afrikaanse Historiografie, p.12.

80 K. Smith, The Changing Past, p.31.

81 M. Babrow, Theal: conflicting opinions of him, in B.J. Liebenberg et al., Strominge in die Suid-Afrikaanse Historiografie, p.13.

82 Ibid., p.18.

83 C. Saunders, The Making of the South African Past. Major Historians on Race and Class, p.20.

no doubt that the imposition of White rule was right as well as inevitable. As a Social Darwinist, he assumed that the strongest and fittest would win, and that might was right. As Whites were superior, their conquest of others was justified. White expansion formed the vehicle of the spread of civilisation and its triumph over barbarism. Saunders contends that Theal did more than anyone else "to establish a tradition of strongly pro-colonist, an anti-Black historical writing and to create the racist paradigm which lay at the core of that tradition and which served to justify white rule". According to Saunders, later historians took over from Theal certain racial myths, which he did more than anyone else to propagate.

Before Whites arrived Theal believed there was almost constant strife, cruelty and misery. He presented an almost unmitigated picture of Black barbarism. African societies were static. He was at pains to find evidence to prove that Bantu-speakers arrived in South Africa relatively late, and therefore had no more right to land in the country than Whites. He did more than anyone else to establish a pseudo-scientific basis for the myth of the empty land. In propagating a myth of an empty interior in the 1830's, Theal was legitimating White claims to that region. Theal helped create a picture of the South African past which, if Blacks were present at all, it was in a distinctly subordinate role. Blacks might rob Whites and fight them, but they were not equal or fellow actors in the historical drama.

Smith<sup>84</sup> mentions that Theal was much beloved by the Afrikaners and by Afrikaner historians in particular. Theal was the first English historian to comprehend the striving and struggles of the Republican Afrikaners. Bosman<sup>85</sup> acknowledges Theal's "great love for the Dutch-Afrikaans Colonists", and the latter's admiration for their share in South Africa's history, but also his

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84 K. Smith, The Changing Past, p.37.

85 I.D. Bosman, Dr. George McCall Theal as die Geskiedskrywer van Suid-Afrika, p.120-129.

tendency to overemphasize certain arguments to make sure that his pro-Boer message was heard. Bosman correctly interprets the real reasons why Theal was so revered by the Afrikaners, and so harshly criticised by liberal historians: his outlook on life was in line with a great part of the Afrikaans nation of the nineteenth century, and he did not hide his sympathy with their pastoral, conservative approach to life. Theal himself was a religious man, recognizing the will and works of God in historical events.

Theal's treatment and understanding of the Boers is sympathetic and warm. It is not surprising that for several decades Afrikaners regarded Theal's history as the standard history of South Africa.

In the late 1870's and early 1880's there was a slow but steady merging of interests between the rural Cape Afrikaners and the English-speaking business community. Among other things, this led to the political alliance between Hofmeyr and Rhodes. Theal came to identify strongly with this "colonial nationalist" attitude, developing the theme of the formation of a new White South African society, ruled by both White groups. In this sense it was Theal who was responsible for the invention of the concept of a "White South Africa" in historical writing. Before judging him too harshly one should remember that Theal, like all historians, was a product of his age. On other continents too, historians were pro-White, sanctioning Western expansion by pointing to the progress and spread of Christianity and civilization it brought in its wake. To accuse him of racism in the late 20th century sense of the word would probably be anachronistic. Theal's continuing importance and influence are illustrated by the fact that not only are many school textbooks largely based on his work, but there are still historians who rely on and consult him.<sup>86</sup>

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86 M. Babrow, Theal: Conflicting Opinions of Him, in B.J. Liebenberg (Ed.), Strominge in die Suid-Afrikaanse Historiografie, p.18.

### 3. AN ANALYSIS OF HISTORY TEXTBOOKS USED IN REPUBLICAN SCHOOLS TO 1900

#### 3.1 Characteristics of Republican Textbooks

The generally anti-British tone of these works is clear throughout. In contrast to the pro-British textbooks reviewed in Chapter 3, these books are written from an unashamedly Afrikaans perspective.

The brave and gallant British soldiers of the British-orientated works now make way for the brave and courageous Boer commandos doing battle with the British and various indigeneous peoples. The Republican textbooks, like their Colonial counterparts, concentrate to a great extent on conflict. Much is made of wars, battles and rebellions, except that this time the heroes are not British, but Boer.

Where the Colonial books underemphasize the importance of the Dutch period in Cape history, and ignore or downplay events such as Slagters Nek, the Republican textbooks have an obvious Dutch orientation, and tend to overemphasize the significance of Slagters Nek, Boomplaats, and the like. There is an acute awareness of British injustices such as the loss of the Diamond Fields, and the Annexation of the Transvaal.

Yet these authors do not hesitate to take sides with the British, as fellow Whites, where the British are involved in conflicts with Blacks. This consciousness that Whites of both language groups faced a mutual threat in the form of the Black tribes, is a common thread in South African textbooks from the beginning. These textbooks are further characterised by a conscious effort on the part of the authors to establish or reinforce the particular identity of the young Republics. The trappings of nationhood figure prominently, as do patriotic verses.

The young readers are encouraged to nurture the memory of the heroic age of the Great Trek and the War of Independence. For the Transvalers in particular, their glorious past was meant to provide orientation and inspiration in the face of the British menace.

Beyond the awareness of being Transvalers or Free Staters, there is also the consciousness of being Afrikaners. The Afrikaners' claim to the land is legitimated, and given religious sanction. God brought the Whites to Africa for a purpose. The special relationship between God and the Afrikaner people, a theme which was to be much developed during the twentieth century, is already evident in the description of the Great Trek in biblical terms.

A positive self-image is reinforced by references to the noble Dutch and French stock from which the Afrikaners are descended. As in the Colonial works, the non-White peoples are dealt with in the customary stereotypes. The images of the filthy, drunken Hottentots, the wild, thieving Bushmen, and the savage, bloodthirsty Blacks, are no less prevalent in the Republican textbooks than they are in the books examined in Chapter 3.

## .2 The Textbooks Analysed

- (a) Hofstede, H.J.: Aardrijkskunde en Geschiedenis van den Oranjevrijstaat (voor Schoolgebruik), (1884)

This little book is a mere 100 pages long. More than two thirds are devoted to Part II: "Concise History of the Orange Free State" and the remainder to geography. In its parochial approach, and its conscious seeking of an individual identity, this work

is similar to Bryan's book on Natal. Chapter I deals with the history of the Cape Colony from 1486 to 1835. As with all other history textbooks of the time, the Eurocentric approach is obvious. The opening sentence sets the tone: "The First European to sail past the Cape was Bartholomeus Diaz" (p.43). The most important events of the first 150 years were the "invasions by the Hottentots and the resulting conflicts" (p.45). In this and other books reviewed, it will be obvious that there is little if any difference in the approach of Afrikaans- and English-speaking textbook writers toward the indigenous inhabitants. The stereotypes, master symbols and general bias are for all practical purposes identical.

The Huguenots receive detailed attention., bias by overemphasis. Afrikaners have every reason to be proud of the blood of these "noble and religious men" (p.48) in their veins. In contrast to the lengthy discussion of the French immigrants, the 1820 settlers are not mentioned at all, a case of bias by omission. It will be remembered that the British- orientated works reviewed earlier generally down-played the importance of the Huguenots and over-emphasized the role of the British settlers. The Dutch fought "bravely" against the British invaders, but were left in the lurch by the "cowardly" Hottentot troops; the Dutch were "forced" ("gedwongen") to accept the British terms (p.50). The Afrikaans perspective on events such as this is in marked contrast to that of pro-British works.

Chapter II of the book is devoted solely to the causes and course of the Great Trek, once more a case of bias by overemphasis. All the traditional causes, including the legacy of Slagters Nek, are given. The myth of the empty interior, used so often before and after to legitimate White occupation of the interior, is expounded: Potgieter found the Vaal region "uninhabited" due to the extermination of the early inhabitants by the "bloodthirsty" Mzilikazi. The action at Vegkop is described

vividly. Mzilikazi is again referred to as "this bloodthirsty and cruel one" (p.54). Special mention is made of the first Nagmaal held north of the Orange, and the courage and faith of the Voortrekkers, termed "Pilgrim Fathers" ("Pelgrimvaders") (p.56). The religious dimension to early Afrikaans historiography is evident here, as is the master symbol of the Afrikaners as a nation with a calling.

Further chapters deal with the history of the Free State after the Trek. An entire chapter is, understandably, devoted to the Bloemfontein Convention and the young Republic's constitution.

Chapter VI makes mention of the trappings of nationhood acquired by the new state, i.e. a coat-of-arms, a flag and the now officially named "Orange Free State" (p.75). The book is strongly supportive of attempts at federation, and expresses regret that they should have failed: "So the prospects of a United South Africa vanished once more" (p.86).

The emphasis on conflicts is characteristic of the times. Thus in a further example of bias by overemphasis, the Battle of Boomplaats is dealt with in two pages (pp.62-63), and much is made of the "raids and robberies" by Moshweshwe's followers (p.64). From its inception, the Free State was burdened "with the troublesome Moshesh as its neighbour" (p.73). Meanwhile the "cattle rustling and depredations" by the Basuto continued (p.81). The Koranna chief, Sihele Kobus, without provocation, "attacked and murdered" several families in the Boshoff district (p.81). The departure of Adam Kok's Griquas was a great boon, for the O.F.S. rid itself once and for all of these "troublesome neighbours" (p.87). Moshesh is termed a "cunning and deceitful neighbour" who was adept at using "clever talk" to manipulate his opponents (p.88). As with a wayward child, Letsoane had to be "chastised" ("tuchtigen") for his "violent deeds" (p.91). Other chiefs committed similar "raids" and "depredations" (p.92). In one incident the Basuto, under the cover of a flag of truce,



murdered a settlement of Basters in a "treacherous and cruel manner" (p.93). Similarly the Botes family was attacked and murdered "in a gruesome way". In the Kroonstad district 7 burghers and 21 Coloured servants were "murdered" (p.94), and other burghers were "murdered" on Natal territory (p.94). The next war was sparked off by the murders ("in a treacherous manner") of numbers of burghers (p.99).

The Second Basuto War produced its quota of heroic deeds: Field Cornet Robertse and his 15 men fought off "thousands of Kaffirs"; a farmhouse was defended by a half dozen burgers "against thousands of Kaffirs" (p.92). In Louw Wepener, "that brave warrior", the Free State gained its own folk-hero: "Long may the name of Louw Wepener be remembered and honoured by all" (p.95).

The Free State claim to the Diamond Fields is vigorously defended. The British intervention is termed a "violent occupation" of an area to which Waterboer "had not the slightest claim"(p.104). The loss of vast tracts of land to the north, east and west had to be accepted by the Free State in its weak position, but it was at least assured of permanent, recognized boundaries (p.107). From then on the country experienced steady growth in agriculture, education, and commerce. The book pays tribute to God, to its brave and faithful citizens, and to President Brand, for the twin blessings of freedom and peace (p.109). It concludes with an inspiring patriotic verse:

"O Vaderland, geliefde grond.  
Tot's levens allerlaatsten stond  
Blijft ge aan ons harte heilig;  
En zijn uwe ook klein, in tal en kracht,  
Geen nood, want eendracht schenkt ons macht,  
En met haar zijt gij veilig." \*

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\* "O Fatherland, beloved soil.  
To life's last moment  
You will remain sacred to our hearts;  
And though yours are small in number and strength,  
Do not be concerned, 'cause unity gives us strength  
And with her you are safe."

(b) N. Hofmeyr: Kijkjes in Onze Geschiedenis. Een Leesboek Voor School en Huisgezin, (1893)

Hofmeyr, first a teacher in Bloemfontein, later became a lecturer in history at the "staatsgymnasium" in Pretoria. During the Second Anglo-Boer War he was official chronicler of the war for the Z.A.R. Government. His Kijkjes, first published in 1893, became immensely popular throughout South Africa, and by 1921 one hundred thousand copies had been sold.<sup>87</sup> It was later published in Afrikaans as Longmans se Leesboek oor die Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika, and in English as Longman's Readings in South African History. The edition reviewed was already in its ninth impression. The book includes numerous cameos of episodes and personalities in South African history.

The Afrikaans perspective is manifest from the start. The introduction is in the form of a letter "Aan de kinderen van Zuid-Afrika":

"Dear children,  
Has mother or father ever told you of Jan van Riebeeck or Andries Pretorius, of Slagters Nek or Dingaan's Day? ... So you should get to know the history of your fatherland. Yes, it is a sacred duty ... to learn about the history of your country and your nation ... Yes, the older you become, the better you will understand what it is to be an Afrikaner (original emphasis)" (pp.5-6).

The first chapter opens in 1486 ("De Kaap ontdekt"):

"Four hundred years ago our country looked utterly different from today. There was not a single white person, the earth was wild and uncultivated. Our beautiful fatherland was then a desert, and where our towns and cities are now, stood perhaps a few 'Kafferpondokken'. South Africa did not even have a name in the civilized world at that time, because nobody had ever seen it (p.7). Only in 1486 was the dark veil which had so long hidden our beautiful shores lifted" (p.7).

The usual flattering language is used in relation to the Dutch inhabitants, and the customary disparaging terms employed for those other than Whites. Although Hofmeyer specifically mentions that the Xhosa generally spared women and children in battle, his vocabulary and the stereotypes thus created, are otherwise typical of the time: He refers to the "horrific and moving" scenes, the "Kaffir rage", "murder and destruction", a trader being "cruelly murdered in front of women and children" (pp.52-54). Hintza was a "brave but treacherous" chief (p.57). For ten years the "courageous" founder of South Africa and the first "Voortrekkers" wrestled with the rough forces of nature, wild animals, and the "cunning natives" who surrounded them (p.20). The use of the term "Voortrekker" for the Dutch settlers in 1652-1662 is an illuminating example of historical backward projection ("terugprojeksie").

The Huguenots were a "blessing"; their "simple, child-like, honest belief" remained a characteristic of the Afrikaner (p.24). Woltemade is an "unforgettable hero" (p.35). Similarly Louis Trichardt was "exceptionally brave" (p.67) and his trek a "courageous undertaking by a "small brave band" into the wilderness inhabited by "wild peoples" and animals. Uys was a "dignified," "universally respected patriarch"(pp.70-71). The Trekkers sought to buy or lease land in a "peaceful" and "honest" manner, but Mzilikazi was a "cruel, bloodthirsty heathen ... a tyrant almost without equal in the world", a "cruel" and "cunning Kaffer", and his warriors "wild savages" (p.74). Hofmeyer makes much of the massacre of burghers by the Basuto in a "treacherous" or "bestial" manner. Among the many "horrific" atrocities committed by the "cunning" Basuto, the massacre of the Basters and the group of Transvalers during the Second Basuto War "forms one dark page in history ... which will be imposed forever on the Afrikaner's memory" (p.117). This overemphasis of atrocities, and alleged atrocities, is actually a form of bias.

While the texts reviewed in Chapter 3 generally down-played

incidents such as Slagters Nek, (bias by under-emphasis or omission) Afrikaans historians tended to over-emphasize their importance. Hofmeyr devotes two chapters in highly emotive language to Slagters Nek. The importance of such grievances, whether real or imaginary, for the growth of nationalism was indicated in Chapter 1:

"Place yourself in your imagination at the foot of the hill ... where we witness a heart-rending scene. See! On the hill stands a gallows with five ropes attached to it. For whom has the gallows been erected? ... For five Afrikaner farmers ... the nooses are placed around their necks: they grow pale as they gaze at the gallows ... Here and there stands a mother or wife ... who sobs and weeps ... with broken heart and tearful cheeks the crowd returns home, but ... to this day the Afrikaner cannot forget the word 'Slagters Nek'".\*

In a eulogy uncharacteristic of its time, Hofmeyr pays tribute to the stature of the Xhosa chief Makana: he was "one of the most remarkable Kaffirs South Africa has ever produced", "a man of noble heart and inspired by high ideals, one of the most noble, deep-thinking, greatest Kaffir heroes to be found in history", etc. (p.49). Unlike Wilmot, Noble, Whiteside and other colonial writers, who reserve their praise for British troops only, Hofmeyr praises the unequalled bravery of the Xhosa warriors, whose "unbelievable courage" allowed them to face the deadly hail of the White man's bullets. In defeat, Makana's behaviour was worthy of a Roman noble: "Noble Makana! we honour you for the greatness of your rough soul" (p.50). A singular tribute indeed from a nineteenth century Republican historian.

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\* "Verplaatsen uw ons in de geest aan de voet van de heuwel ... zo zien wij er een hartroerend toneel plaatsvinden. Ziet! op de heuwel staat een galg met vijf touwen er aan gehecht. Voor wie is de galg opgericht? ... Voor vijf Afrikaner boeren ... De stroppen worden hun om de hals gedaan: zij verbleken terwijl zij de galg aanschouwen ... Hier en daar staat een moeder, een echtgenote ... die onophoudelijk snikt en weent ... Met gebroken harten en betraande wangen ging de schare huiswaarts, maar ... tot op deze dag kan de Afrikaner dat woord (Slachtersnek) niet vergeten" (p.47.).

The causes of the Great Trek are found in the usual factors. Under British rule "the natives ... although still savage barbarians, were suddenly placed on an equal footing with the white man" (p.62). The Trek is viewed as a heroic age, in which heroes such as Potgieter, Maritz, Uys, Celliers and Retief were moulded: "In one word, the history of the great trek is the history of our heroic age" (p.63). Roughly one-quarter of the work is devoted to the trials and tribulations of the Trekkers, bias by over-emphasis.

The saga of the Trek is narrated in colourful, often emotive language. The farewell to the Cape frontier soil, bought with blood, sweat and tears, in which loved ones lay buried, the last Nagmaal in a familiar environment, "a quiet tear of farewell", then at last the command to embark on a road of no return: "Trek!" (p.66). Hofmeyr alludes to the idea of the Afrikaners as God's chosen people; a parallel is drawn between the Voortrekkers and the Children of Israel: God called up the Moses' and Aarons to lead the Afrikaner people out of the Colony. The biblical allusion is maintained in the figure of Piet Retief, who like Moses of old, led his people into Canaan: "Forward then in the name of the Lord" (p.77); Dingane's last "toast" was in fact a "kiss of Judas" (p.79). The women of the Trek are referred to as "noble heroines", "mothers in the Afrikaans Israel" (p.96). Blaauwkrantz and Bushmans River, "the price which the Afrikaner Boers paid for Natal in 1838, was dear and unforgettable" (p.81). In their darkest hour God provided the desperate Trekkers with a leader, Pretorius. In contrast to the colonial historians of the time, Hofmeyr quotes the traditional version of the Vow in full (pp.86-87). At Blood River the outcome of the battle was never in doubt: "God was on their side" (p.87).

Boomplaats added a further seven names to the Afrikaans hall of fame, "their names forever engraved in the hearts of the Freestaters" (p.102). Also, the storming of the Basuto position during the Second Basuto War was " a brave undertaking"; victory

may be attributed to the "bravery" of the "courageous" Louw Wepener (pp.124-125). There is also a poem devoted to his "heroic death". A gallery of heroes, essential to all nationalisms, was provided by this, the Afrikaners' heroic age.

Hofmeyr, a Free Stater, provides an orientation for the younger generation of Republicans by urging them to draw inspiration from their forebears: "The children would do well to listen to the tales of their parents and grandparents, for they foster respect for previous generations, love for their country and nation ..." (p.112). The O.F.S. was "moulded in the crucible of the Basuto Wars" (p.112).

Just as the pro-British textbook writers, while generally anti-Boer, inevitably take sides with the Boers in Boer-Black conflicts, so Hofmeyr's anti-British stance does not prevent him from taking the part of his fellow Whites in the Anglo-Zulu War. At Isandlwana there were "miracles of courage" against the "cruel Zulus". One after the other the "brave troops" were cut down by the "bloodthirsty Zulu hordes" (pp. 136-137).

The victory at Majuba was the "most remarkable and outstanding victory in the struggle for freedom" (p.140). The British officers and men who died were, of course, brave too, and full homage was paid by the victorious Boers to General Colley. It was after all God's victory, not theirs (p.142). The book ends with "Een Zuid-Afrikaans Volkslied".

- (c) D. Aitton : Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika met een Inleiding over de Algemeene Geschiedenis voor de Scholen in de Zuid-Afrikaansche Republieken, (1887)

This work, published by the Netherlands-South Africa Society in Amsterdam in 1892 (the copy studied was from the 1897 Second Impression), like so many other South African school history

textbooks, leaned heavily on Theal (see above). In the preface, Aitton concedes that free use was made of the work of Theal: had the Society known that Theal was to publish his Korte Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika 1486-1835, they might not have proceeded. Yet Aitton's book also covers events after 1835, it is more compact for school (especially primary) use, and contains general history as well. The language was adapted to Afrikaans readers and the events of 1896 are included. Odé's book<sup>94</sup> also borrowed largely from Theal. Because the content, style and perspective in the two works is so similar, it has been considered unnecessary to examine both. In any event, these were the first scholarly textbooks written in Dutch suitable for school history teaching. The book under discussion is 326 pages long, 210 of which deal with South African history.

In the preface to the 1897 edition, Aitton writes that this is an expanded and improved edition of the Leesboek on Geschiedenis voor de Scholen in de Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek of 1892, which had been in use in the two Republics (and perhaps unofficially in certain Cape Dutch circles?). Aitton was even recommended reading for Natal history teachers<sup>95</sup>. The preface to both editions attempts to explain why the history of the Z.A.R. in the first place, and that of the neighbouring states in the second, should be taught to the youth. One gains insight into the self-understanding of the Transvalers (and Afrikaners) at this time: they had grown into a "dynamic race ... known to be god-fearing, courageous in battle, persevering and full of initiative". In the "Hollandschen Afrikaan" we recognize the "spirit of freedom" and "religious sense" of the 16th and 17th century Dutch, and of the "fine, industrious French Huguenots", the two having blended into "one nation". An extremely positive self-image is cultivated in this way. The Afrikaners of 1897

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94 i.e. Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika in Schetzen en Verhalen voor de Scholen in Zuid-Afrika, referred to earlier in this chapter.

95 N.E.D.A., Standard Syllabus, August 1, 1915.

were keenly aware of their distinct identity, an identity which was to be reinforced in the history classroom.

In its spirit and content the education being offered in Transvaal schools at the time was clearly Christian National: in wanting to teach the children the history of the "volk dezer Republiek", Church history, especially that of the Reformation was to be included. Beside "love for their own Fatherland", and the "National (Vaderlandsche) history of the Afrikaner nation", the "South African youth" should also become interested in general history. It is clear that, though this textbook was primarily produced for schools in the Z.A.R., it aimed at reaching "Zuid-Afrikaansche" youth i.e. young Afrikaners countrywide; it was to be the history not of the Z.A.R. alone, but of the whole Afrikaner nation and its fatherland. Aitton provides an orientation toward a united nation and country.

The textbook opens in traditional style: "On the 9th April van Riebeeck formally took possession of the land" (p.121). The later "treaty" with Schacher cannot strictly be viewed as a purchase of land, because the land "was already long in the possession of the settlers"; through it though the Khoi recognized the Company's "rightful possession" of the peninsula and surrounds (p.134) - thus the White man's claim to South Africa is legitimated. To provide further legitimation for the Whites' claim to the land, Aitton mentions that at various points along the coast, beacons were erected as "proof of possession", and that in August 1779 the Dutch flag was raised at the river named after the Prince of Orange (pp.159-160). In the same way further legitimation is provided for the White occupation of the interior, which on the eve of the Trek was "a wilderness ("woestenij") inhabited solely by wild animals"(p.220). At Vegkop the Trekkers placed their lot in God's hands; He granted them victory over Mzilakazi thereby giving them possession over a great part of the present Transvaal and Orange Free State. The right of the White man, and in



particular of the Afrikaner, to this half of South Africa is accorded religious sanction. (This is an argument still being used in certain political circles today). The many tribes who had earlier inhabited this region had either disappeared or ceased to be independent. Thus Potgieter could issue a proclamation whereby the whole area over which Mzilikazi had ruled became the possession of the Emigrants ("aan de Emigranten vervallen verklaard werd") (p.229). An historical event had legitimated possession of the land.

The native inhabitants are described in the derogatory terms so typical of the period: "They soon made the acquaintance of the savages ('Wilden')". They were "enemies from the start" (p.122). The "Hottentot hordes" who stood at the "lowest level of development, knew no religion, but held all sorts of superstitions and believed in witchcraft" (p.123). They were, and still are, "hideous ('walgelijk') in their appearance and stinking from filth and fat"; those without stock eagerly devoured "snakes and all sorts of insects". The settlers bore with "Christian forbearance" and "patience" the continuous "raids", murder and plunder of the "wild" inhabitants (p.125). Fifty years after the "volksplanting" the natives remained what they had always been: "lazy, working only to earn tobacco or strong drink: the Hottentots "degenerated ... through brandy" offering up health, honour and independence (p.134). The smallpox epidemics spread because of the "filthy lifestyle of these savages ('Wilden')" (p.149). The Bushmen were even lower, "wild and treacherous"; even those brought up by farmers had a "treacherous nature" (p.123). The "thieving" and "cheekiness" of the Bushmen became intolerable: they "murdered", "burned" and "stole". One can understand why "a deep hatred" towards these "raiders" ("stroopers") took root in the hearts of the colonists (p.150).

Two master symbols emerge clearly: the filthy, drunken Hottentot, and the wild, thieving Bushmen. The Blacks too were

"treacherous" in battle, fighting either "in masses" or "by means of ambush". By nature "bloodthirsty", they "leave no living soul behind on their raids": "sometimes they are even cannibals ('menscheneters')" (p.124). Dingane, for example, ordered the Retief party's heads to be crushed ("verbrijzeld"). The heart and liver were removed from Retief's body and laid before Dingane (p.231). Thus a comfortably positive self-image and a ferociously negative Feindbild of all three indigenous peoples are firmly established.

The "boundaries" of the Colony such as the Fish River were, of course, violated by the "deceitful" Xhosa. The repeated raids and invasions ("herhaalde invallen") received only reluctant attention by the British authorities. The belief took root that the British would always favour the "native" in a dispute with a farmer, thus increasing the farmers' bitterness towards the British (p.185).

Aitton's anti-British perspective is evident here and elsewhere in his book. The British took control of the Free State with "brute force" and the "thunder of cannons" ("kanongebulder") (p.257), only to grant both Republics their freedom later: "Gratitude toward God filled all, and as one they joined in prayer and the singing of psalms" (p.261). In 1857 the Vierkleur, the coat-of-arms and the motto "Eendracht maakt Macht" were adopted as symbols of the Z.A.R.'s nation and statehood. The young Trekker State south of the Vaal also acquired these symbols at this period (pp.268-271). Considerable attention is given to the mutual aid offered each other by the two "Zuster-Republieken" in times of need (p.273-274).

Understandably Aitton deals at length with the Annexation of 1877 and its consequences. The "Proclamatie" issued at Paardekraal in December 1880 is quoted in full. The most famous "heroic deeds" at Laing's Nek, Ingogo and Majuba followed, names "which the Afrikaner may in future mention with respect and justifiable

pride" (.298). Majuba was stormed with "superhuman" ("bomenschelijke") effort (p.301). The concessions made by the British in the Pretoria Convention were made out of fear "of a general movement among the Afrikaner from Simon's Bay to the Limpopo. A great strength may still go out from them, when they are united in their endeavours". A vision of Afrikaner unity and an awareness of the political and military potential of such unity is evident in these words (p.303). The chapter on the War of Independence ends with the poem, Transvaalsch Volkslied 1880, written significantly in Afrikaans, not Dutch. The sentiments and perceptions expressed are of interest to this study, as the following extracts show:

"The vierkleur of our beloved land,  
Waves once more over the Transvaal, ...

"Many storms has it withstood ...  
Stormed by Kaffir, Briton and Lion ...

"Four years long we spoke sweetly  
To regain our land  
We asked you, Briton ...  
To go away, and leave us alone.

"And with God's help we threw off  
The yoke of England ...  
So the Lord saved us once again  
All honour to Him. \*

God clearly interceded in this conflict, smiting the enemies ("Kaffer en Brit") of His people. As in the past, God enabled

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\* "Di vierkleur van ons dierbaar land,  
Di waai weer o'er Transvaal, ...  
"Veul storme het zij deurgestaan ...  
Bestormd deur Kaffer, Leeuw en Brit ...  
"Vier jaar lank het ons mooi gepraat,  
Om weer ons land te krij  
Ons vraag jou, Brit ...  
gaat weg, en laat ons blij.  
"En met "Gods hulp het ons die juk  
Van England afgegooi ...  
So het di Heer ons weer verlos;  
Ons geef Hem al die eer. "

the Z.A.R. to ward off the threat posed by the Jameson Raid: "with God's help the Transvalers also overcame this threatening danger" (p.323).

In the concluding section, "Besluit", Aitton writes of the "old struggle" between British imperialism and the "Hollandsche Afrikanen", of British contempt for the Boers and of repeated interference in South African affairs. There is also the conviction that in the future, the British Empire would hinder "the free development of the Afrikaner nationality" (p.321). The recent Raid had soured relations between the two "main elements" of the South African population, yet the book nevertheless contains a vision of the future, a united South Africa:

"Then and then alone unity will be possible, when all, regardless of their descent, regard South Africa not only as the country where they are temporarily resident, but as their Fatherland"(p. 324).

The book concludes with Een Zuid-Afrikaansch Volkslied in which a love of the land (i.e. the whole of South Africa, not merely the Z.A.R.), so dearly bought, is expressed:

"O land, bought with blood  
With noble, heroic courage ...  
My dear Fatherland  
South Africa." \*

Aitton's textbook, like so many others of the period, attempts to provide its young readers with an historical orientation: an explanation of the Z.A.R.'s present predicament is sought in past conflicts (and victories), which are greatly over-emphasised and a vision of the future is offered.

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\* "O land, gekocht door bloed,  
Door vromen heldenmoed ...  
My dierbaar Vaderland  
Zuid-Afrika."

## SUMMARY

Before 1879 there was little national consciousness or cohesion among Afrikaners. This is reflected in the lack of historical consciousness in the curriculum of Republican Schools. The crises of 1879-81 led to a national awareness among Afrikaners, in particular in the two Boer Republics. After that time it became possible to speak of Afrikaner nationalism. The two Afrikaner states became increasingly aware of their past. Inevitably, Republican youth were taught the history of their fatherland. The Republican Governments recognized the role of history teaching in the formation of an identity, in legitimating the existence of the young states, and in providing national orientation.

Soon after 1881 it was evident from the history courses in both Republics that the two poles or foci of Afrikaner history were to be the Great Trek and the War of Independence, or First Anglo-Boer War. These early syllabuses also reveal that contemporary events were included for their obvious political value. Similar to the Cape and Natal syllabuses, Transvaal and Free State history syllabuses emphasized military and political history almost to the exclusion of anything else. The syllabuses (and textbooks) of the Republican period are characterised by an acute awareness of the threat posed by both British Imperialism and Black tribes. Whereas, in Colonial history teaching, it was the British Empire that provided orientation, in Republican schools pupils were urged to look to the Netherlands as "mother country".

Gradually the Republics were able to replace the English-language Cape history textbooks with their own Dutch texts. The influence of Theal on the authors of these early works is obvious. The books display an anti-British stance. They also generally portray non-Whites as a threat and describe them in negative terms.

The foundations of Afrikaans historiography were laid in this period.

## CHAPTER 5

### HISTORY TEACHING IN THE TRANSVAAL AND ORANGE FREE STATE 1900-1918

#### 1 PAX BRITANNICA: MILNERISM AND BRITISH SUPREMACY 1900-1909

On 1 September 1900, the South African Republic became the British Colony of Transvaal. Earlier the same year the Free State Republic had become the Orange River Colony. The new British administration appointed E.B. Sargent<sup>1</sup> as adviser on education matters to the military authorities in the two former Boer Republics. He was zealous in his efforts to carry out Milner's instructions to Anglicise the Boers. After a visit to Cape Town in January 1901, Sargent planned the establishment of schools in the concentration camps along the lines of the camp school at Green Point. By July 1901 he had been appointed Director of Education for the "occupied" areas. In the course of 1902 most of the Transvaal Education Department's schools were in fact operating in the camps: by May 1902 there were over 17 000 children in the camp schools as compared to just under 11 000 at school in the towns. In the Orange River Colony the comparable figures were 12 000 as compared to about 2 700.<sup>2</sup>

On 31 May 1902 the two Republics officially ceased to exist. South Africa was at last at Milner's feet. Van Jaarsveld<sup>3</sup> quotes Milner's confident pronouncement in 1902: "I have saved the British position in South Africa and have knocked the bottom out of the great Afrikaner nation for ever and ever, Amen." His energetic attempts to Anglicise South Africa included an immigration scheme and the inculcation of the values of imperialist Britain in the schools.<sup>4</sup> Republican education was swept away. All the inspectors and other education officials were

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1 See M.A. Basson, Die Britse Invloed in die Transvaalse Onderwys, 1836-1907, pp.144-190.

2 J.C. Coetzee, (Ed.), Onderwys in Suid-Afrika, pp.297;162.

3 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Wie en Wat is die Afrikaner? p.10.

4 Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa, pp.266-267.

English. Any teacher suspected of dubious loyalty was summarily dismissed. The power of the state was used to bring about the denationalisation of a people through the schools.<sup>5</sup>

In a confidential report for the half year ending 30 June 1901, Sargent makes his intentions quite plain: "English must be the paramount, and indeed, the only language throughout South Africa ... I have therefore determined to propose that English shall be the medium of instruction in all secular subjects". Dutch was to be used for religious instructions only.<sup>6</sup> It was necessary to teach the Boer children "those ideas which belong to the civilization of the twentieth century" (i.e. British ideas), and for this reason Sargent expected his teachers "to learn sufficient of the 'Taal' to be able to exchange courtesies with the burgher and his wife ... they will gain the hearts of the people, and find them willing to allow their children to be taught the speech and the knowledge of a world that has hitherto lain outside their ken".<sup>7</sup> The spirit of Milnerism was indeed abroad. In an address delivered to a teacher's conference in Johannesburg in July 1902,<sup>8</sup> Sargent spoke of the need, above all, of unity:

"South Africa has to be taught to understand the value of unity, and it lies with you teachers, more than with any other body of men and women, to educate her in that view. We do not want any longer to have a divided community ... It is for you to make the children in the schools understand that these differences ... must be obliterated before South Africa is worthy to take her place beside ... Canada or ... Australia... I think ... the Dutch can readily understand a United South Africa. Their imagination may in in time ... embrace the idea of a world-empire".

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- 5 E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, Vol.I., p.315.  
6 T.E.D.A., Transvaal and Orange River Colony, Report of the Acting Director of Education for the Half-Year Ending June 30th, 1901, p.14.  
7 Quoted in E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, Vol.I., pp.18-19.  
8 T.E.D.A., Conference of Teachers of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, Johannesburg, July 1902., pp.24-28.

The British authorities imported a strong and well-trained force of three hundred teachers from the Home Country and the other colonies, with which to inculcate the English language and ideals in the younger generation of Republican Afrikaners.<sup>9</sup>

In 1901 Milner<sup>10</sup> wrote that he attached special importance to school history books:

"A good world history would be worth anything. At present children are only taught the history of South Africa ... Everything that makes South African children look outside South Africa and realize the world makes for peace. Everything that cramps and confines their views to South Africa only (limits their historical reading, for instance, to Slagter's Nek and Dingaan's Day and Boomplaas and Majuba) makes for Afrikanerdom and further discord"

The "Report on the Educational Needs of the Transvaal Colony" 1901, barred the teaching of South African history as it only stimulated disloyalty to England.<sup>11</sup> Although Sargent deemed it undesirable to teach history in camp schools at all, the Transvaal schools were obliged to meet the syllabus requirements of the University of the Cape of Good Hope. Despite Sargent's reservations, history, in the form of the Cape syllabus, was taught in the schools under his control.<sup>12</sup> In 1903 the first syllabus based on the Cape syllabus appeared, covering British and European history between 1748 and 1815, with particular emphasis on British imperial and colonial history. South African history only was to be taught in that limited context. It is interesting that the geography syllabus of the same year unhesitatingly prescribed a detailed knowledge of South Africa. Geography was clearly not as "dangerous" a subject as history,<sup>13</sup> although even here the context of the Empire was to be

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- 9 Malherbe, E.G., Education in South Africa, Vol.I., p.299.  
10 Quoted in M.B. Basson, Die Britse Invloed in die Transvaalse Onderwys, p.156.  
11 F.A. van Jaarsveld and J.J. Rademeyer, Teorie en Metodiek vir Geskiedenisonderrig, p.89.  
12 M.A. Basson, Die Britse Invloed in die Transvaalse Onderwys, p.157.  
13 Conference of Teachers, Johannesburg, July 1902, p.25.



emphasized.<sup>14</sup>

In 1903, there were 14 secondary schools in the Transvaal, with 964 pupils, of which 336 at 11 schools offered history.<sup>15</sup> The 1903 report of high school inspectors on history teaching at those schools contains some illuminating insights into the objectives of the British authorities at the time: "... the political attitude of the next generation will be determined by the history teaching of this, and in view of this special importance attaching to the subject," certain considerations deserved to be borne in mind in deciding upon a history curriculum. "History is politics taught by examples, and it is in the history lesson that a teacher has an opportunity of ... laying the foundations of good citizenship and statesmanship." The inspectors concede that where the "struggle with barbarism" and the Afrikaner's sense of "national mission" are "of romantic interest", "a narrow particularism must be avoided". By the latter, of course, they meant Afrikaner national consciousness. Transvaal and Free State high school children were "obviously destined to be the future pioneers and apostles of a civilisation no doubt primarily English". One of the inspectors, Mr Hope, could not have been more explicit in his view of the nature and advantages of the type of history which should be taught: "... I look upon a simple and connected account of the gradual progress of English History as the backbone of any vertebrate and coherent system of instruction for my pupils."<sup>16</sup>

Bertha Synge's Story of the World replaced the South African textbooks in Transvaal and Free State schools in this period. The T.E.D. Report for 1902<sup>17</sup> commented as follows on the state of

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- 14 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Report for the School Year January to December 1903, p.30.
- 15 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Report for the School Year January to December 1903, p.43.
- 16 Ibid., pp.43-44.
- 17 Ibid., p.30.

history teaching:

"The teaching of history has received scant attention, so far, in our schools, owing to the desire of the Department to avoid controversial subjects: However, it was impossible to banish it for ever, and so the series of readers by Miss Synge are welcome. They appear as if they would ... avoid controversy".

The 1904 Report confirmed that "Synge's Readers are universally used from Standard III upwards" and the Rand circuit inspector reported "a revival" in history due to the popularity of Miss Synge's book. Basson<sup>18</sup> on the other hand, quotes the Volkstem of 27 July 1903: "'Synge ... this is the name of the secretive 'specially chose' British-imperial children's historian." Davenport<sup>19</sup> says of Synge that "she belittled all aspects of Afrikanerdom". From Klerksdorp it was reported that English history was being taught to pupils preparing for the Cape Elementary and School Higher Examinations. In the Rustenburg circuit "for political reasons neither English nor South African History is taught at present".<sup>20</sup>

The examination papers set by the T.E.D. for high school bursary candidates in this period are revealing. In the 1906 History paper for candidates under thirteen, twelve questions are set; all deal with general and in particular British history (e.g. "Give an account of the attempts made by James II and his followers to recover the English crown"). The only concession to South African history is in question 12:

"State briefly who or what were any three of the following:

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- 18 M.B. Basson, Die Britse Invloed in die Transvaalse Onderwys, 1836-1907, p.180.
- 19 T.R.H. Davenport, History in South Africa in the 1980's: Why Bother About It?, in South Africa International. Volume Nineteen. Number Two, October 1988, p.98.
- 20 T.E.D. Report for the School Year January to December 1904, pp.31, 33, 35, 41.

Martin Luther, Wellington, Erasmus, Gustavus Adolphus, Peter the Great, Mirabeau, Lafayette."<sup>21</sup>

At least van Riebeeck found himself in illustrious company.

A year later the same examination contained three full questions on aspects of South African history, albeit with Afrikaner heroes and heroic deeds completely missing.<sup>22</sup> The 1906 paper for candidates under 14 does contain one question on the reasons for the Great Trek and two others on South African history.<sup>23</sup>

The imbalance between general and local history reflected in these papers is significant, for the 1906 syllabus had at least paid lip service to the status of South African history. It prescribed (a) Modern European History 1517-1815, and (b) History of South Africa, from the discovery of the Cape to the Matabele War.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless it was clear that more and more concessions were being made to the feelings and aspirations of the Afrikaans-speaking element. In the light of the Afrikaner political revival this was perhaps inevitable.

## 2. THE AFRIKANER POLITICAL REVIVAL AFTER 1905

Milner's strategy for the pacification of the Boer population of the Transvaal and Orange Free State had included their "denationalisation" by the suppression of their cultural development and the re-education of their children through a deliberate policy of Anglicisation. The effect produced by this enforced Anglicisation was precisely the opposite of that

21 T.E.D. Papers set to Candidates for High School Bursaries, September 1906, p.4.

22 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Papers set to Candidates for High School Bursaries, 1907, p.5.

23 Ibid., 1906, p.10.

24 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Report for the Six Months January to June 1905, p.31.

intended. The Afrikaans language movement flourished in the atmosphere of intense resentment fostered by Milnerism. On the political front too the Boers had been finding their way back to self-government much faster than Milner had envisaged. Somewhat disillusioned, Milner left South Africa in April 1905. General Botha's Het Volk party, founded in 1904, won the majority of seats in the Transvaal elections a few years later. In December 1907, General Hertzog's Orangia-Unie swept to power. By 1908 Afrikaners had returned to power in three of Britain's four South African colonies.

The Smuts Act (No. 25 of 1907) is seen by Barnard<sup>25</sup> as the establishment of a neutral state education system, in keeping with Smuts's holistic philosophy. South African children, both Boer and English, were to be prepared for their place within the British Empire. Smuts did indeed make concessions to the status of Dutch. However they were so minor as to be bound to cause dissatisfaction among his compatriots. General Hertzog's Education Act of 1908 on the other hand provided for mother-tongue education up to Std 4, raising a howl of protest from English extremists in the Free State.<sup>26</sup>

Four years before the Smuts Act, a movement headed by the Dutch Reformed Church set about establishing non-state schools in which a "Christian National spirit" would prevail.<sup>27</sup> In 1903 the Commission for Christian National Education issued the syllabuses for the schools under its jurisdiction, which within a few years numbered over 200.<sup>28</sup> In contrast to government schools at the time, where British history took central (even sole) place, the C.N.E. schools were to teach the history of the fatherland ("Geschiedenis des Vaderlands"), starting from Std 1. The context of the history syllabus is the very antithesis of what Milner was attempting in his schools: the Std 3 syllabus, for example,

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- 25 S.S. Barnard, *Blankeonderwys in Transvaal*, p.113; see also M.A. Basson, *Die Britse Invloed in die Transvaalse Onderwys*, ch.XVII.
- 26 See R.A. Grobbelaar, *Middelbare Onderwys in die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1910-1952, met Spesiale Verwysing na Leergange en Leerplanne*, pp.15-17, and B.I.S. Beukman, *Die Geskiedenis van Onderwys in die Vrystaat Voor en Onmiddellik na Unie 1898-1912*, ch.IV.
- 27 See M.A. Basson, *Die Britse Invloed in die Transvaalse Onderwys*, ch.XVII.
- 28 E.G. Malherbe, *Education in South Africa, Vol 1*, p.322.

covered "the main figures and main facts from the history of our "volk", beginning with the Great Trek ... up to the Bloemfontein Convention", and teachers were to regularly commemorate, whenever appropriate, "Amajubadag, de Hervormingsdag en Dingaansdag", the very events Milner was endeavouring to wipe from the pages of history.<sup>29</sup>

Similarly the Std 4 syllabus covered events such as the Great Trek and the wars of 1880-81 and 1899-1902 in great detail. Std 5 pupils were to learn "the whole history of South Africa, and that of the Orange Free State and of the South African Republic (Z.A.R.) in particular", while Aitton's Korte Geschiedenis van de Republieken in Zuid Afrika was prescribed for Std 6. Other textbooks recommended (for the use of the teacher as reference works) were F. Lion Cachet's De Worstelstrijd der Transvalers, Theal's Korte Geschiedenis van Zuid Afrika and Van Oordt's Kort begrip der Kerkgeschiedenis.<sup>30</sup>

In an undated piece from this period (probably 1903 or 1904) entitled "Christelijk ... Nationaal Onderwys", Prof. D. Postma provides insight into the thinking behind Christian National Education. In his exposition we catch a glimpse of a thread which was to run through South African education until the present day. In the struggle ("strijd") in which the Afrikaners were involved, not only a thoroughly Christian education, but also "truly national (original emphasis) education was essential. It was God's Will that there should be different nations, nations separate from one another in their way of life, thinking, attitudes, religion and language. It should be obvious to everyone what differences exist between peoples. The Afrikaners were led by God along different ways, "door God geleerd ... anders te denken en te gelooven". C.N.E. Schools could serve to

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29 T.E.D.A., Leerplan voor de Scholen voor Christelijk Nasionale Onderwijs, Commissie voor C.N.O., pp.40-41.

30 T.E.D.A., Leerplan voor de Scholen voor Christelijk Nasionale Onderwijs, Commissie voor C.N.O., pp.41-43.

maintain and strengthen "ons nationale leven, en dat wel door onderwijs in onze taal en onze geschiedenis". Besides the national language it is especially the "Vaderlandsche Geschiedenis" which exercises the greatest influence on "de nationale vorming". Since time immemorial the tales of the forebears' deeds have been a powerful means of arousing sympathy, antipathy, enthusiasm and patriotism. Instead, Postma laments, schools were being used to alienate young hearts by the narration of the heroic deeds of other nations: "and when attempts are sometimes made at catching glimpses into our history, then such attempts are countered with violence. Precisely because one is afraid of the powerful influence of a proper treatment of national history in the schools". Just as Christian education would save the nation from spiritual downfall, so National education would save it from national downfall ("nationalen ondergang").<sup>31</sup>

Prof. F. Postma of Potchefstroom, one of the leading figures in the C.N.E. movement, articulated in 1905 the close link between national consciousness and the teaching of national history. Although the C.N.E. schools did not survive long, it is worth quoting Postma at length, for his "national" views (if not the Christian dimension) on the subject, and those of kindred spirits, eventually came to dominate history teaching in South Africa, as the chapters to follow will illustrate. According to Postma, "love of the fatherland is rooted in a knowledge of the history of the fatherland, in the knowledge of the deeds of our fathers". He feared the demise of the Afrikaner nation because of the "scandalous" neglect of the teaching of national history, which "sacrificing of the feeling of nationality" he compared to "a stab of the knife into one's own bosom". Part of the blame could be laid at the door of the University of Cape Town which, as the examining body, had only just begun to make allowances "ever so slightly" for "Afrikaans history". As they

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31 D. Postma, Christeljk ... Nationaal Onderwys, pp.13-17.

were almost exclusively English one could not expect them to feel "much for our history". Postma, however, also takes teachers and parents to task.<sup>32</sup>

In a similarly impassioned lecture in 1908, the same Postma<sup>33</sup> was once again pointing to the abysmal lack of knowledge of South African history of the upcoming generation: "they know a little mouthful of 'Cape history' and know a great deal of the 'Williams' and 'Richards' and 'Edwards' and all the kings and queens of England. The important issue before them is the 'History of England'", which made up seven-eighths of the syllabus. He quotes the Cape examiners: "The candidates ... know more of the kings of England than about their own nation". Postma identifies the Cape external examination as one of the primary causes of this state of affairs: South African history was no longer required for the higher examinations, and counted only one-third of the marks for the elementary examination. In 1906 the latter examination had been abolished and with it "Vaderlandsche geschiedenis". Even in primary schools there was little or no history teaching: "There is no time in the schools to teach Afrikaans children their own history!!!" (original emphasis).<sup>34</sup>

In schools where some attention was given to history, it was through textbooks "which presented twisted facts" or told untruths. According to Postma<sup>35</sup>, Whiteside's widely used book was not only written in a foreign language, but was riddled with "untruths and inaccuracies." He proceeds to give examples of

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32 F. Postma, Vaderlandsche Geschiedenis, passim.

33 F. Postma, Zuid-Afrikaansche Geschiedenis op onze Schole, passim.

34 "Daar is nie tyd nie op die skole om die Afrikaanse kinders in hul eien geschiedenis te onderricht!!!" (original emphasis).

35 F. Postma, Zuid-Afrikaansche Geschiedenis op onze Scholen.

Whiteside's perceived bias, which he roundly condemns:

"The great damage ('kwaad') that a book such as this does, is incredible. The false and distorted presentation alienates the children completely from their own history ... and utterly deadens (original emphasis) all feeling of nationality. The whole spirit in which the book is written is anti-Afrikaans, and the politics of killing by silence ('dood-zwijing Politiek') plays a major role in this".

Postma concedes that Darter's Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika is slightly more acceptable at least being in Dutch, but he questions this book's impartiality too: it downplays British injustices, and does not promote "love of the fatherland". His address concludes with the injunction: "Let us at last then start to banish Whiteside from Potchefstroom and district." The controversy over history teaching and history textbooks is indeed never-ending.

By 1909 the C.N.E. movement's schools had been taken over by the State. Financial problems and the lack of interest and support by the Het Volk Party led to the gradual, but certain demise of the C.N.E. schools. As Coetzee<sup>36</sup> points out, the ideal of C.N.E. did not die in 1910 - its protagonists had lost the battle, but not the war. During the 1930's this spirit would be revived and after 1948 it would leave its imprint on the entire South African education system.

In the wake of the defeat of 1902 and the establishment of British hegemony over the whole of South Africa, Afrikaner national and historical consciousness asserted itself in other ways. It was in the period under review that a series of readers, "Zuid-Afrikaanse Historie Bibliotheek", was published. The series was meant to appeal to young readers, providing a counter-balance to the vast amount of reading material on English history available at the time.

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36 J.C. Coetzee, (Ed.), Onderwys in Suid-Afrika, p.305.



The readers proved immensely popular, enjoying several editions in Dutch, followed by several Afrikaans editions in the 1920's and 1930's. The original versions were written in a simplified Dutch to make them more easily comprehensible and palatable to young Afrikaners. A generation or more imbibed heroic episodes in the Afrikaner's history. The following stirring titles are a sample: De Strijd om Recht; Voor Land en Volk; Zwart en Wit; Een Vader des Volks; Onder de Vierkleur; David Malan; Liefde en Plicht; Aan Tafelbaai's Strand.

The author, J.F. van Oordt, wrote under the pseudonym D'Arbez.

### 3. HISTORY SYLLABUSES 1910 - 1918

By 1909, the demographic and political realities of the Transvaal could no longer be disregarded. Thus the Regulations Governing Primary Schools and Secondary Schools issued by the T.E.D. in that year were issued simultaneously in Dutch as Bepalingen voor Lagere Scholen en Middelbare Scholen. The history syllabus for primary schools prescribed "the principal events of South African History, with the Colonial development of the British Empire, and with the related and causative world movements, and further, with the growth of free institutions within the British Empire and especially the machinery of responsible government in South Africa". The hope was expressed that the course would inspire pupils with reverence for the past which they had inherited, and a sense of civic duty in the present.<sup>37</sup>

Neither the list of suggested topics for Stds 2 and 3 nor the list for Stds 4 and 5 contained the Anglo-Boer War as a theme. It would appear that in the sensitive years preceding Union the

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37 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Regulations Governing Primary Schools and Secondary Schools and Departments for White Children including the Code or Course for Instruction to be Followed Therein, 1909, pp.30-33.

topic was being studiously omitted so as not to inflame past grievances. The senior primary list did, however, include the events of 1877 - 1881. Theal's South Africa formed the basis of the syllabus.

The Std 6 and 7 course called for "a more precise and mature appreciation of the facts of South African history", once again with reference to Theal's South Africa in the Story of the Nations Series. The pupil's study of history should end in "practical patriotism", particularly through the study of "the principles and practice of responsible government". Besides Theal, Hofmeyr's revised book, Kijkes in onze Geschiedenis, in both languages, was considered "useful". Amongst the books teachers could read to extend their knowledge was, interestingly enough, Aitton. As before, the senior secondary course followed was that of the Cape.<sup>38</sup>

Although the Transvaal history syllabuses were to an increasing extent reflecting an awareness of "national" history, in practice South African history was still being neglected. In the 1907, 1908 and 1909 Lower Certificate Examinations there was not one question on South African topics.<sup>39</sup>

The period 1910 - 1918 (and beyond) was characterised in both former Republics by an acute shortage of suitable school books in Afrikaans, which was gradually being introduced as the medium of instruction in place of Dutch. As far as history was concerned, the education authorities were clearly uncertain as to which history should be taught, and how: "... There is still too much

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38 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Regulations Governing Primary Schools and Secondary Schools, 1909, pp.35-37.

39 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Report for the Year 1909, pp.141, 146, 153.

difference of opinion amongst those who would claim to speak with authority as to the character and range of history syllabuses for the results of school work in this subject to give real satisfaction to anyone".<sup>40</sup> This uncertainty is reflected in the large number of syllabuses compiled in the decade 1910 - 1920, usually with only minor changes.

These changes and the uncertainty underlying them, mirror the lack of direction and national identity characteristic of the years after Union. The White "nation" was fractured by three powerful, and contradictory, forces: Hertzog's nationalism aiming at a separate identity for the two White language groups in a two-stream policy; Botha's and Smuts's South African Party wanting to merge the two into a single stream, that is a broad South Africanism, and the Jingo element determined to maintain British superiority. The Jingo element had had their way after 1900 with Milnerism, yet from about 1906 they were increasingly neutralised by Afrikaner political mobilisation. Between 1906 and 1918 the political scene was largely dominated by Botha and then Smuts. The history syllabuses in these years illustrate very clearly the spirit of the South African Party: reconciliation between Boer and Briton, and South Africa as a self-governing country but an integral part of the Empire. From the founding of the National Party in 1914, Hertzog and his followers were to become more and more strident in their demands for mother-tongue education, recognition of the Afrikaners as a nation with their own national past, and independence for South Africa. This was to be at the centre of the White political conflict for the next half century.<sup>41</sup>

Nowhere is the philosophy of the political middle ground as represented by the South African Party clearer than in the 1913 Transvaal history syllabus. As before (for example the 1907

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40 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Report for the Year 1914, p.32.

41 See E.G. Matherbe, *Education in South Africa*, Vol. I., pp. 415-417; and J.C. Coetzee, *Onderwys in Suid-Afrika*, Ch.IV.

syllabus), South African history was to be "thoroughly treated", but note the growing sense of South African nationhood in the following extracts:

"... younger pupils will hear stories based on the stirring events of South African history", and "As regards history ... then, the code ... reflects clearly South African circumstances and aspirations. The teacher will have a great opportunity here. The subject must have local appropriateness, local point and sting. The centre of gravity and interest must lie in South Africa. There must be a South African spirit throughout. The South African boy must learn to look with discrimination and pride on the development of the two great White races which inhabit South Africa."

In an obvious concession to the extremist elements in the Party, however, the British connection was emphasized: "... and on the development of the empire to which he belongs."<sup>42</sup>

Whereas the Republican syllabuses had contained the names of Arikaner heroes, and the British-orientated ones the names of British heroes, the 1913 syllabus and others of that decade presented a more balanced gallery of heroes. The Std 1's were to be told not only of the "bravery of Woltemade", the "bravery of young Uijs" and the "brave women at Bloed (sic) River", but also the "ride of Richard King" and "the death of Wilson and his men". The Std 2's were to learn about "the hardships endured by the Voortrekkers" as well as the bravery of the British at Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift. The authorities must have felt by 1913 that there was sufficient distance from the Anglo-Boer War for it to be included in the syllabus. Thus "the great Boer War" was dealt with in Std 4, and again in Std 7. The syllabus for the school-leaving certificates were still those of the Cape, and did not yet cover South African history. The syllabus was brought right up to date with the inclusion of the Act of Union in 1910. The lists of books of reference contain the usual Foggin,

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42 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. The Curriculum of Schools for General Education, 1913, pp.4-6.

Parker, Theal, Hofmeyr etc., but also for the first time Preller's Piet Retief. Preller will figure more prominently in Chapter 6. The 1913 syllabus showed a desire to satisfy both flanks of the ruling party while at the same time promoting a broad South Africanism.<sup>43</sup> This inherent tension would eventually lead to the demise of the South African Party.

Relations between the two White language groups, patched up superficially before and immediately after Union, had soured. Tensions within Botha's party had led to the establishment of the National Party in 1914. South Africa's participation in the First World War triggered off the Rebellion of 1914, a head-on collision between the Government and Afrikaner nationalists. This was a serious challenge to the legitimacy of the new South African state, for the cry for the restoration of the Boer republics was being heard. The execution of Jopie Fourie and the accidental shooting of General de la Rey led to a further deterioration in relations between the Government and Afrikaner nationalism. It was at this time that the Helpmekeer society and the first Nationalist newspaper De Burger were born.<sup>44</sup> In deference to the feelings aroused by these events, the education authorities thought it wise once again to exclude the Anglo-Boer War from the history syllabus of 1917:<sup>45</sup> "It has been decided that South African history beyond the year 1892 shall not be included in any school course".

This is one of the clearest examples of the direct link between the needs of a regime and the content of school history syllabuses.

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43 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. The Curriculum of Schools for General Education pp.59-67.

44 T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa. A Modern History, pp.271-272.

45 T.E.D.A.; T.E.D. School Courses Including the Principal Subjects of the Common Primary Course and of the General Secondary Course, 1917, pp.33-38.

In reaction to the growth of an exclusive Afrikaner nationalism, the syllabus was altered to allow for a choice between South African history and the history of the Empire. "Scheme A" provided for South African history up to the end of Std 4 and again in Std 6, but not at all in Stds 5, 7, 8 and 9. "Scheme B" provided for South African history alongside general history through all standards.

As mentioned above, 1892 was the cut-off point. In practice this meant that a teacher choosing Scheme A would effectively be eliminating South African history from his history syllabus. The South African Party had not only to contend with the demands of Afrikaner Nationalism, but also those of the Jingos in the Unionist Party without whose support Botha, and later Smuts, could not have governed. The playing down of South African history and the omission of the great conflict of 1899-1902 demonstrate the difficult position of those entrusted with the drawing up of history syllabuses in a plural society. We turn now to some representative texts of the period.

#### SELECTED TEXTBOOKS: 1900 -1918

#### Characteristics of the Textbooks Analysed

In Chapter 3 the textbooks analysed are representative of the pro-British, Colonial school of writing. In Chapter 4, works by Republican-minded, pro-Afrikaans authors were examined.

While the Cape and Natal were British colonies, and the Free State and Transvaal, Boer Republics, these two officially sanctioned perspectives on the South African past, though challenged, were unassailable. After 1902, and particularly after Union in 1910, White South Africa was no longer divided into a Republican North and a Colonial South, but rather along language, and ultimately, party political lines.

The Second Anglo-Boer War saw the emergence of an Afrikaner Nationalism which transcended the old geo-political boundaries. Similarly, English-speakers formed nationwide political parties. By the end of the period reviewed in this chapter, the battle lines had been drawn. The Jingo element had the Unionists to articulate their political ambitions, the Afrikaner Nationalists the National Party, and the political "moderates" of both language groups the South African Party.

It is noteworthy that the textbooks examined, while not consciously written from a party political perspective, to a very large extent reflect party political standpoints.

Scully, Bleby and Foggin, while still British-orientated are cautious, even conciliatory, in their treatment of British - Boer clashes of the past, a stance in line with the policies of the S.A.P.

The Afrikaans-orientated textbooks are, in spirit, close to the National Party of the time. The British and the Blacks, in that order, are regarded as the two main threats to the Afrikaner nation. The two axes of Afrikaner history, the Great Trek and the Second Anglo-Boer War (which superseded the Anglo-Transvaal War), are in full evidence in these books. The list of grievances against the British, a kind of historical charge sheet, had been greatly expanded by events such as the Jameson Raid; the depredations of the Second Anglo-Boer War, the traumatic loss of independence in 1902, Milnerism and the Rebellion.

The non-White peoples are treated in the same manner in all the books reviewed in this chapter as they were in the textbooks examined in preceding chapters.

The differing approaches to South Africa's past found in these two groups of textbooks, and the by now firmly established stereotypes and master symbols, were to persist for the next half

century or more.

#### 4.2. Analysis of the Textbooks

(a) W.C. Scully: A History of South Africa from the Earliest Days to Union, (1915)

Scully was the author of books on Africa, such as Reminiscences of a South African Pioneer and Between Sun and Sand. In his preface Scully states that this book fulfilled the need for a single work setting forth South African history after Union in a connected form. It treats all four South African states: there are 190 pages for Cape, 40 for Free State, 24 for Transvaal and 14 pages for Natal history. Scully concedes that this is not original work, being based on Theal, Cory and Leibbrandt's précis of the Archives.

The tone and language in Scully's book is so similar to that of the works of Colonial writers already examined that only a few examples will suffice. His treatment of the "Hottentots" is characterised by all the usual clichés and stereotypes: they "murdered" herdsmen and "carried off" cattle (p.18); they were generally a constant source of trouble to the White settlers. Most of the "Hottentots" the missionary van der Kemp tried to "save", "deserted", and "recommenced marauding" (p.94). In 1802 expeditions to the interior met with various "wandering hordes" of Hottentots and "half-breeds" (p.95). The "Bushmen" were "savages" (p.59) and "marauders" (p.67), "lawless" bands of "true Ishmaelites" (p.83), guilty of the standard "depredations" (p.52) and "treacherous murders" (p.59).

On the Eastern Frontier the "unfortunate farmers" were constantly being "murdered", "pillaged" and "plundered" by the "invading" Xhosa (p.92). By 1816 the "depredations" and "outrages" perpetrated by the Xhosa had become "almost unbearable": "War, hunting and cattle-lifting were looked upon by the Bantu of the



period as the only pursuits worth following, and there was probably hardly a Xhosa within 50 miles of the border who had not participated in the plunder to which the farmers had for so long been subjected". Under the heading "More Bantu Depredations", Scully mentions "trouble with the Bantu" again as a result of their incessant "depredations"(p.131). Gaika was a "debauched drunkard", "weak", "vacillating" and "self-indulgent" (p.143); Sandile was "weak" and "unstable" (p.142).

The abolition of slavery resulted in the country becoming filled with "wandering Hottentots and others of nondescript breed, who lived by thieving ... doing anything but working" (p.152). Scully expresses his sympathy with the Trekboers in Trans-Orange who were placed under the jurisdiction of a "hybrid, inferior race" (i.e. the Griquas). On the Diamond Fields the Coloured labourers "took to drink and stole diamonds from their employers" (p.208).

Moshweshwe's "ambition" led him to occupy areas "where no Basuto had previously resided" (p.174). He continued to "profess friendship", but his "sinister attitude" caused further hostilities (p.184). Later his "double-dealing" became evident (p.191). The treaty between the Free State and the Basutos was "disregarded" by Basuto who "violated" the border (p.191). By 1858 the "depredations" of the Basutos had become "intolerable", thus war was "forced upon the O.F.S." (p.193). Later he again grew "arrogant" and "the looting became worse than ever" (p.198). The antithesis of the above stereotypes and unfavourable master symbol is the positive self-understanding of White South Africans as a decent Christian people reflected in Scully's judgement on the Company's rule: "on the whole" the Company dealt with the Hottentots in a "humane, lenient and considerate manner" (p.43). Scully quotes Theal on the fine qualities of the European settlers - "unconquerable love of liberty, a spirit of

patient industry, a deep-seated feeling of trust in the Almighty God; virtues which fitted them to do the work marked out for them by Providence in the land that to their children was home" (p.44). The Huguenots were of a "superior class", a few even belonging to the noblest families of France (p.41). The positive self-image is constantly reinforced: the South African Boer was "the most efficient pioneer that civilization has ever known" (p.47).

British sympathisers with the Blacks were a group of "ill-balanced enthusiasts" whose "mistaken indignation" weakened a righteous cause (p.103). Scully is sceptical of Philip's Researches in South Africa: the work "confounds theories with facts", and is "unreliable" in many important respects. In short, he concludes, Philip's influence upon South Africa "has not been beneficial" (p.141).

True to the spirit of reconciliation of the time, Scully is lenient in his treatment of incidents such as Slagters Nek: Bezuidenhout and his kin were "hardy, turbulent men, who had spent most of their lives in defending their property against Native marauders" (p.112). The "intrepid" Jan Bezuidenhout, "with high courage, faced his foes". He regrets that mercy was not shown as this would have averted "much subsequent bitterness".

The Great Trek was a migration to regions "occupied only by wandering hordes of savages and wild animals". The main cause of the Trek was "the blundering and vacillating" policy adopted towards the "warlike and aggressive hordes of Bantu" on the frontier (p.153). It was "impossible to overestimate the bravery" of the men of the Vlugkommando (p.163). Pretorius was a man of "high character" and "great ability", a "heroic figure", whose death was widely mourned (p.123). According to Scully, the charges of slavery brought against Transvaal farmers before 1877

were unfounded (p.216). The Boers who left to escape British rule are no longer "rebels" as in earlier works, but merely "orthodox" (p.219). He also makes a point of mentioning that there were "many English volunteers" with the Boer forces deployed against Sekhukhune (p.220).

In his discussion of the 1877 Annexation, Scully takes care not to push a British line. The battles at Ingogo and Laing's Nek are now termed "defeats", as opposed to "withdrawals" in earlier British-orientated books.

Scully deals very briefly with the events leading to the Second Anglo-Boer War, and he is careful not to apportion guilt for the outbreak of war. On the war itself there are only a few lines: "It is not proposed to enter into the details of that struggle, which ended in a complete victory for Great Britain" (p.227). 1915 was a sensitive year in South African politics, and certainly no time to dwell on the uncomfortable details of the Anglo-Boer War. The chapter on the Transvaal ends with the heart-warming words of Kitchener's farewell address to his troops : "'No war has ever yet been waged in which the combatants and non-combatants on either side have shown so much consideration and kindness to one another'" (p.227). It was the official view in 1915 that those sections of the past which could disturb relations between the two White language groups should be omitted from the history syllabus. However noble the intention, this must be construed as bias by omission.

Turning to Natal, Scully refers to the "very great energy" of the European community (p.238). The "Coolies" had, however, increased so rapidly as "to become a serious embarrassment" (p.239). Natal had great potential, "but the enormous and increasing Bantu and Coolie elements in its population present problems of growing menace" (p.245).

The rest of Scully's book is devoted to the "burning" "looting"

and "plundering" of the Xhosa (pp.251-252), the "long and troublesome campaign" against the "degraded" Batlapin (p.305) and the expansion of British power in the Transkei, Bechuanaland and Rhodesia ("Major Wilson and his brave band") p.304. Significantly, the last chapter is headed The South African Commonwealth, pointing to the ideal of a British-orientated union of states, larger than the Union itself.

- (b) A.S. Bleby : South Africa and the British Empire. A Course of Lessons for the Cape Matriculation History Syllabus (1913 Revised Edition)

Miss Bleby was principal of the Girls High School at Rondebosch, Cape Town. As stated earlier in this chapter, the Transvaal followed the Cape Matriculation syllabuses until 1918. Bleby's book was one of the texts catering for these candidates. More than half of the book's 423 pages deal with South African history. The title is typical of the spirit of the times treating South Africa in the context of the British Empire. The section on South African history begins with the last days of Company rule at the Cape.

Bleby's attitude towards the non-White inhabitants is that of other nineteenth and early twentieth century colonial writers of textbooks, with the by now familiar references to their laziness, unreliability, barbarity and the like. The Khoi were a wandering race of cattle-owners, "too lazy to be useful labourers, but too cowardly to be dangerous enemies" (p.89). The San "a race of small, untameable savages, treacherous and revengeful, incorrigible thieves, living by hunting and plunder, were a much greater trouble" (p.89).

The "Kosa Kaffirs" were a much more formidable foe, "brave, warlike, well-organized." They soon began "cattle-raiding" (p.89) and "trespassed" (p.90). The Government's weak frontier policy made them more "troublesome". Because of Maynier "the Kaffirs

were now harassing and plundering without fear" (p.92). Here again are the negative terms applied to "the others".

The inclination of the British government to blame everything on the farmers was due to their never having come into contact with the "noble savage" : there was no-one to tell of "the poor farmer's wife, roused up at midnight to find her husband killed with an assegai" (p.173). It should also be remembered, Bleby says, that the Xhosa were not the original owners of the land (p.188). The White man's claim to the eastern districts is being legitimated here. Bleby's solution to the frontier problem is straightfoward : "The only alternative with the Kaffir was to conquer and repel him, or to civilise and bring him under colonial control" (p.189).

In another example of bias by disproportion, an entire chapter is devoted to the British immigrants of 1820, illustrating the British orientation of the books of the period. Along with other colonial writers, Bleby is strongly critical of Lord Glenelg, and expresses her indignation at the treatment meted out by him to the farmers (p.204). Unlike earlier colonial writers, however, Bleby is conciliatory, even complimentary, in her attitude towards the Dutch-speaking farmers. This shows a desire to bring the two White language groups closer together in the years after Union. She also acknowledges the sometimes positive role played by the missionaries : "In looking back ... now that we have become a South African nation, ... we should dwell rather on the services they rendered to South Africa" (p.212).

When discussing the Matabele, Bleby uses the word "ravaged" three times on page 227, and again on page 232. Chaka was a "tyrant" who had massacred in cold blood more than a million of his people (p.240). Dingane was a "treacherous savage" (p.246), as "cruel" as Chaka and even more cunning and treacherous", who on one occasion put to death eleven of his wives for having annoyed him" (p.241).

In contrast to the epithets employed in her discussion of the non-Whites, Bleby eulogizes both White language groups. The "hardy Voortrekkers, nothing daunted", "stout-hearted farmers strengthened by prayer and trust in God", defeated these "savages" (p.33). Dirkie Uys was "a brave young boy" who died a "hero's death" (p.247); Pretorius was a "trusty" leader and "able general", "respected", "God-fearing", capable of "splendid generalship" (p.249). Farewell and his party were "adventurous spirits" (p.239), "stout-hearted settlers" who had the courage to face the dangers of the wild. The Bacas, "a freebooting Kaffir tribe", were punished for helping the Bushmen steal Voortrekker cattle: they were driven from their kraals (pp.252-3). No mention is made of the killings of the Bacas that took place during this expedition, a case of bias by omission so common in school textbooks).<sup>46</sup> The main result of the Great Trek according to Bleby was that it forced the Imperial government "to accept the responsibility for the maintenance of peace and good order in South Africa" (p.264). Bleby clearly regards British rule as beneficial.

The British annexation of Natal is justified by the usual arguments (p.253). There were "hordes of savages" roving about Natal (p.257) and the "native difficulty" remained one of the "problems" of Natal. In later years "another problem" was added by the "importation of Coolies" from India (p.259). Common to South African textbooks over the decades, the non-Whites are pictured by Bleby as either a threat or a problem, or both. The White population of Natal on the other hand became "a very energetic and intelligent community" (p.259).

The Trek in itself was "a great misfortune", although its ultimate effect was a great expansion of colonial territory and the opening up of new fields for colonisation further north (p.265), which expansion is supported by Bleby.

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46 See B.J. Liebenberg, Andries Pretorius in Natal, Chapter 7.

Like other writers in the Colonial mould, Bleby makes much of the supposed dishonesty and duplicity of the Xhosa. Thus the Glenelg system was doomed as it ignored "Kaffir modes of morality" (p.270); the treaties had "no meaning for the Kaffirs" (p.271). To the "Kaffir mind cattle-lifting was no more a crime than it was to the Highland raiders in the Middle Ages"; certain Kaffir tribes "prided themselves on their skill in stock stealing" (p.272). By 1841 Napier "had lost all belief in the value of Kaffir promises" (p.272).

The orientation function of history is clear in Bleby's comment on the "native problems" which lay before the newly united South Africa: these people should be approached with the same desire to deal justly, with love and mercy, which had been the redeeming feature of British native policy throughout the nineteenth century (p.289). Thus the past policies could provide orientation for the solving of problems in the future.

Bleby is conciliatory toward the Boers, acknowledging that they had fought "with great courage" at Boomplaats (p.296), and siding with them against the Basuto: the "crafty" Moshesh "needed a lesson" (p.301). Despite the conciliatory tone of Bleby's work, she still uses the pronoun "us" throughout to refer to the British perspective, for example: "The two British annexations further embroiled us with the Dutch republics, and embittered still more their feelings towards us" (p.308). This "us-them" scheme is reversed in the Dutch, and later the Afrikaans, textbooks where the "us" become the Afrikaners and the "them" the British. The pronouns "us" and "them" reveal much of the historical perspective of a writer.

Bleby devotes five chapters to Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the Indian Mutiny. Her treatment of nineteenth century South African history ends with the Keate Award (1874). The two Anglo-Boer conflicts are omitted so as not to disturb relations

so soon after Union, once again bias by omission. The record resumes again with Union, which above all brought with it all the chance of a better understanding between the two White races of South Africa, "and of their working together harmoniously for the common weal". If this hope was realised, Union meant the dawn of a brighter day for South Africa and the fulfilment of the maxims of two of her great leaders - 'Eendracht maakt Macht', and 'Alles zal recht komen' (p.415).

The book ends on a reassuring and self-assured Imperial note: "The peace and freedom of South Africa, and her leisure quietly to develop her resources, are secured to her by the power of the British Empire and the protection of the British navy" (p.424). South Africa, firmly British-orientated, could thus feel secure in the bosom of the Empire.

- (c) L.M. Foggin : The Civil Reader, for Upper Classes (1913),  
(Third Edition, 1918)

Foggin, Inspector of Schools in Rhodesia, had first published his little reader in 1910. The preface to the first edition was provided by Patrick Duncan, former Colonial Secretary of the Transvaal, and contains thoughts of great importance for this study. Duncan writes of the importance of knowledge of government and constitutional matters, especially in South Africa where a national life and the institutions belonging to it "are in the process of being built up by a people having within itself many elements of difference, and divided until recently into separate states with different governments. The success of the Union and its institutions depends on, amongst others, the citizen's understanding of the complex machine of government." No clearer example of the legitimation function of history could be found anywhere.

The preface to the 1913 edition is even more explicit: "It is the mission of this work to instil into the minds of the



citizens of the future an adequate conception of their primary duties, their elementary rights and the relation to each other as co-workers in building up the fabric of the body politic as well as to the State of which they form the constituent elements".

In the chapter on "Examples of Patriotism", Foggin writes that South Africa had every reason to be grateful to its political leaders, who co-operated to establish the Union. It was only by the exercise of patriotic effort that Union had been achieved (p.23). On the "Education of Citizens", Foggin maintains that the best textbooks for the education of citizens were "the records of past experience" (p.29). The chapter on "the Relations of Governing the Subject Races" opens with Kipling's "Take up the white man's burden". In contrast to former days, most "enlightened" nations treat the conquered races "as children needing guidance, help and training". This task was the White man's burden, a burden "which has fallen upon the British more than upon any other nation in modern times". Such a burden also lay upon the shoulders of the White man of South Africa as the ruling race (p.33), a task "laid upon him by Providence" (p.38). The paternalism and sense of superiority of the period, and the consciousness of a calling are all obvious here.

The institution of Cadet Corps and Boy Scouts gave the boys of the Empire a chance to share in the "imperial and patriotic work" of defending the British Empire (p.54), a "community of states or nations bound together by bonds of blood, sentiment and commerce"(p.74). Foggin writes of the "necessity of destroying the Zulu power" (p.86) and the "elimination" of the two Republics that had been the largest obstacle to Union (p.85).

In the section on "Prospects of the South African Union", Foggin sees as the greatest gain "the welding of the two great white

racés of South Africa into one"; there were signs that "the old racial animosities are beginning to break down" (p.95). In three different places he emphasizes the need for South Africa to contribute more to the British navy: "South Africa will not be mistress in her own house until she makes full provision for defence" (p.100).

- (d) E. Stockenström: The New Matriculation History (Part II).  
A Brief Summary of the Central Facts of South  
African History from Earliest Times to 1892  
(1918)

While English-speaking history pupils were being offered Whiteside, Scully, Bleby and other unashamedly pro-British authors, Afrikaans-speaking pupils were to an increasing extent being weaned from such books by National- or Republican-minded teachers. Eric Stockenström was history master at the Boys' High School in Stellenbosch and also lecturer at the University of Stellenbosch. He was an ardent supporter of the Afrikaner cause. His books were used for decades in South African schools. Stockenström's 1918 book was published in both English and Afrikaans. The second edition of 1922 was the same text, with an additional chapter on Union. The 1928 Afrikaans edition is reviewed in Chapter 6. Part I of Stockenström's twin volumes covered general history.

Stockenström's book was critical of the liberalism of the English missionaries, and like almost all other textbooks of the time, anti-Black. In two important respects it differed from the textbooks of the time: it was anti-British in places, and secondly it placed the Afrikaner at the centre of the historical stage. Here was evidence of an anti-establishment, alternative historical perspective. Whereas Whiteside and others viewed South African history through British spectacles, Stockenström, Godée Molsbergen and others reflected the Afrikaner's historical consciousness and interpretation of the past.

Stockenström firmly establishes the traditional mastersymbols pertaining to the indigenous inhabitants. Under the heading The Aborigines and Other Natives of South Africa, the "Bushmen" are described as a race of "wild men", "pygmies", probably "the lowest and most degraded specimens of the human race". Their physical appearance is described in the most insulting language. They were "coarse in feature", with "very thick lips", their skin "too wide for their bodies which were covered with wrinkles", and they had "a very flat nose"; their bodies "were usually smeared with animal fat and their dwelling was simply a cave or hole in the ground" (p.17). He quotes John Barrow's description for good measure : "The Bosjesmans indeed are amongst the ugliest of all human beings ... (they) partake much of the apeish character" (p.18). They had no language other than clicks and hoarse sounds". These "irreclaimable savages" had their hand against every man (p.18); they eventually disappeared, as "the weaker go to the wall" (p.19). Their "rude paintings" are reminders of these "savages" (p.19).

The indolence of the "Hottentots" is stressed. They were a "lazy, filthy race" whose most striking character was "idleness", spending a large part of their day sleeping, and the night dancing to their "rude" instrument the "ramkie" (p.20). They were "fond of smoking dagga": this probably accounts for their "languor" and "listless character". Very little was known about the religious notions of these "savages" (p.21). The Bantu had achieved a much greater civilization than the "despicable Hottentots" (p.23), who were "extremely indolent and as farm hands absolutely worthless" (p.30).

In contrast, the forebears of the Dutch settlers were the "indomitable" Netherlanders who had fought with "exceptional skill and valour" against the Spanish, winning "the admiration of the whole world" (p.25). Stockenström's praise for the European settlers at the Cape is lavish. They were "a veritable aristocracy". In 1664, fifty orphan girls of "respectable and

good moral character" were brought to the Cape, and twenty years later more farmers and girls", all of them of unstained reputation and good moral character"(p.32). The Bushmen depredations", the continuous struggle against "savage men and ferocious beasts", resulted in an exceptional skill with weapons. The wild free life made these pioneers "self-reliant, hardy ... splendid colonists in every respect" (p.35). He quotes Livingstone to reinforce the positive self-image: "'The Dutch farmers of South Africa trace their descent from some of the best men the world has ever produced" (p.32). The Huguenots too represented "the best and noblest blood from France", "men of character and unblemished reputation" (p.32). In summarising the Dutch period, Stockenström pays tribute to the "doughty" and "redoubtable" Hollanders who only allowed colonists of "unblemished moral character" to emigrate and whose slave code "was the mildest in the world" (p.44).

To enhance the self-esteem of the Whites and especially the Afrikaners, Stockenström describes them in glowing terms, page after page: Tjaart van der Walt was a man of "unblemished moral character and great intrinsic worth, intrepid and undaunted ... distinguished for his sincere patriotism and his strong devotion to duty", a forerunner "of a long series of distinguished Boer commandants" (p.15). Janssens and de Mist were "honest", "progressive", "broad-minded" "conscientious" men, and the administration of the Batavian Republic was "lenient, enlightened, and honest"; Janssens in particular was an "intrepid and distinguished soldier, and a high-principled, broad-minded gentleman ... of unimpeachable moral character ... inspired by a strong sense of duty and ardent patriotism" (p.56). The "gallant" Andries Stockentröm too was a man of "unblemished moral character and intrinsic worth" (p.60). Colonel Graham is quoted on the orderliness, willingness and obedience of the Boers. Four pages and a pen-and-ink illustration by the author himself are devoted to Slagters Nek, described as a "political

blunder" by the "mere handful of British officers" ruling a nation with a "great and stirring history" (p.69). The 1820 settlers soon got to know the "sterling virtues of the Boers, especially their "undaunted perseverance" (original emphasis) (p.75).

To strengthen ties between the two White groups at the time (i.e. 1918), Stockentröm emphasizes their co-operation in the past in defence of the frontier. Before 1820 the Dutch burghers "had to brave the numerous onslaughts of the Kafirs alone". Thereafter the English had to take their stand "beside their Dutch fellow colonists". The result of this "defensive struggle against the barbarians was to bring the English and Dutch colonists together (original emphasis). The two had a common interest in "repelling the natives" and learned to live "in harmony" together. Just like the ancestors of the Boers, the South African English too were the "most valuable and splendid" colonists, who "though constantly surrounded by numberless savages" never "degraded themselves to form connections with the natives"; rather, "they preserved their moral character unblemished" (p.78).

In a glaring example of bias by overemphasis, the author uses the word "savages", six times on pages 60 and 61 alone to describe the Xhosa. They are also called "aggressors" and "intruders". His crayon sketches of Shaka and Mzilikazi portray them as malformed, pot-bellied savages. His descriptions of these and other chiefs are the usual stereotypes. The former "exterminated" the tribes he conquered, his career marked by "indescribable cruelty" and the "ruthless bloodshed" of his "irresistable hordes". These "savage hordes", these "murderous bands", "cruelly butchered" whole tribes. Mzilikazi was a "cruel tyrant" with a "bloody career", Dingane a "fiendish tyrant, more cunning and cruel than his predecessor, who ruled his people with a "diabolical cruelty" (pp.80-82). Moshweshwe gathered under him a "savage crew", and was "crafty" and "ambitious" (p.83).

Stockenström, like so many other authors already reviewed, stresses the supposed duplicity and unreliability of non-White chiefs. The Treaty States were thus the "acme of the ludicrous policies of the philanthropic government" (p.142), hoping to make treaties "with barbarians as if they were civilized Europeans"(p.144). The system was doomed to failure, for "the Kaffirs were savages, and there was naturally no moral code among them which could bind them ... to an agreement"; it was "part of the tradition of the Kaffirs to do as much harm and injury as possible to their natural enemies. To rob the white man of his cattle was to the mind of the barbarians no criminal act but a great virtue" (p.145). D'Urban was "hoodwinked by savages to whom the breaking of a compact ... was not a crime but rather a virtue" (p.149). Sir George Grey also allowed himself "to be hoodwinked by a barbarian whose mental capacity was altogether out of comparison with that of civilized Europeans" (p.183).

Cetshwayo, surrounded by thousands of "bloodthirsty warriors", showed signs of restiveness. The British ultimatum, preceded by the "massacre" of Christian converts, and "Zulu intrigues", was "scornfully repudiated" by the "haughty savage". (p. 224). It is significant that just as pro-British authors support the other White Group in a Black-White conflict, so Stockenström aligns himself with the British in this Anglo-Zulu clash: At Isandlwana a "huge Zulu army", an "overwhelming mass of bloodthirsty barbarians", surrounded and "butchered the handful of men", after which the "exultant savages" attacked Rorke's Drift where the "redoubtable defenders" saved Natal (p.225).

Typical of Afrikaans historiography of the post-1902 period, Stockenström views the Great Trek as the first great pole of Afrikaner history. In a classic case of bias by overemphasis, it is allotted six chapters in which the emigrants are treated most sympathetically. There is full understanding of the reasons given for their departure: the "weak and foolish" frontier policy allowing the Colony to "swarm with Kaffirs"; the Anglicization

policy which "deeply wounded the sentiment of the Dutch colonist"; the Missionaries' interference and influence on policy decisions such as the 50th Ordinance resulting in the country "swarming with vagrant Hottentots" which "vagabonds proved a serious menace". All this was "to the savage mind" a sign of weakness (pp.90-110).

True to the tradition of Gustav Preller (see Chapter 6) and others before and since, Stockenström raises the Trek leaders to the status of demi-gods. Louis Trichardt, the "redoubtable" leader had grown up "under the majestic vault of the charming South African firmament"; with his wife the "heroine Martha", he entered the "almost entirely depopulated" interior. After much suffering he and most of his party succumbed: those "hardy pioneers offered up their lives for the cause of freedom and justice" (pp.117-119). Hendrik Potgieter was a "worthy frontier farmer", "trusted and respected by all the burghers, eminently fitted to be a leader" (p.120). His agreement with Makwana "proves that the emigrants never took forcible possession of any territory belonging to the natives". Thus the White man's claim to the interior is legitimated (p.121). Gerrit Maritz too "possessed many excellent qualities" - he was a "disinterested, fearless and able man who was respected and trusted by all" (p.123). Similarly Piet Retief possessed "many qualities which fitted him to be a great national leader ... distinguished for his probity, determination and pertinacity of purpose ... a noble patriot, a bold and fearless advocate of the rights of his countrymen". "Andries Pretorius was a man of high character, intrinsic worth, indomitable resolution and sincere patriotism" (p.131).

The massacres along the Bushmen and Sunday Rivers are described in powerful language:

"While the desperate mothers were shoving their beloved children under the bed ... the cruel savages ... ripped open their breasts with the sharp blade of the deadly

assegaai. The innocent little ones were then dragged from under the bed and horribly massacred by having their brains dashed out against ... the wheels. Robust young ladies were held down on the ground while their bodies were being cut open, and their heart, lungs and internal viscera torn out by the cruel hands and cast on the veld. Young lads and grey-haired men were first tortured and then murdered in a manner than can be better imagined than described" (p.128).

Louw Wepener "the heroic Boer Commandant", was killed by the "savages, who cut out his heart and mingled his blood with theirs, for these "credulous and superstitious barbarians" believed that they could thereby imbibe his strength (p.186). Hermanus Potgieter's hunting party was "tortured to death", Potgieter himself being "pinned to the ground and skinned alive". The bodies of all the victims were then horribly mutilated" (p.192). Generations of pupils were taught this and similar highly emotive "history" at an impressionable age.

At Boomplaats, the farmers made "a determined and heroic stand, but the odds were too great" (p.178). In contrast to the British-orientated textbooks of the period, Stockenström backs the Republic's claims to the Diamond Fields. In the question of the Annexation of 1877 and subsequent events, Stockenström's loyalties are obvious: he condemns the Annexation in no uncertain terms and commends the fighting qualities of the Transvaal Boers.

At Laing's Nek, Joubert gained "a brilliant victory. A handful of "plucky" Boers under the "doughty" Roos rushed forward at Majuba "to do or die," resulting in a "brilliant" victory over the "brave" General Colley. Stockenström specifically mentions the "bravery and determination" of the British. Thus while his pro-Boer sentiments are clear, Stockenström is careful to give credit to the British as well. This was an important consideration in a 1918 textbook.

The author goes out of his way to enhance the self-esteem of the young Republics: Brand was a "renowned patriot", a man of "great



tact, intrinsic worth, and unblemished character who made of the O.F.S. a "model state", one of "the most orderly and best governed in the world" (p.246).

Stockenström is derogatory about the Uitlanders and the social results of the discovery of gold, and guilty of bias by exaggeration: "The territory formerly sanctified by the blood of martyrs - the blood of Boer heroes and heroines - was now vitiated by abominable houses of disrepute, horrible gambling dens, low class canteens, vicious slums, and filthy haunts of robbers and assassins" (p.262). The events discussed conclude with 1892, the syllabuses of the time not accommodating the history of South Africa after that year. The Anglo-Boer war is played down, receiving a mere sentence: "After a terrible war which lasted three years, the gold mines and the country of the Boers were finally added to the British Empire" (p.264). This rather bitter postscript does, however, betray much more about Stockenström's resentment of the fate of the Republics.

- (e) E.C. Godée Molsbergen: A History of South Africa for Use in Schools; and Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika voor Schoolgebruik (1910)

Godée Molsbergen was a Dutch-born professor of history at the University of Stellenbosch, whose sympathies lay unmistakably with the Boer or Afrikaner cause. This textbook, in the original Dutch and in the English translation, had been compiled at the request of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Taalbond, the Zuid-Afrikaansche Onderwijzers Unie and the Afrikaanse Christelike Vrouwen Vereeniging, all of whom felt the need for a textbook that would do justice to the Afrikaner's past. It would act as a counter to the pro-British books being used in schools. That such a book was, in 1910, guaranteed to stir controversy, can readily be understood.

The English press reacted violently to the appearance of the

book. The East London Daily Despatch condemned the book in two leading articles in April 1910: "'It is monstrous that such a book should be printed, but when it comes out as the work of a Professor to whose salary the Government contributes!"; The Star called it "poisoned" and "rank, pernicious racialism". The Jingo element clamoured for the banning of the book. The Superintendent General in the Cape did not oblige, but the Director of Education in the Transvaal did place Godée Molsbergen's book on the "blacklist".<sup>45</sup>

The parts of the book that precede the actual text are in many ways more revealing than the text itself. The book is dedicated to the youth of South Africa"; before the preface there are four quotations, including Psalm XXII ("Our fathers trusted in Thee - they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them") and the first stanza of the Z.A.R.'s national anthem, Kent gij dat volk. This alone would have caused consternation in "red-hot" pro-British circles. The preface looks forward to the year 1910 when a united South Africa, "the cherished dream of many hearts", would be an accomplished fact; South Africans would have reached their goal, "guided by ... Providence, notwithstanding diversity in tongue and nationality ... ,welded together into a new people!".

Godée Molsbergen continues:

"The birth of this nation was the outcome of much travail ... and the shedding of blood ... and it is our duty to recall the sufferings of the past ... May no son of South Africa, whether of Dutch or English parentage, be found to date her history from the time when he himself reached years of discretion...! Young South Africa ... will not ... grow up in ignorance of their country's past ... in that we can trace its course step by step from the coming of the first white man right up to the present day. The story is one to cause the heart of the young Afrikaner to throb with gratitude towards Providence for the favour shown his people, and to

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45 See A.J. Boeseken, Lewe en Werk van prof. E.C. Godée Molsbergen, Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe 17/1 April 1977, pp.7-18.

thrill with love for his country and his nation ... "And along with the hard facts of history let the teacher mingle stories ... of Jan van Riebeeck's residence on the shores of Table Bay; of the heroic deeds of ... Joachem Willemszoon, Woltemade, Richard King, Piet Uys, General de Wet, ... of the chivalry of General Colley ... of the escape of President Steyn, and the burial of President Kruger; of the sorrows and sufferings of the widows and orphans of the combatants who fell in the war, whether Boer or Briton."

Several interesting aspects come to light in this preface: first the typical White-centric approach to South African history; second the belief in the hand of Providence in history. For example the Trekkers trust in God is stressed: they relied "upon God and upon His protection. That He would never desert them was their certainty in an uncertain future" (p.111). The final defeat of Mzilikazi was "deliverance, truly ... of the Lord " (p.117). The third noteworthy aspect of the obvious attempt at national unity, but with an emphasis on the central place of the Afrikaner and the fourth the stated aim of fostering national consciousness through a knowledge of the past, i.e., national orientation through a study of history.

In Chapter I the author answers the question, "Why do we study the history of our fatherland?", by saying, "in order to know what position our nation ("ons volk" in the Dutch version) holds in the eyes of the world". Unlike the British-orientated textbooks of the time, Godée Molsbergen gives considerable attention to the rise of the Netherlands.

The first half of the textbook deals with the Dutch period in Cape history, including five pages on the Huguenots. Van Riebeeck was "strictly honest, of unblemished character, full of faith in God, resourceful and prudent"(p.43). After two generations the descendents of the French, Dutch and German settlers no longer thought of themselves as such, but as "Afrikaners". This is another example of backward projection. There are several references to the Afrikaner nation's special relationship with

God. The thought "of such brave forefathers, as these, who, guided hither by God, helped to build up the Afrikaner nation, thrills every heart with pride"(p.54). The stock-farmers of the interior "never lost their trust in God nor their reverence for His word."

The frontier farmers had constantly to be on their guard against the San, and the experiences in the "struggle" with this "troublesome" "foe" are very similar to what their descendents were to suffer "at the hands of the Kaffir nation"(p.56). The colonists had "in the Kaffirs, ... a perpetual menace" (p.65). The colonists were better able to wage war with an "enemy" like the Xhosa (p.69), than the "elusive foe", the San (p.66). By means of such language the master symbol of non-Whites as a threat is constantly being transmitted.

The negative Feindbild is further strengthened by emotive language such as the following: "a great horde" of Xhosa crossed the Fish, "raiding cattle", "laying waste farms", "setting fire to dwelling-houses" and "even torturing several Europeans to death"(p-71). The colonists were exposed to the "pillage and plunder" of the "native hordes" (p.76), those "troublesome and dangerous cattle-thieves" and "marauders" (p.82), a "perpetual menace". Further on, the author expands on the master symbol of other non-Whites as a danger: the rapid increase in the Black population "is a constant menace to Natal", and there was also "a danger from the Coolie element" (p.139). From the start, the Republican Boers had to confront "a common danger", a "universal danger", i.e. "the Basuto problem". Even after the annexation of Basutoland, the Basuto constituted "a constant danger" (p.146).

A further stereotype which is repeatedly reinforced is that of the San and Xhosa as thieves: the author writes of the "cattle-lifting propensities" of the San, and of the Xhosas' "frequent raids upon the colonists' cattle"(p.70).

Godée Molsbergen, in discussing the causes of the Great Trek, displays an anti-British stance; he maintains that the patience of the Dutch-speaking inhabitants was "strained beyond the limit" (p.89) by, amongst others, the hostile attitude of the British Government towards their mother-tongue, making them feel like "strangers in their own fatherland" (p.91). Yet the most momentous consequence of the Trek was to be the birth of a new nation - the Boers (p.112).

To legitimate the White man's, and specifically, the Afrikaner's claim to the South African interior, the author points out that Potgieter "formally purchased" the country lying between the Vaal and Vet rivers from Makwana; "thus the Boers ... became, after much wandering, landowners once more" (p.115). The immense territory which Mzilikazi had ruled in his "reign of terror", had "now passed into the possession of the Boers" (p.117). Similarly the author makes much of the "treaty" between Dingane and Retief, the "deed of cession of Natal" (p.120), calling it an "important document". The Boers "rid South Africa of two great evils" - the Matabele and the Zulu; "thus they deserve her lasting gratitude for rendering her habitable for white men and for black, subject to the latter's good behaviour" (p.122).

The author's Afrikaans perspective is clearly visible in the following: the Boers had no sooner triumphed over their Zulu foes than they were "menaced from a new quarter", i.e. the attention of the British Government, which "seemed bent on the extermination of the Trekkers". The Boers "have never forgotten the attitude assumed by the British Government towards them" (pp. 122-123). Yet the Sand River Convention showed that God "had not deserted his people. They were free!" A "lusty nation, the Transvaalers, had come into existence; a nation tempered in the furnace of affliction, the healthy offshoot of the sturdy Dutch stock" (p.133). Through such adjectives, the self-esteem of one's own group is enhanced. During the British Administration the Free State was in "a deplorable condition", as the British officials

"abused their power" and "the Basutos plundered the country at will" p134). This, and the following extract, must have ruffled Jingo feathers at the time:

"In 1836 these very Boers had left the Cape Colony so as to be free from British rule. This had been forced upon them in 1848, and yet in 1852, when the British Government had created a powerful native state, and brought the country into a state of hopeless confusion, and saw no honourable way of escape from its difficulties, it had withdrawn from the scene of its blunders." (p.135).

In concluding the section on the Orange Free State, the author commends the Free State for "nobly fulfilling" her treaty obligations in 1899 in her "sister republic's" hour of need. Steyn and de Wet "made the whole world ring with their names when they kept up the gallant struggle to the bitter end". After "much storm and stress" the O.F.S. has the right to expect a happy future, and her children will work together "in the building up of a healthy and vigorous South Africa" (p.147). Thus inspiration from the past could provide an orientation for the present and future.

The author's treatment of Transvaal history reads like a charge-sheet, a litany of grievances, and a tabulation of conflicts against the Pedi, the Kwenas, the British. He is at pains to refute the reasons given by Shepstone for annexing the Transvaal, and rejoices in the Transvaal victories at Bronkhorstspuit, Laing's Nek and Majuba (p.158). He is sympathetic towards the Z.A.R. in its efforts to maintain its sovereignty in the face of British imperialist expansion. While acknowledging Rhodes's stature, he nevertheless singles out Kruger as "the most notable man South Africa has to this day produced", a man of "marvellous resource". He was noted for his "scrupulous honesty" and "determined to secure the rights of his nation by honourable methods", in contrast to Rhodes, "who did not hesitate to make use of any means to attain his cherished ambition" (p.161).

British moves and attitudes between 1897 and 1899 "made war inevitable" - no wonder Godée Molsbergen's textbook was banned by the authorities of the time. In contrast to other works in the first decade or two after 1902, he pointedly mentions the "terrible privations" caused by the concentration camps, and other consequences of British ruthlessness: the whole country "was in a most deplorable condition, homesteads were plundered and burnt, crops were destroyed, and cattle slaughtered". The country was systematically laid waste, and women and children were carried into concentration camps, where 20 000 of them died" (p.171).

The last chapter is headed A Happy Ending. Although critical of the appointment of Milner as High Commissioner for the conquered territories as well ("they recognized in him the man who had been instrumental in bringing about the war"), the author looks forward to May 31, 1910 as "the dawn of a new era", and expresses the hope that the King will reign "over a flourishing and prosperous South Africa, whose subjects, whether of Dutch or English descent, will live together in brotherly love!" (p.176).

(f) Maskew Miller: Korte Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika Met Baie Illustrasies vir die Gebruik van Skole, 1918(?)

This is the Afrikaans edition, around 1918 (there is no date of publication) of Maskew Miller's Korte Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika en zijn Bewoners voor het Gebruik van de Scholen (1909). The preface states that the book is based on both published works and unpublished manuscripts by Theal, as adapted by T. Young, Principal of Sea Point Boys' High in Cape Town, in collaboration with F.W. Reitz. This was also the only book based on Theal's work which carried his official blessing and sanction: "Of the different concise history books the content of which was taken from my work, this is the only one for which I have granted

my permission". The content and atmosphere of this 1918(?) edition are, therefore, characteristic of the books based on Theal.

There are the usual descriptions of the Bushmen as "a race of wild people" (p.2) "low on the ladder of civilisation" (p.3), and the Hottentots as "Half-naatjes" (half-breeds) (p.5). Neither had any knowledge of God, relying on magic and "all manner of strange customs" to ward off evil spirits (p.3). The Bushmen were "wild people out to rob travellers and murder ship-wrecked sailors". The war against them only ceased when there were so few left that they could do little more harm ("weinig kwaad") (p.61). They were not prepared to change their ways so the Whites were not prepared to share the land with them (p.61). The first Bushmen are purported to have entered north east Africa, probably from Asia (p.7), and by 1500 there were "few Bantu south of the Zambezi" (p.9), a belief widely held for a long time. Three chapters are devoted to the Portuguese "discovery" of South Africa.

When the Xhosa refused to go back across the Fish, the commandos forced them back to "their own side". This event should be remembered well because it was the first of a long series of frontier wars (p.76). Under the heading "Trouble with the Xhosa" the usual criticism of British frontier policy (or lack thereof) is aired. More than a hundred Whites were "murdered by the Xhosa" and the country was "plundered and destroyed" (p.159). Having endured ten years of the Xhosas's "excesses" ("buitensporighede") the Governor felt obliged to punish that "troublesome" tribe (p.160). A "large mass ("trop") of Xhosas" entered the Colony, "set houses alight, chased the stock off and murdered some Whites" (p.161). Again the Xhosa secretly prepared for the war of 1850, in which on Christmas Day alone, 46 men were "cold-bloodedly murdered" and their houses burned down"(p.168). The Birkenhead episode is given two pages. Once again there is



an emphasis on war and conflict and little or nothing on the trade and social relations between White and Black, the acculturation that took place, and the long periods of peace between the wars. This bias by omission or underemphasis is characteristic of all the earlier, and even many of the later textbooks.

For a "barbarian", Shaka was a man of great intelligence, although almost indescribably "cruel and vicious" (p.120). Dingane was just as "murderous" ("moorddadig") but even more "treacherous" than Shaka. Moshesh, although "not fond of the truth" was "intelligent, generous and good-hearted" (p.126). The book estimates the number of Blacks killed during the Mfecane at about two million (p.124), a number derived from Theal.

The reasons given by the Emigrants for leaving the Colony are sympathetically treated. The author also puts forward the master symbol of the deserted, "uninhabited" interior beckoning the White settlers (p.142).

Natal history is sketched briefly up to 1893 and features mainly military history in the form of the Langa libalele Rebellion and the Zulu War. Similarly the history of the Z.A.R. is primarily concerned with the clashes between the Boers and the Pedi, Kwena and Magato. In all cases it was the tribes "who first caused trouble" (p.197). The War of 1880-81 is termed a "Vrijheidsoorlog" (War of Freedom) and the British reverses are called "shattering defeats" ("gedugte neerlae") in no uncertain terms. Theal's pro-Boer sentiments are revealed here. The 1899-1902 War is given a line or two: "It was the most unfortunate war which South Africa ever experienced" (p.207). As with other approved school history textbooks of the period, there is the desire to omit those events of the past which may have disturbed relations between the two White language groups.

The last two chapters, entitled "Successive Expansion of the Cape Colony", self-consciously reflect the growing self-confidence of the young state. 1909 is described as the "year of the birth" of the South African nation in which one large South African commonwealth was established (p.207).

## 5. SUMMARY

After the military conquest of the Boer Republics, Milner set about anglicising Afrikaans children. An important element of his education policy was the banning of South African history in favour of British and general history. Milner understood only too well the symbiosis of national and historical consciousness.

However, the national-minded Afrikaners of the North could hardly be expected to take such treatment lying down. The emergence of C.N.E. schools articulated the Afrikaners' determination to resist Milner's attempts to denationalise them. The C.N.E. movement was representative of a wider revival of Afrikaner national sentiment.

After 1910 history syllabuses and most textbooks examined reflect a desire to reconcile the two White language groups. Certainly the syllabuses of the period are a compromise between the differing historical interpretations of the two. Controversial topics are carefully excluded and credit is given to the heroes on both sides. The syllabuses clearly show the increasing self-awareness of the young Union, and its need for an identity.

The textbooks examined may easily be divided into two schools - the pro-British and the pro-Afrikaans. Both types treat the non-White peoples in an equally derogatory manner, a legacy of Colonial times.

## CHAPTER 6

### HISTORY TEACHING IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS 1918-1948

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

1918 is for a number of reasons a convenient cut-off point. The Joint Matriculation Board, established in accordance with Act No. 12 of 1916, took over control of the matriculation examinations from the University of the Cape of Good Hope in 1918 - the end of a long era.<sup>1</sup> This Board consisted of four representatives of the Councils of each of South Africa's three universities, representatives of the four provincial education departments and of the Union Government, and six representatives appointed by the Minister of Education from amongst school principals of state and private secondary schools in all four provinces. The Junior Certificate examination would from then on be supervised by the University of South Africa. The JMB would award the School Leaving Certificate, or Senior Certificate. For the latter, candidates could choose between History and Geography. In 1920 the subject choice was again adapted, and a science or foreign language could be taken in place of history.<sup>2</sup>

In 1918, an Afrikaner, Dr W.J. Viljoen, was appointed as Superintendent of Education in the Cape.<sup>3</sup> This was the first time an Afrikaner was in control of Cape education. This too marked the end of an era, as all subsequent appointments were to be Afrikaans-speaking. In 1918, "British History" finally disappeared from Cape syllabuses.<sup>4</sup> In 1918 Dutch achieved

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1 A.G. Coetzee, Die Leerplan in Geskiedenis as Leervak op die Kaaplandse Middelbare Skole, p.51.

2 See P.A. Grobbelaar, Middelbare Onderwys in die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1910-1952, met Spesiale Verwysing na Leergange and Leerplanne, pp.27-37.

3 J.C. Coetzee, (Ed.), Onderwys in Suid-Afrika 1652-1960, p.87.

4 F.A. van Jaarsveld and J.J. Rademeyer, Teorie en Metodiek vir Geskiedenisonderrig, p.92.

equality with English as medium of instruction.<sup>5</sup> It was also the beginning of the Smuts era, for one year later, in 1919, he succeeded General Louis Botha as Prime Minister.

For the next thirty years, White South African politics was to be dominated by different interpretations of the concept of nationhood by Smuts on the one hand, and Hertzog (and later Malan) on the other.

## 2. POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS 1918-1948

### 2.1 Smuts, Hertzog and Malan: the party political backdrop

For three decades Smuts and Hertzog ruled the country, sometimes alone, sometimes in coalition. From 1919 to 1924 Smuts's South African Party was in charge, to be unseated by the Pact Government formed between the National Party and the Labour Party, which ruled to 1930. Hertzog's National Party was able to rule, with an absolute majority, for the next three years. The economic crisis forced the two former opponents into forming the United Party in 1934, with Hertzog still Prime Minister, and Smuts his deputy. With the declaration of war in 1939 the United Party split and Smuts took over the reins until his defeat in 1948. The formation of the United Party led directly to the establishment of Dr D.F. Malan's Purified National Party, the party which was ultimately to come to power in 1948, and is still ruling South Africa at the time of writing.

Each of these leaders articulated a different concept of nationhood. Smuts and his followers were hoping for the two White language groups to merge into one White nation, in which the English element was likely to be dominant. For them South Africa's loyalty to the Empire was unquestioned. South Africa

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<sup>5</sup> F.A. van Jaarsveld and J.J. Rademeyer, Teorie en Metodiek vir Geskiedenisonderrig, p.92.

was a part of that greater whole - the Empire was supreme, the constituent parts lesser. Hertzog maintained that there were two streams of South Africa's national life and advocated that they were to be united in a common loyalty to South Africa whose interests came first, before those of the Empire.<sup>6</sup>

Yet Hertzog's brand of nationalism was not intended to be an exclusively Afrikaans one; when he spoke of Afrikaners he included English-speaking South Africans. It was his call for equality that antagonised those pro-British elements who were not willing to grant the Afrikaner his place in the sun. It was Dr Malan who made the concept of nation more specific by narrowing it down to an exclusive Afrikanerdom.<sup>7</sup>

The compromise between the first two approaches is clearly reflected in both the syllabuses and textbooks of the period 1918-1948. Dr Malan's exclusive Afrikaner nationalism had to wait until 1948 to become "official", yet its spirit is already evident in many of the Afrikaans history textbooks of the period. Davies<sup>8</sup> points to the inability and unwillingness of the United Party Government between 1934 and 1948 to assert itself in the sphere of pre-tertiary education, an area which touched on ethnic sensibilities. Its one interventionist role in education, the promotion of dual-medium schools, was a failure, demonstrating the "impotence of civic South Africanism and ... the relative vitality of Afrikaner nationalism."

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6 See D.W. Krüger, The Making of a Nation, p.65, and D.W. Kruger (Ed.), South African Parties and Policies 1910-1960, pp.61-69. See also S.W. Pienaar, Glo in u Volk. Dr. D.F. Malan as Redenaar 1908-1954, pp.23-28.

7 E.G. Matherbe, Education in South Africa, Volume 2, p.19.

8 J.L. Davies, Christian National Education in South Africa, pp.134-137.

## 2.2. The Union Comes of Age: 1918 - 1932

The gulf between the de facto and the de jure status of the dominions was a source of confusion to the constitutional position of the self-governing states. In practice there was a great measure of equality, but not so in law. Hertzog, therefore, went to the Imperial Conference in London in 1926 determined to obtain from the British Government an acknowledgement that South Africa's status was on an equal footing with Britain's. In this he succeeded: the Balfour Declaration cleared up the uncertainty surrounding the status of the dominions. Hertzog, quite satisfied that South Africa was now a free and independent country within the British Commonwealth, created a Department of Foreign Affairs and in 1929 sent South Africa's first ambassadors abroad. The remaining inequalities still embodied in statutes were removed by the Statute of Westminster in 1931. Thus the nature of the British Empire was radically altered during the years 1926 and 1931.<sup>9</sup>

The Union was also obtaining more of the trappings of nationhood. After an almost unprecedented political storm, a compromise Union flag was hoisted on May 31, 1928. The Status Act of 1934 affirmed the status of the Union as a sovereign independent state. To an increasing extent South Africa was also acting as a regional power; not only was it the mandatory power in South West Africa, but there were also attempts from time to time to incorporate the Protectorates and Southern Rhodesia. On the economic front too South Africa came of age, particularly as a result of the spectacular growth of industry during the Second World War. By 1945 South Africa's prosperity, international prestige and self-confidence had all increased. This is mirrored in the changes, especially in emphasis, in the history syllabuses between 1918 and 1948.

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9 C.F.J. Muller (Ed.), 500 Years. A History of South Africa,  
pp.419-421.

### 3. THE REVIVAL OF AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

#### 3.1 The Centenary Celebrations of the Great Trek, 1938

Few events in South African history have provided a more immediate and powerful stimulus to the growth of national consciousness than the Symbolic Ox-wagon Trek of 1938. After fusion in 1934, Malan's purified National Party became a parliamentary dwarf and seemed destined for eventual political oblivion. Yet Malan enjoyed the support of the influential Afrikaans cultural and intellectual circles which had formerly stood behind Hertzog, as well as the hard inner core of Afrikaans Calvinism, which had for years been exerting a quiet but strong influence on the growth of political and national consciousness in South Africa. By 1936 the cultural movement had spread widely. The new generation of urban Afrikaners sought its inspiration in the past and aspired to a national independence of the republican variety. By 1938 it required only a deep emotional upheaval or external factor to bring down the edifice which the Generals had constructed. These were provided by the Voortrekker centenary and the outbreak of war respectively.

During the thirties Afrikanerdom had been conscious of its growing strength in urban areas, illustrated by the establishment in 1929 of the F.A.K. (Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Organisations) headquarters in the heart of English-speaking Johannesburg. With the increasing number of teachers provided by training colleges and universities, Afrikaners gained a firm foothold in education. As the influence of Afrikaans increased in the teaching profession, republicanism was fostered and this was built entirely on the memory of the past. The conquest of education was but the beginning. Throughout the length and breadth of the country Afrikaners were preparing to commemorate the Great Trek. From different points of the compass symbolic ox-wagon treks were to converge on Pretoria, visiting along the way all the places sacred in the history of Afrikanerdom. They

were thus to link the past with the present, and that part included not only the desperate struggle against "Bantu barbarians", but also against British imperialism. As the wagons converged on their goal, an extraordinary spirit of fervid patriotism swept over the country. Enthusiasm became quasi religious and sometimes hysterical. The symbolic Trek caused a quickening of the national pulse. The renewed interest in the heroic past found its emotional expression in the ox-wagon, the old Republican flags, Voortrekker dress (including full beards) and the old muzzle-loader, all objects to be venerated.<sup>10</sup> This new revitalised Afrikaans nationalist spirit is clearly reflected in some of the works reviewed later.

### 3.2 The Afrikaner revival and the schools

Characteristic of the role of the schools in nationalist movements, the mouthpiece of the Cape Afrikaans Teachers Association, Die Unie, made a plea for well-planned and well-organised school participation in the centenary celebrations.<sup>11</sup> The July issue published a list of patriotic songs to be sung by schoolchildren at celebrations and around the huge campfires already planned. Amongst those were Die Stem van Suid-Afrika, Afrikaners Landgenote, Afrikanerlied, Dierbaar Suid-Afrika, Die Vierkleur van Transvaal, Land, Volk en Taal, Vlaglied, Vryheidslied, Slaap rustig, dapper helde, the Republican Anthems and the Unielied.<sup>12</sup> In December 1938, Die Unie issued a special commemorative "Voortrekkereuefeesuitgawe".<sup>13</sup> It contained numerous inspirational messages from cultural, religious and educational leaders. The Superintendent General of Education expressed his pride in the enthusiasm and contribution of Cape pupils.<sup>14</sup>

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10 W. Krüger, The Making of a Nation, pp.186-193.  
11 Die Unie, 1 September 1938, p.82.  
12 Die Unie, 1 July 1938, pp.9-10.  
13 Die Unie, 1 December 1938.  
14 Ibid., p.179.



The Chairman of the Cape Afrikaans Teachers' Association wrote of the "quiet worship" and "fiery admiration" one felt at the thought of the Trekkers, who one hundred years ago had paved the way, along the "Pad van Suid-Afrika". In the past, the report continued, the Afrikaans child had been subjected to a distorted, despised view of his own history; this was changing as he gained pride in the history of his nation: "The Afrikaner feeling has awakened in the child and calls out for leadership and guidance!". From 1939, Afrikaans teachers were to foster in Afrikaans children a greater awareness of their church, their nation, their language and their culture: "May the celebrations ... serve as an inspiration ... which will leave its mark forever on the "child of South Africa". The editorial claimed that "those ox-wagons" gave the Afrikaner what he had been seeking: they were the symbol of the "own", of the great and famous heroic deeds of that great period in "our history": "These are our wagons" (original emphasis)... "Here around the wagons we can at long last be ourselves ... We are still, we are once again, Afrikaners. There is a future for us. The ox-wagons bring us their message."<sup>15</sup>

In an article entitled "Ons Erfdeel" (Our Inheritance) in Die Unie, one J.S. Potgieter of Malmesbury wrote of past attempts to prevent the birth of a new nation in South Africa. These attempts had been in vain because it was "the will of God" that the Afrikaners should survive. Against the overwhelming "barbarian masses", the handful of Voortrekkers "protected our nationality and kept it pure". All Anglicization attempts had been in vain, because God had also willed that the new nation would have its own language. Was the Afrikaner not taking all these blessings for granted - had the time not come to face the colour questions squarely so that South Africa could remain a White man's country?<sup>16</sup>

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15 Die Unie, 1 December 1938, pp.180-185.

16 Ibid., pp.187-188.

The same issue of Die Unie contains a speech by M.J. Oosthuizen of Kakamas<sup>17</sup> emphasizing the sacrifices made by the martyrs of the February 1838 massacres at the "sacrificial altar of our national existence", thereby betraying the semi-religious nature of the centenary celebrations. The "civic religion" discussed in Part I is pertinent here. Oosthuizen takes the religious metaphor still further: the commemorative wagon "Johanna van der Merwe", named after the Voortrekker heroine, was a "Temple of God" which He had placed on the "Road of South Africa", and a "Volksaltaar" from whence the incense of national tribute rose; it was an "Ark of the Covenant" in which the covenant of Sarel Cilliers and the Bible of the Voortrekkers lay; strangers could worship with the Afrikaner in the courtyard of "our Temple" but "in the sacred place of our hearts where 'Johanna van der Merwe' stands, only the direct descendants of those who suffered and fought for our nation, may kneel".

The very exclusive nature of this nationalism, with its strong religious overtones, was also brought home by another Centenary speaker at George when he said "Dingaan's Festival is our (original emphasis) national festival ('volksfees') and by the word 'ons' I mean the Afrikaans-speakers". The same speaker was in favour of telling the Afrikaans child the full story of his history "even if it meant that others (i.e. English-speakers) sharing his classroom might take umbrage at hearing "the truth"; it was the task of the school to bring home to the future generations the "basic truths" of their history and to develop their national pride. In history teaching it was to be stressed that the Afrikaner nation's existence was rooted in its people's religion.<sup>18</sup> The leader article of the same issue asked what role the teacher was to play in and out of school in honouring the memory of the Trekkers. Much work lay ahead for teachers and

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17 Die Unie, 1 December 1938, "Johanna van der Merwe - Voortrekkerwa", pp. 190-191.

18 Die Unie, 1 February 1938, J.H. Barnard "Toespraak by Dingaansfees", pp.345-346.

schools before "our nation" would know its history and understand its meaning. Generations of neglect and contempt had passed, no longer should there be misrepresentations and omissions and the concern not to hurt others. It was time that "our own history" gained its rightful place in school syllabuses, and it should be taught by teachers "who not only know the facts, but who also understand the meaning of our history and will interpret the facts correctly for the next generation". A plea is made for "a new history of our country, a monumental work to replace or improve upon Theal".<sup>19</sup>

Die Unie of December 1938, also discussed the question of neutral, uninspiring history teaching due to the sensitive relations between English and Afrikaans. The past could not be interpreted properly because of this. The centenary had shown that the Afrikaners had their own heroes who should be honoured with enthusiasm. Just as at school the American child was indoctrinated at school with the idea of American greatness and was taught to honour the flag, so every South African school should have a South African flag to inspire its youth.<sup>20</sup>

A teacher from Sterkstroom, G.A. Giliomee, expressed his concern through Die Unie<sup>21</sup> as to whether "our own history" was taking its rightful place in the Senior Certificate syllabus: would the fact that large parts of South African history were optional in the current syllabus not encourage teachers to select the shorter more compact general history topics instead? The writer urged that the South African history component be made compulsory. A commission of history teachers of the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie made the following noteworthy recommendations in mid-1938<sup>22</sup>:

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- 19 Ibid., "Ons Geskiedenis", pp.361-362.  
20 Die Unie, 1 December 1938, "Nuwe Pligte wat die Eeufees op die Onderwyser lê", pp.199-200.  
21 Die Unie, 1 June 1938, "Die Vaderlandse Geskiedenis van ons Senior Sertifikaat Leerplan", pp. 511-512.  
22 Die Unie, 1 August 1938, pp. 56-57.

- (a) That more attention be paid to South African history, and to make this possible, that the greater part of the section on the British Empire in the current syllabus, be omitted.
- (b) That the expanded South African section should embrace "an intensive study of the Great Trek to 1854" and constitutional development up to and including the Statute of Westminster.
- (c) That the political history of South Africa be brought up to 1902 (i.e. so as to include the Anglo-Boer War).

Some eighteen months later the commission submitted its draft syllabus for the Senior Certificate examination, in which these recommendations were embodied.<sup>23</sup> The reaction of the S.A.O.U.'s sister organization, the South African Teacher's Association (S.A.T.A.) was predictable: "It is no exaggeration to say that these syllabuses have caused a sensation among our members. They are bound to provoke long and lively discussions to say nothing of resolutions for submission to the S.G.E."<sup>24</sup> This is a further illustration of the never-ending debate on the teaching of history at school, particularly on what should be taught. Another S.A.T.A. member wrote of the inclusion of the Great Trek, especially the causes thereof, in the history syllabus as "ammunition for racial polemics;" seeing that present syllabuses represented the "two dominant races" as "inevitably in opposition and at enmity", the time had come for a "reconsideration of the history syllabuses".<sup>25</sup> Yet another S.A.T.A. article deplored the emphasis on national heroes, mainly those of war," as an outcome of militant nationalism".<sup>26</sup>

This exemplary study of the situation in the Cape is typical of the English-Afrikaans conflict in the other provinces.

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23 Die Unie, 1 April 1940, p.314.

24 Education, May 1940, Editorial, p.65.

25 Education, June 1940, W. Reynolds, "History in our Schools", p.94.

26 Education, March 1940, T.H. Blyth, "The Teaching of History in the Primary Schools", p.43.

### 3.3 The Resurgence of Christian National Education

In Chapter 5 it was stated that the idea of Christian National Education had not died with the demise of C.N.E. schools before 1910. The Centenary provided a powerful new stimulus for the movement. A "Volkskongres" on Christian National Education was held in Bloemfontein on 6 July 1939. Die Unie<sup>27</sup> published the motions passed by the congress:

- (a) The Christian National philosophy should form the basis of the Afrikaans education, and should have as its aim the propagation, protection and development of the Christian and national nature of "our national life" ("ons volkslewe").
- (b) Religious instruction did not make a school Christian, nor did national history as school subject make a school national; only when the two elements permeated the whole school system, its spirit, curriculum, discipline, all its activities, could one speak of a Christian National school.
- (c) A Christian National view of history was required, a view which embraced the idea of the godly national destiny.

Two years later, Die Unie published an article by the Rev. J.J. Kruger entitled "Christian National Teaching",<sup>28</sup> in which the emphasis was once more placed on the own, "die volkseie". The child was to learn to value his "own fatherland, own history, own religion and own language, his own culture on his own ground". He demanded for his nation the right to make of "our sons and daughters true little Afrikaners" ("egte Afrikanertjies") (original emphasis) just as other nations turned their children into true Englishmen or true Germans. C.N.E. wanted to raise true Afrikaners who would not be scared of loving what was theirs: "We want to have this national principle in our education". The Afrikaans parent was demanding a "positive national attitude". The inclusion of national history in the curriculum was no guarantee in itself, for it could be taught in such a way that a

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27 Die Unie, 1 February 1940, pp.253-254.

28 Die Unie, 1 February 1942, pp.272-273.

love of one's own was not fostered. In addition, the subject omitted so many "national treasures: a nation's religion, its literature, its folk-music". Therefore, C.N.E. required that the school should stand, not apart from the "volkslewe", but amidst it.

Through the teaching of history, Kruger continued, the child would be taught how Afrikaner national unity, national character and national destiny were founded in the national language and national culture. There follows an assertion which was to find an echo in so many history textbooks in the next three decades:

"In fact it is part of the order of Creation that there should be separate and different nations with their unique characters. Thus history teaching should take place in such a way that the origins, development, destiny and calling of one's own nation should be recognized in the national past ("volksverlede"), imparted faithfully and actively cultivated".

In short, C.N.E. aimed at fostering "a true nationalism" instead of an "untrue internationalism": in this way education would serve country and nation.<sup>29</sup> Kruger's treatise corroborates the contention in Part I that history teaching is inextricably linked up with the stimulation of not only historical, but also national consciousness. It serves, or is meant to serve the current dominant political philosophy, to legitimate the current order, to provide orientation particularly in times of national confusion (as with the Afrikaners between 1939 and 1943), and to reinforce national identity.

Prof. J.C. Coetzee<sup>30</sup> too advocated a "nationalisation" of the educational process in order that the Afrikaans child might receive education in his "own national language". He also came out strongly against dual medium schools. During the war years a heated, almost violent debate was in progress for and against

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29 Die Unie, 1 February 1942, pp.272-273.

30 Die Unie, 1 May 1942, "Christelik-Nasionale Onderwys", pp.348-349.

such schools, the details of which do not concern us here.

In a paper entitled "The Foundations of Christian and National Education", Dr J.F. Kirsten accused Britain ("the great power with its imperial spirit") of denying smaller nations (i.e. the Afrikaners) their past, their spiritual heritage, or the right to self-determination; such a deed would be condemned as murder ("murder of the soul of a nation") before "the court of eternity".<sup>31</sup> By August 1943, the philosophy of Christian National Education had become accepted to such an extent that the 39th congress of the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (S.A.O.U.) held in Worcester could issue a corporate policy statement in which all the major tenets of the philosophy were embodied.<sup>32</sup> The Congress insisted on "the thorough and inspiring teaching of our national history in order that the necessary love of country and national pride be instilled in the child. A demand was also made for the creation of suitable occasions on which tribute could be paid to "our great past and its national figures". At the same Congress, the Chairman, in his opening address, referred to the long history of Christian National endeavour in South Africa, sketching the main events since 1652, through the Company, Batavian, British and Republican periods. He also referred to attempts "in certain circles" to eliminate history altogether as a school subject. His address ended with a strong case for single medium schools.<sup>33</sup>

While none of the above views was reflected in the "official" textbooks or syllabuses until 1948, they are important, for they were articulated in many, if not most, Afrikaans textbooks of the period under review. In a way they represent an alternative view of the past or counter-symbols to the current "official" master symbols, just as we are today faced with an alternative radical view of the South African past with its own counter-symbols.

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31 Die Unie, 1 September 1943, p.62.

32 Die Unie, 1 August 1943, p.31.

33 Ibid, pp.39-50.

### 3.4 English- speaking reaction

In Section 4.2. above, brief reference was made to the strong reaction of the S.A.T.A. to the history syllabuses proposed by the S.A.O.U. As Afrikaner nationalism gained in strength after 1938, one could expect a certain counter-reaction in English-language circles. Relations between the two language groups were probably at their lowest ebb since the Anglo-Boer War, exacerbated by South Africa's participation in the Second World War, and by the disunity in Afrikanerdom itself. In an editorial, the S.A.T.A. in 1940<sup>34</sup> advocated the appointment of two examiners, one English, one Afrikaans, for the Senior Certificate history examination, on the grounds that South African history "was liable to different interpretations"; what if a sole examiner should be appointed with "barely veiled totalitarian views and all but openly antipathetic toward anything English, a condition more widespread in this country among our so-called educationists and historians than some realize, or wish to admit?". It contended that "Historical bias unfortunately goes hand in hand with nationality and many Afrikaans-speaking South Africans have received their training in history departments in which history is almost politics, particularly South African history".

In response to the draft syllabus drawn up by the S.A.O.U., the S.A.T.A. submitted proposals of its own drawn up by a sub-committee of history teachers. The latter syllabus placed more emphasis on social, constitutional and economic history, and less on political and military history.<sup>35</sup> The content was of the "neutral", international kind, rejected by national-minded Afrikaners. While Afrikaner nationalists and protagonists of C.N.E. regarded current history syllabuses as insufficiently "national" in character, many English-speaking teachers regarded

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34 Education, September 1940, p.150.

35 Education, June 1940, p.103.



regarded them as "narrow in outlook" and tending to foster insularity.<sup>36</sup>

The views expressed by Margaret Ballinger, M.P., at a Fort Hare graduation ceremony in March 1940, were endorsed by the S.A.T.A. organ, Education, in its editorial of April 1940, which spoke of "a narrow nationalism with its tribal superstitions and myths" in reference to Afrikaner nationalism.<sup>37</sup> Mrs Ballinger pointed to the resurgence of "narrow loyalties and exclusions" which had "widened lamentably the gulf between the two dominant European national groups in the country". Teachers of history had to take their share of the blame for "the narrowness of nineteenth century nationalism", the "pouring of a new wine ... into the old bottles of tribalism". She lamented that all that White children learned of the place of non-Europeans in the world is provided by "a dreary record of Kaffir Wars ... represented as the inevitable conflict between civilization and essential barbarism."<sup>38</sup>

In 1941, Education ran a series of articles in which a passionate plea was made for the inculcation of democratic views and values at schools. In the first half of that year in particular there was real concern for the future of democracy - National Socialist Germany and Fascist Italy had overrun most of Western Europe and were threatening the very existence of Britain. This concern is reflected in the articles "Teaching for Democracy" (in two parts), "The Democratic Teacher" and "The War and the Teacher: Thinking for Democracy", which demanded that democracy be reinforced in the schools. The fight for democracy was on the education front. The history lesson was "the natural medium" through which to study the traditions of a country, but the thing to remember was perspective: the story of South Africa cut across racial divisions, and children should be taught to seek South Africa's destiny along a common path. In the name of history many

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36 Education, January 1944, p.143.

37 Education, April 1940, p.49.

38 Education, April 1940, p.60.

pedagogic crimes had been committed by "a section of our teachers who, oppressed by what they feel to be a chauvinistic use of history teaching for racially bigoted ends, are inclined to let history vanish altogether from our schools."<sup>39</sup>

The S.A.T.A. expressed concern at purported moves by the Afrikaanse Nasionale Studentebond "to indoctrinate high school pupils by the institution of 'studie-bonde' under the aegis of principals of high schools". Members as well as the Department, were to be alerted to this development.<sup>40</sup>

At the same time that the S.A.O.U. was requesting the authorities to make the celebration of national events possible at schools, the S.A.T.A. was being accused of blocking such attempts. Die Unie<sup>41</sup> registered its "acute disappointment" at the attitude of the S.A.T.A. toward moves to have Heroes Day, 10 October, declared a national holiday. The S.A.O.U. was, however, determined to honour "our heroes" and to make a great deal of Heroes Day.<sup>42</sup>

This English - Afrikaans controversy over school history, of which these pages are typical, has persisted to the present day. However, it is now overshadowed by a controversy of far greater import, namely the radical-establishment dichotomy.

#### 4. HISTORY SYLLABUSES 1918 - 1948

##### 4.1 The Cape

The 1921 syllabus for the Junior Certificate <sup>43</sup> was possibly an attempt to overcompensate for the lack of South African history

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39 See Education, February, March, June and September, 1941.

40 Education, May 1941, p.55.

41 Die Unie, 1 June 1941, p.364.

42 Die Unie, 1 September 1941, p.95.

43 The Education Gazette, Vol. XXI, No. 14, 17 December 1921, p.446.

in the 1911 syllabus. The compilers went to the other extreme, cluttering the new syllabus with a host of often unconnected topics and themes covering South African history from the voyages of discovery through to Union. Among these were "European settlement - a result of trade enterprise; the origin of the Burgher class; the rule of the Netherlands East Indian Company; the expansion of the settlement; slavery; the Huguenots; the British Occupation - a result of the Napoleonic wars; the British Settlers; pioneering; the Great Trek; Natal; the Free State; the Transvaal; political changes leading to the Act of Union; the native peoples". General history covered "from the Renaissance to 1713".

In an attempt to fill the huge gap in general history left by the 1921 syllabus, the education authorities in the 1923 revised syllabus, offered "General History to the Renaissance" as an alternative to South African History.<sup>44</sup> Pupils could thus study the thread of the history of western civilization, but at the expense of "national" history. As Coetzee<sup>45</sup> points out, this option relegated history to the position it had occupied before 1900 when South African history had been so neglected. With only very minor changes the 1921 Junior Certificate syllabus remained in force until 1930.

The new Senior Certificate syllabus, published two years in advance, came into effect in 1923.<sup>46</sup> Candidates were required to answer questions on any two of the following three sections:

- Section 1 - Pre-Revolutionary.  
Growth of the British Empire from 1713.  
Growth of the Cape Colony to 1795.
- Section 2 - Revolutionary Era.  
Causes and chief stages of the French Revolution and immediate effects upon Europe.  
Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

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44 The Education Gazette, Vol. XXI, No. 14, 17 December 1921, p.447.  
45 A.G. Coetzee, Die Leerplan in Geskiedenis, p.87.  
46 The Education Gazette, Vol. XXI, No. 14, 17 December 1921, p.458.

Causes and immediate results of the Industrial Revolution.  
South Africa, 1795 - 1843.  
Section 3 - Nineteenth Century - Post-Revolutionary.  
Growth of South Africa to 1892.  
Canada.  
European possessions in Africa.  
A comparison of the present constitution of the Union with those of Canada, Australia and New Zealand.  
Brief sketch of the progress of democratic ideas in Europe.  
Rise of the German Empire.  
Unification of Italy.

This syllabus is almost identical to that of the Joint Matriculation Board (1918). Neither syllabus attempted to accommodate South African history after 1892.

It was only in 1931<sup>47</sup> that courses for the Junior and Senior Certificate were slightly altered. History became an optional major subject. There were to be two syllabuses in history - the one suitable for those schools where the majority of pupils proceeded to Std 10, and the other for those where the majority left school after Std 8. The first course would lead to the Senior Certificate, whereas the second brought the study of both South African history and general history "on to the present day".

The South African history component of the First Course included the rise of the Dutch East Indian Company with special reference to the Cape; van Riebeeck and his successors (up to Ryk Tulbagh); the Huguenots and expansion of the Cape up to 1771. The Second Course was the then Junior Certificate syllabus with a minor addition: "Government central, provincial and local".<sup>48</sup> The

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47 The Education Gazette, Vol XXVIII, No. 20, 7 November 1929, pp. 858-861.

48 The Education Gazette, Vol XXVIII, No. 20, 7 November 1929 p.860.

Senior Certificate syllabus did not change. Most changes in the 1931 syllabus were, therefore, concerned with general history. The status of the subject did change though from minor to major.<sup>49</sup>

In fact there were to be relatively few adaptations to history syllabuses between 1921 and the early 1950's. It was almost as if the delicate balance of power between the two major political groupings precluded any radical shifts in emphasis or content. It should be remembered too, that even when Hertzog was prime minister between 1924 and 1928, he was ruling with the support of the predominantly English-speaking Labourites. Once again, between 1933 and 1948, there were bilingual governments in power. The relative stability, or rather consistency, in history syllabuses throughout the entire period can almost certainly be traced to the political compromises between the two language groups, and to the fact that the political centre was in power throughout the period. The pro-British Jingo element and the more republican-minded and nationalist-leaning Afrikaners were politically ineffectual for much of the period.

In 1938<sup>50</sup>, history as a minor subject, alongside history as a major subject, was introduced. There was no change in the syllabuses for courses I and II for history as major subject, from those of 1931. In the syllabus for history as minor subject, however, there were some new themes: Section III made provision for a study of "the natives of South Africa" (their origin, manner of life, occupations and present development); the development of "our farming, mining and industries; and our main roads, railways and harbours"; "our present form of government - central, provincial and local; the present distribution of "the European population".

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49 Cape of Good Hope. Junior and Senior Certificate Handbook, 1930,  
p.23.

50 Cape of Good Hope, Junior and Senior Certificate Handbook, 1937,  
pp.7; 37-39.

By 1944, the history syllabus for both Junior and Senior Certificate had been redrafted "although the content is very much the same as the present syllabus"; this came into effect in the 1944 examinations.<sup>51</sup> The most comprehensive revision occurred in the Senior Certificate syllabus in that the South African history component was extended from 1892 to 1910, and in one case even beyond that. It was also described in more detail: the social, political and economic conditions at the Cape (1771-1795); the period of temporary government (1795-1806); the main facts of the political and economic history of South Africa to 1910; the constitutional development of the Cape Colony to 1872, and federation movements and the constitutional development in South Africa leading to Union in 1910, including a thorough study of the Union constitution; the Statute of Westminster in relation to South Africa.

Section C - Special Subjects - prescribed four subjects of which two were an "intensive study of the Great Trek to 1854", a theme which was to be overemphasized to the present day, and "native administration in the Union of South Africa, mainly in connection with the Native Land Act (Settlement Act), the Native (Urban Areas) Act, 1923, and the legal amendments thereof, Native Franchise and Native Education". This second special topic is significant in that it is the first official recognition given to the rapidly increasing Black urban population. In 1904 Blacks had made up only 29,4 per cent of South Africa's urban population; by 1936 they constituted 38 per cent<sup>52</sup> and, following the rapid urbanisation caused by the Second World War, 52 per cent by 1946.<sup>53</sup> There was a gradual realisation that Blacks were becoming an ever more important part of the South African economy. There was also slight recognition of the political position of Black South Africans. The spectre of the Black

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51 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope, Junior and Senior Certificate Handbook, 1942, p.57.

52 C.W. de Kiewiet, A History of South Africa. Social and Economic, p.206.

53 E.A. Walker, A History of Southern Africa, p.754.

majority was to loom ever larger.

#### 4.2 The Transvaal

In the 1923 T.E.D. Regulations Governing Primary Schools<sup>54</sup> it is pointed out that history offers the teachers "a great opportunity". The subject was to have "local appropriateness, local point, and sting"; the "centre of gravity and interest must lie in South Africa. There must be a South African spirit throughout. But in no limited sense. The South African boy and girl must learn to look with discrimination and pride on the development of the two great white races which inhabit South Africa, and on the development of the Empire of which South Africa is now a self-responsible member." The Regulations further state that "no history course would be complete unless it included some account of the origins and development of the duties and privileges of citizenship". Pupils must know something of the principles and practice of responsible government. Their study of history "should end ... in practical patriotism".<sup>55</sup>

As before, schools could choose between Scheme A and Scheme B. Scheme A prescribed stories from South African history in Std 3; South African history, 1486-1828, and stories from British history in Std 4; the outlines of British and general history to the accession of Queen Elizabeth in Std 5; and South African history, 1828-1892, as well as the outlines of British history, from the accession of Queen Elizabeth to the death of Queen Victoria in Std 6. Scheme B provided for stories from South African history in the period 1486-1815 for Std 3; 1815-1892 for Std 4; South African history from 1652 to 1828 for Std 5; and from 1828 to 1892 for Std 6. In both schemes there was a heavy emphasis on military history and, therefore, on conflict,

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54 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Regulations Governing Primary Schools for White Children, 1923, p.5.

55 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Regulations Governing Primary Schools for White Children, 1923, p.33.

especially that between White and non-White. The syllabuses are full of "battles", "attacks", "Hottentot Wars", "Kaffir Wars", "conflicts", and "destruction".<sup>56</sup> It should also be pointed out that South African history was still married to, and embedded in, British history. The orientation was British.

As with the Cape syllabuses, there were few changes in Transvaal history syllabuses during the period under review. The first significant change was in 1931, when the South African history course for the Senior Certificate was brought forward from 1892 to 1914.<sup>57</sup> The period covered was thus 1760-1850 in Std 9 and 1850-1914 in Std 10. In 1934 this was revised slightly to cover the period 1771 to 1914. Both the 1931 and 1934 syllabuses also required a knowledge of the union of South Africa, Canada, and the federation of Australia and the United States, and general history from 1762 to 1914.<sup>58</sup> The 1934 Junior Certificate Examination required, as part of the history syllabus, a knowledge of "the related Geography" as well as of Citizenship. For Std 7 Civics pupils were to have such knowledge of local, provincial and national government "as will enable him to take an intelligent interest in public affairs", and for South African history (1806-1872) the change of Government at the Cape; the British Settlers; the Great Trek; the establishment of the Boer Republics and the discovery of diamonds. It was recommended that the connection between South African and general history be shown wherever possible "as is done in Hope's 'Our Place in History' and Gie's 'Geschiedenis vir Suid-Afrika'".<sup>59</sup>

The Std 8 South African history section covered the period

- 56 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Regulations Governing Primary Schools for White Children, 1923, pp.34-35.
- 57 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Transvaal Secondary School Certificate Handbook, 1931-1933, p.26.
- 58 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Transvaal Secondary School Certificate Handbook, 1934, p.30.
- 59 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Regulations and Syllabuses for the Transvaal Junior Certificate Examination 1934, p.36.



1872-1910 and included topics such as the discovery of gold, economic changes, the poor white and native questions; events leading to Union; the Constitution; South Africa as part of the British Commonwealth and South Africa's relationship to the world as a member of the League of Nations.<sup>60</sup> Mirrored in these topics is South Africa's changing status vis-à-vis Great Britain, and her growing self-confidence as a regional power. After World War I, South West Africa was entrusted to South Africa as a mandated territory. By 1928, South Africa had her own flag, while three years previously Afrikaans had gained the status of an official language. The Balfour Declaration of 1926, the Statute of Westminster of 1931 and the ensuing Status Acts of 1934 were milestones on South Africa's road to sovereign independence. There was also growing economic power to match constitutional growth.

In 1935<sup>61</sup> an explanatory note was added to the 1934 Senior Certificate syllabuses, as it was not proposed to draw up a detailed syllabus; the nature of the work expected was indicated as follows:

- (a) Salient points in the constitutional development of South Africa.
- (b) The main facts of our political history, e.g. native policy, extensions of European boundaries, political relations of South African States and Colonies with each other, dealings with external powers.
- (c) The influence of economic conditions on South Africa, mainly after 1860.
- (d) The period 1885-1910 to be treated in very broad outline, particularly constitutional growth.

In 1938<sup>62</sup> the contents of the syllabuses were not so much changed as rearranged. The syllabuses for Stds 7 and 8 were divided into

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60 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Regulations and Syllabuses for the Transvaal Junior Certificate Examination 1934, p.38.

61 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Transvaal Secondary School Certificate. Handbook 1935, p.24.

62 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Regulations and Syllabuses. for the Transvaal Junior Certificate Examination, 1938, pp. 41-45.

four sections. Section A on general history was compulsory for all schools. Sections B and C on South African history were optional. Section D was divided into four parts, of which two were to be studied. The reason for making Section B an alternative was to permit those schools whose pupils proceeded to Std 10 to avoid repeating in Stds 9 and 10 work already done in previous standards. One new theme was "National Problems: Poor Whites - Asiatics - Natives".

The 1941 Catalogue of School Books Authorized for Use in Transvaal Primary Schools<sup>63</sup> listed Juta's series of textbooks as well as Kammeijer and van Rooijen's books for Stds 4 to 6.

In 1942, the T.E.D. published a suggested syllabus for the grades to Std 8.<sup>64</sup> In the introduction the aims of history teaching are set out, and include, that "it was the duty and the privilege of the history teacher to inculcate in his pupils a rational and enlightened love of country", and that "the history of our own country should always be studied against the background of world history"; and that a "sense of sound citizenship" should be developed in the child. Teachers are encouraged to stimulate interest in history by the reading of carefully selected passages, such as "the excellent description of the Battle of Blood River in Preller's 'Andries Pretorius'"

These suggested syllabuses display several interesting features. In the Std 3 syllabus, for example, Blacks are still regarded as a problem or a threat : "Jan van Riebeeck - Difficulties and dangers: wild animals, natives, etc." On the other hand, by 1942 the highly insulting term "Kaffir" was replaced by "Xhosa", or "Bantu" or "Native". Also the Anglo-Boer War is specifically mentioned in both the Std 5 and 7 syllabuses. The period covered in South African history was, as before, 1652 to 1910.

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63 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. 1941, p.10.

64 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Suggested Syllabus for History. Grades to Standard VIII, 1942, pp.3-17.

#### 4.3 Orange Free State

It took far longer for the two smaller provinces to assume responsibility for the examination of their Junior and Senior Certificates than it did the Transvaal. This was probably because of the modest number of candidates in Natal and the O.F.S. not warranting an independent examination authority until much later. However, from 1932 the Free State Education Department administered its own Junior Certificate examinations. History and Geography as an integrated course was a compulsory subject for the Junior Certificate up to 1946. Thereafter the percentage of candidates opting for history declined rapidly, from 100% in 1945 to only 77% in 1950.<sup>65</sup>

Up to 1932 the O.F.S. followed the Joint Matriculation Board examination for the Junior Certificate. The history component of the Free State integrated course of 1933 covered, as far as South African history is concerned, a "general survey" from 1652 to 1910 and the treatment of two periods, in more detail, chosen from a list of six, i.e.: 1652-1662; 1679-1707; 1814-1826; 1830-1852; the history of the Orange Free State 1852-1885 and 1890-1910. The first four periods were named the Jan van Riebeeck, Huguenot, British Settler and Great Trek periods respectively.<sup>66</sup> The 1933 course also made provision for civics, cultural and religious history.

It was widely felt that the "general survey" of the period 1652-1910 was too vast a field to cover; in 1934 the period to be surveyed was reduced to a more manageable 1825-1910. In 1946 the period for the general survey was again changed, this time to 1652-1806. This 1946 J.C. Syllabus also reduced the number of periods for more specialised study to three (Jan van Riebeeck,

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65 P.A. Grobbelaar, Middelbare Onderwys in die Oranje-Vrystaat 1910-1952.

66 J.J. Nel, Geskiedenis in die Middelbare Skool onder die O.V.S. Departement van Onderwys (1933-1947), Bylae C.

Huguenot and British Settler), from which schools had to select only one.<sup>67</sup>

Till 1938, the Free State had entered its candidates for the Senior Certificate in the external examinations of the Joint Matriculation Board. The history syllabus followed for this course after 1938 was virtually identical to that of the J.M.B., i.e. South Africa from 1806 to 1910 with a section covering constitutional development up to the Statute of Westminster.<sup>68</sup> This syllabus remained prescribed, with only the most minor changes, until 1951.

The situation of history as a school subject in the O.F.S. was similar to that in the other provinces during this period: between 1941 and 1950 the percentage of history candidates for the Senior Certificate declined from 93% to 78%.<sup>69</sup>

#### 4.4 Natal

As mentioned elsewhere Natal made use of the syllabuses of the Joint Matriculation Board until the early 1950's.

An examination of the N.E.D.'s own syllabuses for history in the primary schools<sup>70</sup> reveals very similar content to that of the other provinces. The Std 1, 2 and 3 syllabuses followed a biographical approach. Pupils were to learn the "stories" of famous figures from both general and South African history, in the form of cameos. Roughly half the stories had to deal with South African history. Standard figures such as Vasco da Gama,

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67 J.J. Nel, Geskiedenis in die Middelbare Skool, Bylae D.

68 J.J. Nel, Geskiedenis in die Middelbare Skool, Bylae E.

69 P.A. Grobbelaar, Middelbare Onderwys in die Oranje-Vrystaat 1910-1952, p.123.

70 N.E.D.A., Onderwysdepartement, Natal, Leerplanne van Geskiedenis vir Gebruik in Goewerments- en Goewerments- ondersteunde Laerskole, Februarie, 1925, pp.9-18.

Adam Tas, Dick King and the Trek leaders were listed. Only one of the South African personalities is Black. Most, but not all, of the figures suggested from general history were in fact prominent British personalities such as Raleigh, Nelson, Gordon and Kitchener. Bryan's Our Country provided the framework for Std 3.

For Std 4 the topics listed in Foggin's book, in either the English or Afrikaans version, were to be studied. The list offers the standard fare from Prince Henry the Navigator through to Louis Botha. All the names mentioned are White. Non-Whites are mentioned only in the context of war. In Std 5 general history only was taught. The Std 6 syllabus, although it had a South African history component, was strongly British-orientated. The first topic sets the tone: "England's position". Further topics cover British colonial expansion in the Americas, India and Australia. The general history offered is thus British colonial exclusively. South African history commences with the British occupation of the Cape, treats of Somerset, the British Settlers, Lord Glenelg's "kaffir policies" and concludes with Shepstone.

The booklist at the end of the primary school syllabuses of 1925 includes Synge, Fairbridge, Theal and Gie as recommended reading for teachers. Most titles were on English history: Green's History of the English People, Macaulay's History of England, Woodward's Expansion of the British Empire, and the like.

In 1932 revised history syllabuses for Stds 1 to 6 were introduced.<sup>71</sup> This entailed a rearranging of the 1925 syllabus rather than anything new. Books recommended for the use of the teacher were the perennials, Hofmeyr, Bryan, and Jenner's readers.

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71 Education Department, Natal. Geography, History, Character-Forming, Hygiene and Temperance for Use in Government and Government-Aided Primary Schools, April 1932, pp.14-21.

This writer was unable to trace the 1942 history syllabuses referred to in the Director's Report for 1941-1942<sup>72</sup>. It is unlikely, however, that they would have differed to any great degree from the syllabuses examined.

#### 4.5 Characteristics of History Syllabuses in this Period

School history syllabuses in the nineteenth century were ill-defined. From early in the present century they became increasingly detailed, and therefore, prescriptive. The syllabuses of the period reviewed illustrate this. It thus became more difficult, and later virtually impossible, for an author to simply omit an historical event simply because such an event did not suit his viewpoint. As syllabuses became more prescriptive, authors' inclination to vastly exaggerate certain points while underemphasizing others, was curbed, but not fully prevented, as the following pages show.

The somewhat tenuous and inferior position of South African history in syllabuses before 1918 gradually changes to a state where the South African component eventually comprises fully half of the syllabus.

It was thought best, by the authorities in all four provinces, not to disturb the sensitive relations between the two White language groups. Thus for many years, the period covered in South African history was 1652 to 1892, in this way avoiding the contentious events between 1896 and 1915.

Eventually the scope of the syllabuses is extended to 1914, and beyond. This reflects the growing maturity of the Union and a willingness to come to terms with the past, though from divergent perspectives.

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<sup>72</sup> N.E.D.A., Province of Natal, Report of the Director of Education for the Years 1941 and 1942, pp.9-18.

The Union is still viewed within the context of the British Commonwealth, but its increasing constitutional autonomy, expanding economic power, and rising international status, are very much stressed.

While there is still a heavy preponderance of traditional political, constitutional and military history, two new themes begin to emerge, albeit on a modest scale. One is the economic aspect, and the other the growing dimensions of the "native problem". The rapid industrialisation and resultant urbanisation of South Africa brought the economic dimension to the fore. The rise of an urban Black proletariat was also beginning to be recognized, as evidenced by the inclusion of sections dealing with legislation pertaining to "native administration" and policies. The emphasis, some would say overemphasis of the Great Trek, increases steadily throughout this period. As before, there is scant attention paid to social and cultural history.

On the whole, the syllabuses of this period, in all four provinces, display a stereotyped, narrow, and rather sterile view of the South African past.

#### THE INFLUENCE OF GUSTAV PRELLER ON AFRIKAANS HISTORIOGRAPHY

Before turning to selected textbooks representative of the period under review, a brief look at the influence of Gustav Preller on Afrikaans historiography is necessary.

Together with Theal (and to a lesser extent Cory), Preller was the most influential historian in Afrikaans historiography in the first half of the twentieth century. His influence was particularly strong in the so-called "pre-academic phase", up to approximately 1945, on account of the extent of his work, his sympathetic portrayal of the Afrikaners' past, the new light he

shed on the past and his bold and vivid style.<sup>73</sup>

Preller grew up on the late nineteenth century Transvaal platteland, deeply conscious of the "century of wrong", and of the significance of the two main foci of the Afrikaner's historical image: the Great Trek and the Anglo-Transvaal War. These impressions were deepened by his active service during the second Anglo-Boer War in the Transvaal State Artillery and later on commando, the physical destruction wrought by the British scorched-earth policy, and the misery of the concentration camps, both of which he witnessed. The loss of independence in 1902 was a traumatic experience for him. Preller was very much a product of his times, in the mould of the colonial attitude of the White pioneer pitched against savages on the wild frontier.<sup>74</sup>

To Preller, the Afrikaner had lost all in 1902 except his past, which had to be built upon and continued into 20th century party politics. He saw the history of South Africa as a clash between Afrikaner nationalism, British imperialism and Black "barbarism", in which the heroes were Afrikaans, and the villains the English and the Blacks.<sup>75</sup> Historical consciousness was a collective memory of the suffering experienced in the past, which became the central element for a common Afrikaner national identity. Thus consciousness was at one and the same time a reaction against the defeat of 1902, and a weapon in the continued struggle against the English. According to van Jaarsveld<sup>76</sup>, history was for Preller a "legitimation arsenal". He saw himself as called upon to restore his defeated nation's national consciousness by providing them with a historical identity in their darkest hour. Much of his writing thus boils down to a justification of the

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73 See K. Smith, *The Changing Past*, pp.57-68.

74 See F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Gustav Preller: sy historiese bewussyn en Geskiedsbeskouing*, unpublished paper, 1989, pp.1-17, 23.

75 K. Smith, *The Changing Past*, p.68.

76 F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Gustav Preller*, p.4.



Afrikaans nation's existence as a separate national entity.

Nowhere is the interconnectedness of past, present and future clearer than in Preller's writings: for him the past was an "accounting", "a settling of scores", a "liberation", an opening up of the way to the future. Through his historical consciousness Preller became the architect of the future and provided a philosophical foundation for Afrikaner nationalism. History could not be separated from the present: in fact it was to be used in the service of current events. His history was exclusive, ethnocentric and one-dimensional, conservative, nationalistic and partisan.<sup>77</sup> He told Afrikaners what they most wanted to hear: he restored their self-confidence by giving them an ideologised, politicised historical mythology; he created the Great Trek mythology which still exists today. His was a secularised form of a religiously experienced past, a cult freely using symbols and myths to foster allegiance.<sup>78</sup>

Preller excluded whole periods and sections of South African history, offering a Afrikaner-centric image of the past as the actual history of the country. The Great Trek and the Second Anglo-Boer War (which replaced the Anglo-Transvaal War) were the two poles or foci which the Afrikaners' self-comprehension was based. This image of the past dominates school history syllabuses and textbooks to the present day. Preller absolutised a part of the whole, and it was within this limited historical framework that the three main actors on the historical stage were organized and a positive Afrikaner self-image set against the two Feindbilder, the Blacks and the English.<sup>79</sup> Preller is no longer read, but that which he stood for and the image of the South African past he created, live on in school history textbooks.

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77 F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Gustav Preller*, p.6.

78 See F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Gustav Preller*, pp.9-13, and J.J. Oberholster, *Die Neerslag van die Romantiek op ons Geskiedskrywing in, Trends in South African Historiography*, pp.44-52.

79 F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Gustav Preller*, p.17.



The following are some of the most common aspects of this image, appearing time and again in South African school history textbooks throughout this century, taken from one of Preller's own writings<sup>80</sup>:

- (a) The Voortrekkers left the Cape to escape British tyranny and treachery, to establish their own free states "... the motivation behind everything, the central thought, which spurred them to action, was the desire to get away from the English, and to be free."
- (b) His "historical resumé" begins in 1486 with Diaz and continues through the Dutch to the British period. Blacks and other non-Whites are seen as hostile barbarians, even in 1925; they were "more than 75 per cent still semi-barbarians"; the White settlers were plagued from the very beginning by "repeated Kaffer invasions and Bushman raids."
- (c) The myth of the missionary conspiracy against the settlers is perpetuated: Philip was "one of the well known agitators" and Livingstone actively armed the Blacks with "ten thousand rifles". These accusations are closely connected to the idea of an unholy alliance between the British and the tribes against the Boers.
- (d) The myth of the uninhabited interior into which the Trekkers moved was entrenched: the Highveld was "almost completely depopulated by the Zulu wars of extermination", "drenched with the blood of millions of innocent souls".

## 6. AN EXAMINATION OF STANDARD TEXTBOOKS OF THE PERIOD

### 6.1. The books examined

The following titles were those that could be traced in those book-lists, reports and other departmental documents, and in the various private, public and departmental collections to which the author had access. Such a list cannot be complete. It does, however, contain most of the textbooks in use between 1918 and 1948, and certainly all the most widely-used, standard works of

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80 G.S. Preller, Historiese Opstelle, pp.15-35.

the period.

- W. Skinner : Juta se Geskiedenis en Burgerpligte vir Standerds VII en VIII, Juta, Cape Town, 1923.
- J. Wiechers: Geskiedenis Handboek vir Vorm II, Wallachs, Pretoria, 1926.
- R.B. Howes and H.J.Mandelbrote: Juta se Geskiedenis vir Matrikulasiestudente, Cape Town, 1926.
- F.A. Steytler: Geskiedenis vir Standerd III, Volgens die Leerplan vir Laer Skole in die O.V.S., Nasionale Pers, Bloemfontein, 1939.
- H.L. Brown: Maskew Miller's Primary History for Transvaal Schools Standard V, Cape Town, 1926.
- Maskew Miller's Elementary Course of South African History Part II, Cape Town, undated.
- W. Fouché: Darter se Geskiedenis van die Unie van Suid-Afrika, Cape Town, 1927.
- E. Stockenström: Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika, Deel II, Pro Ecclesia, Stellenbosch, 1927.  
Handboek van die Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika Tussen 1652 en 1892, Pro Ecclesia, Stellenbosch, 1922.
- F.E. Bauling: Maskew Miller se Nuwe Geskiedenis en Burgerkunde Standerd V, Cape Town, 1928.  
Maskew Miller se Nuwe Geskiedenis en Burgerkunde vir Standerd VI, Cape Town, 1930 (Second and Improved Edition).
- W.J.Kammeijer and H.H. van Rooijen: Sketse uit die Vaderlandse Geskiedenis: Leesboek vir Skool en Huis Deel III, Nasionale Pers, Bloemfontein, 1930.
- B.B. Lindeque : Suid-Afrikaanse en Algemene Geskiedenis vir Kaapse en Transvaalse Middelbare Skooleind-eksamen Deel I vir Junior Matriek, Juta,

Algemene en Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis vir Transvaalse Juniorsertifikaat, Standaard VII, Juta, Cape Town, 1943 (Nuwe Hersiene Uitgawe).

Algemene en Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis vir die Transvaalse Juniorsertifikaat. Standaard VIII, Juta, Cape Town, 1941.

Geskiedenis en Burgerkunde vir Transvaalse Junior Sertifikaat Deel I: vir Vorm II, Juta, Cape Town, 1936.

Geskiedenis en Burgerkunde vir Transvaalse Juniorsertifikaat Deel II: vir Vorm III, Juta, Cape Town, 1936.

History and Citizenship for Transvaal Junior Certificate, Juta, Cape Town, 1937.

General and South African History for Transvaal Junior Certificate, Juta, Cape Town, undated.

J.M. Cloete and

J.J. Bezuidenhout: Laer Geskiedenis vir Skole in Transvaal Standaard V tot VI, De Bussy, Pretoria, 1933.

H.J. Hofstede: Aardrykskunde en Beknopte Geskiedenis van die Oranje-Vrystaat, Bloemfontein, 1930, (New and Improved Impression).

S.F.N. Gie: Deel I Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika (1652-1795), Universiteitsuitgewers, Stellenbosch, 1927/1955.

Deel II Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika (1795-1918), Universiteitsuitgewers, Stellenbosch 1927/1955.

A. Jenner: Juta's New History Readers for Primary Schools, Standard V, Juta, Cape Town, 1932.

A.K. Bot: Algemene Geskiedenis en Burgerkunde Standaard V, van Schaik, Pretoria, 1927.

Algemene Geskiedenis en Burgerkunde Standaard VI, van Schaik, Pretoria, 1927.

It proved unnecessary to use all the above texts in this study. One, or at most two, works by a specific author may be regarded as representative. There is little need to reproduce the contents of all the textbooks by one particular writer. Likewise, where lesser known works are similar in spirit and content to the more widely-used texts, the author has opted to use the latter only. The following texts, taken from the comprehensive list above, have been included in the discussion in the remaining part of this chapter:

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|---|---|
| W. Skinner:                             | <u>Juta se Geskiedenis en Burgerpligte vir Standerds VII en VII (1923).</u>   |
| J. Wiechers:                            | <u>Geskiedenis Handboek vir Vorm II (1926).</u>   |
| R.B. Howes and<br>H.J. Mandelbrote:     | <u>Juta se Geskiedenis vir Matrikulasiestudente (1930).</u>   |
| W. Fouché:                              | <u>Darter se Geskiedenis van die Unie van Suid-Afrika (1921 and 1927).</u>  |
| E. Stockenström:                        | <u>Geskiedenis van Suid Afrika Deel II (1927).</u>  |
| F.E. Bauling:                           | <u>Maskew Miller se Nuwe Geskiedenis en Burgerkunde vir Standaard V (1928).</u><br><u>Maskew Miller se Nuwe Geskiedenis en Burgerkunde vir Standaard VI (1930).</u>                                     |
| H.W. Kammeijer and<br>H.H. van Rooijen: | <u>Sketse uit die Vaderlandse Geskiedenis: Leesboek vir Skool and Huis Deel III (1930).</u>   |
| B.G. Lindeque:                          | <u>Geskiedenis en Burgerkunde vir Transvaalse Junior Sertifikaat Deel I: vir Vorm II (1936).</u><br><u>Geskiedenis en Burgerkunde vir Transvaalse Junior Sertifikaat Deel II : vir Vorm III (1936).</u> |
| S.F.N. Gie:                             | <u>Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika Deel I (1652-1795) (1927).</u><br><u>Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika Deel II (1795-1918) (1927).</u>   |

References in the text are to the authors of these books. Where more than one book by a particular author is referred to, the form or standard for which the book was intended is indicated after the author's name, e.g. Gie II or Lindeque III.

2. Some Perspectives in the Textbooks Examined

(a) Skinner

Skinner was a history teacher at Middelburg in the Cape Province. His book covers the Std 7 and 8 Cape syllabuses of the time, i.e. South African history from 1652 to about Union, as well as Civics. This book is naturally Eurocentric in its approach to the indigenous peoples. Skinner, despite his English surname, is sympathetic toward the Afrikaans cause. The war of 1899-1902 is called "The English War". Skinner bemoans the results of the discovery of gold, more of a curse than a blessing, leading to an influx of mainly English foreigners. The book expresses understanding of the Transvalers' reluctance to give up control of their Republic.

(b) Wiechers

A history teacher at Bethal High School, Wiechers's perspective is decidedly Afrikaans; it is anti-Black and anti-British. This is illustrated by his treatment of rivalry in the Indian Ocean in the 17th century : the French and English receive half a page each, and the Dutch six and a half pages, an obvious case of bias by overemphasis and, conversely, underemphasis.

(c) Howes and Mandelbrote

Mandelbrote was Professor of History at the University of Cape Town. Howes, born in England, was the first headmaster at Oudtshoorn Boys' High School, and later a distinguished judge. The text examined is the third impression of the first edition of 1926, written to comply with the requirements of the new Matriculation syllabus which brought history up to Union.

In contrast to textbooks written from an Afrikaans perspective, this one makes no mention of the taking of the Vow in the

discussion of the "Victory Commando" (p.220). The Great Trek is "played down" or underemphasized. The authors acknowledge that the annexation of Natal caused "bad blood" between British and Boer. The events of the next forty years caused a deep "national feeling to develop", so delaying unification (p.222). The pro-British perspective in the book is further evident in its treatment of the Diamond Fields dispute: the British government "sincerely believed that the Free State was not capable" of administering the Diamond Fields and therefore annexed them (p.276); also, Carnarvon "assumed" that the majority of Transvaal burghers were in favour of federation and thus gave instructions for the Annexation (p.347).

Kruger was of the "old guard" and "unable to reconcile himself" to a changing world; his anti-British attitude, appointment of Dutch officials, refusal to co-operate with the British colonies economically, uncompromising stand on the franchise and corrupt practices raised tensions (pp.356-358). The implication is, of course, that Kruger and his government were the cause of the war. The War itself receives only a page; although the concentration camps are mentioned, no figure for fatalities is given. These are examples of bias by underemphasis and omission.

The Great Trek had disrupted the unity of South Africa, a break reinforced by the Sand River and Bloemfontein Conventions. Grey and Carnarvon had attempted in vain to heal the breach. But now the reader arrives at the happy conclusion: through the Treaty of Vereeniging, Rhodes's dream of the British flag flying from Cape to Zambezi was realised (p.361).

Chapters XXXIII and XXXV deal with the other Dominions and India respectively, while Appendix D consists of eleven pages of fine print on the expansion of the British Empire since 1713.

(d) Fouché

Fouché was headmaster of the Hogere Jongenskool at Robertson, and also founder of the Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie (S.A.O.U.).

The 1921 and 1927 editions of this textbook, published by Darters, are identical, verbatim, except that in chapters 40 to 42, "The English War" in the 1921 edition becomes "The Anglo-Boer War" in the 1927 edition, a subtle shift in emphasis, out of sensitivity to English feelings and opinions. The book, usually referred to as Darter's History of South Africa, was one of the first history textbooks to be published in Afrikaans. It ran to twelve editions, the last in 1936. Because it was compiled specifically for use in Afrikaans- or Dutch-medium schools, or for the use of Afrikaans-speaking pupils in parallel or dual medium schools, it has a completely different thrust to those pro-British books designed for use by English-speaking pupils. There is an overemphasis of conflicts between Briton and Boer, with the Great Trek and Wars of Independence figuring prominently.

In the preface ("voorrede") Fouché, addresses "the children of South Africa":

"Children!

It does not matter if your name is Jan Smuts, Piet Malan, William Robertson or James Jones. We address you as South African children, born in this wonderful land, grown up ... under the blue sky ... Here you now have a little book about the history of our country and people ("volk"), specially written for you by someone, who was also born in this country ..."

Children are urged to remember South Africa's own heroes, and not to think that the history of Holland or Britain is necessarily more stirring than that of their own country. Teachers are reminded that there is no subject more suitable for the making of good citizens of children than "history of the fatherland".



The encounter between of White and Black is viewed as a struggle that lasted for over a hundred years to decide "who will be boss?" Some are of the opinion, according to Fouché that the great struggle between White and Black in South Africa is still to be fought (p.141).

Fouché makes a plea for a great Afrikaans artist to execute a painting of the taking of the Vow, to be hung in the Union Buildings (p.301), Keet's poem Slag te Bloed-Rivier is quoted in full. The following stanza is illustrative:

"Blaauwkrans massacre has been repaid  
... Honour to God! He has heard!  
Afrikaners! pass the word on!" \* (p.306)

After the annexation of Natal, it soon became apparent that the English were still following their "wrong Kaffir politics" (p.314).

Moshweshwe relied on the "hate of Wodehouse for the Boers" to gain British protection (p.360). Britain prevented the O.F.S. and Z.A.R. from uniting out of fear of the rise of a "powerful Afrikaner State" which could form a "pivot" ("middelpunt") of Afrikanerdom (p.348).

Chapter 33 deals with the "Transvaalse Vryheidsoorlog". The battles at Bronkhorstspuit and elsewhere are described as "shattering defeats" to British arms (pp.380-381). This is in contrast to pro-British works which describe these battles merely as "setbacks", "withdrawals", etc.

Following the discovery of gold, the "scum of the earth" gathered in Johannesburg. Fouché has great understanding of Kruger's reasons for not extending the franchise to the "foreigners"

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\* Blaauwkrans moord is duur geboet,  
... Eer zij God! Hij heeft gehoord!  
Afrikaners! zegt het voort!" (p.306).

("uitlanders") (p.394). Kruger's ideal was "to unite all Afrikaners in a great struggle against British supremacy" (p.412). Fouché devotes three chapters to the Anglo-Boer War. It would appear that the "struggle and suffering" of the Boers from 1835 to 1902 had been in vain, "but one thing the Boers never lost, that is their self-respect" (p.248).

To provide orientation for the future of the nation, in Appendix B Fouché asks the question : What future does South Africa have? Despite tremendous challenges and problems, the country was making remarkable progress as a result of the co-operation between the two White language groups "who have offered one another the hand of friendship". Fouché looks forward to the day, not far off, when the whole of Africa south of the equator will belong to South Africa. The two White races needed to work closely together "without necessarily becoming one". This reflects Hertzog's two-stream policy.

(e) Stockenström:

The first part of Stockenström's work prepared Matriculation candidates for the examination on European history between 1775 and 1919. In contrast to Stockenström's earlier textbook, reviewed in the previous chapter, this revised edition brings South African history forward from 1892 to around 1914, thereby including the highly emotional topic of the Anglo-Boer War. In doing this, the author was a few years ahead of the official Cape syllabus, which only included the period 1892-1914 as from 1931.

That part of Stockenström's book dealing with the period up to 1892 is very similar both in content and spirit to his 1918 and 1922 works already reviewed, and will thus not be dealt with here. The one difference is that the latter textbooks were written in English for English-speaking pupils, while the 1927 edition was written in Afrikaans. The Afrikaans nationalist overtones are thus more pronounced in this textbook. The first

chapter, for example, is entitled "Die Wording van die Hollands-Afrikaanse Volk". It is particularly in the treatment of South African history after 1892 that the Afrikaner nationalist perspective is obvious.

Stockenström, a fiery Afrikaner nationalist, is one of the first writers of textbooks to attempt to analyse the rise of Afrikaner nationalism, identifying the War of 1880-81 as its major stimulus (pp.377-382). The British annexation of Bechuanaland is also roundly condemned as an aggravation of British-Boer tensions (p.394). The Book contains several examples of bias by disproportion. The background to, and the causes, course and result of, the Anglo-Boer War are allotted 70 pages. For example, the Edgar incident alone receives two pages. Stockenström conscientiously lists the grievances of the Uitlanders, but then proceeds to minimize or dismiss them, giving the Republican viewpoint throughout. In summarising the causes of the War, Stockenström uses the metaphor of the Transvaal "lamb" being no match for the "mighty British wolf" whose greatest ambition was the expansion and glorification of the Empire - the "warmongers" and "empire-builders" made war inevitable (p.440). One can but imagine the uproar that must have been caused in pro-British circles by such an interpretation of the South African past.

Stockenström passionately denounces the Boer turncoats as "contemptible, cowardly traitors" ("afsigtelike papbroekverraaiers") (p.445). Tribute is paid to the martyr and hero, Gideon Scheepers, the "fearless": "The English took him out of his sickbed, transported him to Graaff-Reinet and shot him" (p.447). Manie Maritz too was a "fearless, born military man". Stockenström does not hesitate to boast with the Boer gallery of heroes. The 26 000 concentration camp deaths are mentioned twice. He is strongly disapproving of the use by the British of Black troops - "the bloodthirsty barbarians" (p.452). He is cynical about the British victory: the Boers had inflicted a wound on

the British Empire from which it never recovered - what a price to have paid for Rhodes's ideal and for Transvaal gold (p.454). The high Boer casualties (especially among the women and children) and physical destruction were disastrous, particularly for the farming community. He remarks with bitterness that in many cases the people who had "bought the land with their blood and sweat" were forced to become "hewers of wood and drawers of water." (p.455).

Another consequence was the "racial hatred" the war had caused between Boer and Briton - "let us not mince words" ("laat ons tog nie doekies omdraai nie"), the whole war generation would first have to die out before the wound could heal. The Monument at Bloemfontein was erected so that the war might not be forgotten (p.456). The conflict had led to an unparalleled national awakening as a result of the national humiliation and suppression (p.459): "our history was enriched with a long series of glorious events and dramatic episodes and decorated with a long gallery of renowned heroes", who, through their heroic deeds against the overwhelming enemy earned the honour and respect of the whole world (p.460).

Stockenström shows that while, after 1902, many in South Africa were endeavouring to exclude the Anglo-Boer War from the school syllabus (and in fact had succeeded right up to 1931), there were others for whom the War (with the Great Trek as a second historical axis) provided inspiration in their present unsatisfactory predicament, and a guide for the future. To pro-British elements the War was an uncomfortable reminder of an event best forgotten. For the Afrikaner it was to be the dynamo which would drive his nationalism for the next seventy years.

The book ends with a section on the constitution of the Union and events between 1910 and 1914. The political events surrounding the rupture between Botha and Hertzog are interpreted as a clash

First" or the British Empire first (p.504). Stockenström makes no secret of where his sympathies lie.

(f) Bauling

For practical reasons, these two volumes may be treated as a whole: the Std 6 book is the second revised edition of the same series, first published in 1928.

In the foreword to both volumes Bauling, headmaster of Wolmaransstad High, urges pupils to remember that although they are Afrikaners first (and foremost) they belong to a wider world. The perspective in Bauling's books is Afrikaner nationalist. In a classic example of backward projection, Bauling interprets the birth of the first White child at the Cape, as the birth of the "first White Afrikaner" (p.25).

The Great Trek is explained as an attempt by the Colonists to rid themselves of a government which simultaneously oppressed them yet was unable to protect them against the natives (p.59). The Trek, more than any other event, contributed to the expansion of White civilization in South Africa and saved the Dutch element from downfall (p.59). Piet Retief's manifesto forms the basis of the explanation for the Trek (pp. 61-63). The "perseverance", "courage" and "determination" of the Trekkers became legendary.

The Afrikaans perspective is clear in the obvious pride Bauling takes in the Boer victories at Bronkhorstspuit and Majuba (p.117) and in his glowing portrait of Paul Kruger's physical and mental capacities: he was "powerfully built", "strong", "agile", "a good runner", and "excellent shot", "calm", with "a clear mind" and "good insight"; at fourteen he shot his first lion, later drowned a wounded buffalo, and outran an elephant - he was "a born leader" (p.199). Afrikaner nationalism, first aroused by the 1877 Annexation, was greatly strengthened by the Jameson

Raid. Milner's "haughty" treatment of the Z.A.R. is severely criticised (p.132). His concern for the Uitlander's rights was merely a "pretext for interference" - his real aim was British paramountcy over the whole of South Africa. Kitchener eventually launched a "war of destruction" - "all the farms were destroyed" so that the commandos would be starved (pp.134 and 141).

Although the War had inflamed "racial hatred" between Briton and Boer and cost the Afrikaner his independence, the Boer had emerged from the war strong: "his self-respect intact and with a name among the nations of the world"; he further earned the respect of his former enemy who came to view him "not as a half-civilized savage but rather as a brave and noble adversary" (p.142).

The aim of citizenship according to Bauling "is to teach us to be of use to family, school, town, country and nation" ("volk") (p.99). A good citizen is someone "willing to subject himself to authority" (p.100), a rather authoritarian approach to citizenship.

The Civics section would have every Afrikaner, like the Romans of old, fired with "national pride"; every citizen was to love and respect his "people" and the "fatherland". Bauling extolls love of fatherland as one of the strongest motivations to make a nation great (p.168). The flag was the symbol of an own nationality (p.169). The Union was still a young country and, as a nation, consisted of many different elements. As soon as the "right patriotism" penetrated the whole country, there would be co-operation (p.169). A knowledge of the past, especially of the nation's great men and deeds, could provide inspiration for the national task at hand and orientation for the future.

(g) Kammeijer and van Rooijen

Kammeijer was vice-principal of the Modelskool in Bloemfontein and van Rooijen was a lecturer in history at the Normal Teachers Training College in Bloemfontein.

Approved by the Suid-Afrikaanse Akadademie and recommended by the Book Commission of the Orange Free State Teachers' Association, this Std 6 textbook is propagandist, highly subjective and inclined to confuse historical fact with myths and wishful thinking.

Van Riebeeck's landing is depicted as follows:

"The voice of the brave Commander is heard on the beach at Table Bay - 'Men, the land is desolate and wild. But should God grant us His blessing, we shall transform this wilderness into a beautiful garden ... plant the flag here!'"

Van Riebeeck prays that God will establish the Reformed religion here, that He will use them to convert the blind heathen (p.90). Here already is the Afrikaner's special mission in Africa. The nine Free Burghers were the "first Afrikaners", another example of backward projection (p.93).

The authors make much of the Swellendam and Graaff-Reinet "nationalist" uprisings. The First British Occupation is depicted completely negatively: The officials were "tyrannical", religious freedom was non-existent, bribery was rife, money became valueless and the economy declined. Compare this to the glowing reports of the same period in pro-British textbooks examined in Chapters 3 and 5. The Anglicization policy is regarded as one of the primary causes of the Great Trek (probably to strengthen the cause of the Afrikaans language at the time the textbook was published). The London hearing attended by Andries Stockenström is belittled sarcastically : Philip took "samples" with him: "King or Emperor Jan Tsatsoe the Great" and "the honourable and

most learned gentleman Andries Stoffels", a "Kaffir and a Hottentot". If the results had not been so serious one could have laughed at the "travelling circus of the doctor"(p.197). Then "Enter Andries Stockenström, a true Afrikaner, he will put the record straight. But alas! syrup for the native, poison for the Afrikaner is his contribution" (p.198).

It is obvious that the authors have reserved a special judgement for the missionaries and other philanthropists. Sir George Grey and the German settlers are praised, while David Arnot is "the bastard", the "big villain", who inherited all his worst traits from his Coloured mother"(p.233). Arnot "hated the Boers with a deadly hatred". The Diamond Fields dispute is treated in an openly propagandist manner bearing little resemblance to scholarly historical writing. Arnot, the "Big Villain", is central to this fanciful version of the dispute.

The authors make light of the Transvaal's problems prior to Annexation. Under the ironic sub-heading "The Blessings of the British Rule", the supposed blessing was that the Transvaal state debt under Shepstone's "brilliant administration" grew from £300 000 to a "mere" £1 000 000 (p.247).

The Z.A.R. could not be expected to yield to the Uitlanders' (foreigners') demands without surrendering the country they had "bought with their blood" (p.275). The authors note with pride that "a small nation which can produce such great men as the Boer leaders and generals, cannot go under" (p.282). Kitchener with his 200 000 men could not get the better of 15 000 Boers (p.282). British martial law in the Cape is compared to Alva's reign of terror in the Netherlands (p.282), an example of bias by exaggeration. The British executed the Cape Rebels to terrorize the Cape Afrikaners into submission and without exception the victims gave their lives as heroes (p.284). Readers are urged to visit the Vrouemonument, erected to honour the women and children who gave their lives for independence (p.288). A breakdown of the



deaths in the concentration camps is given. The Peace of Vereeniging was a "dreadfully bitter pill" to have to swallow (p.305). Lord de Villiers and especially President Steyn, the "uncrowned king", are eulogised (p.314). The authors, being Free Staters, give more credit to Steyn than do most other authors.

The Union, the authors point out, is an independent state which rules itself according to its own laws; it has its own flag "which at our own national festivals waves in our clear skies".

Kammeijer and van Rooijen acknowledge that while the Union flag was a compromise, it should be honoured, and if needs be, defended (p.359).

The 1914 Rebellion is treated sympathetically: Germany was a traditionally friendly power with which the Union had no quarrel whatsoever (p.345). Jopie Fourie was a "true patriot", whose last request that he be shot in his big Afrikaner heart is quoted (p.348). The victory of the Pact Government in 1924 is noted with satisfaction (p.351).

The last sub-section, "Our Language", deals with the history of the Afrikaans language and the rise of the language movements.

Having provided their readers with ample sources of pride in their past, the authors offer orientation for present challenges and the future of the country: the big problem facing South Africa was the search for a solution "to the constitutional position of the natives". This is an accurate analysis for the period. South Africa with its wonderful climate, great natural beauty, fertile soil and mineral wealth had great potential: "we love this country ... because it is ours". The first verse of "Die Stem", (not yet the official anthem) is quoted. When we talk of our "volk" we are not referring to "creatures" like the Bushmen, Hottentots or Bantu, but to the Whites; South Africa is a "White Man's Land". In contrast to other colonies, the Whites

here had never mixed with the natives. Echoing Hertzog's brand of nationalism, the authors define "our people" as consisting of two nationalities: the Dutch and the English Afrikaners (pp.363-366).

(h) Lindeque

First a history master, later headmaster and eventually Inspector of Education in Johannesburg, Lindeque became one of the best known writers of textbooks in South Africa this century. His many books, in both languages, were used for two decades or more throughout the country.

Volume I treats of South African history between 1806 and 1872. The descriptions of the frontier wars, Slagters Nek, the missionaries etc., are largely conventional and contain nothing new. The emphasis on the place of the Great Trek in history is noteworthy. The religious overtones to the treatment of this event are interesting: Sarel Cilliers was the "prophet" of the Trek; "with God's help" the Matabele were repulsed at Vegkop (p.28); Cilliers, "pious man of God" did not forget to thank God for His assistance in their hour of need (p.29); with God's help, the Wenkommando gained a victory at Blood River. It could not have been otherwise for the "pious man of God", Cilliers, had made a vow to God (p.38).

Chapter XV deals with Civics: the Whites had power and influence over their non-White subjects, and it was their duty to treat them with tact and sense. As a member of the British Commonwealth, South Africa had a duty to support the other members economically and militarily. Britain, having conquered South Africa in stages, had gradually surrendered its status as conqueror and recognized South Africa as an equal partner (pp. 257-259). South Africa's newly gained dominion status is reflected here.

Volume II continues with South African history from 1870 to 1926.

Lindeque writes from an Afrikaner perspective. He calls the new thrust of British imperialism in the 1870's, "The Strong Hand" (p.5). Although conditions in the Z.A.R. left much to be desired, they certainly did not justify the Annexation. Paul Kruger becomes an almost larger-than-life figure (pp. 6-7).

The British reverses in the Zulu War are regarded with mild amusement: it was Chelmsford's own fault for having ignored the well-intentioned military advice given by the Boers. The War of 1880-81 is called the First War of Independence ("Vryheidsoorlog"), while land disputes with the Bechuanas are called "Kaffir troubles on the Western boundary" (p.13). Warren, MacKenzie and Rhodes are taken to task for their imperialist designs and for inflaming "racial hatred". Rhodes's "underhand" dealings with Lobengula are criticised. The Z.A.R. and the Matabele are seen as fellow victims of British "ambition" and "conniving" (p.20).

The problems arising from the discovery of gold were exacerbated by two other "disturbing factors" after 1885, i.e. the growing imperialist spirit of Rhodes, and the capitalist power of the imperialists after the establishment of De Beers Consolidated (p.21). More than other writers before him, Lindeque makes much of the common link between Imperialism and Capitalism, the common goal of which he sees as the destruction of Kruger's government. Kruger faced these formidable forces with only his burghers and the rising national spirit throughout South Africa. Rhodes was in close contact with the Rand capitalists to bring about Kruger's downfall (p.25).

This accurate summary of the forces at work before 1899 would have been uncomfortable in the extreme for pro-British elements even in 1936, hence the bitter recriminations of the period. The Jameson Raid was hatched by the "imperialist money kings and capitalists" (p.27). After this "fiasco" Rhodes became a "declared enemy of the Afrikaner in South Africa".

The causes of the Anglo-Boer war are presented in a rather simplistic form: the desire to revenge the humiliation at Majuba; the "racial hatred" inflamed by the Uitlander question and British Imperialism casting its "greedy eyes" on the Transvaal (p.28). The British thought they could crush the Boers in a few months, but Lindeque notes with pride that instead it took two and a half years and 250 000 troops. It was the Camps that forced the Boers to the negotiation table (p.30). Besides the 27 000 Camp victims and physical destruction, the war left a legacy of bitterness and hatred (p.31). A positive outcome was that "our national history was enriched with dramatic episodes and famous, glorious national heroes. The chapter on the war ends with this eulogy:

"They are our honour, our pride, the founders of our republics, the protectors of our nationality, the corner stones of our independence and the defenders of our land ..."

Among the most contentious issues facing the Botha cabinet were the "non-white question, English-Afrikaans relations and the language issue (which receives particular attention). In the clash between Botha and Hertzog, Lindeque's sympathies are clearly with Hertzog, who "unashamedly put the interests of South Africa before those of the British Empire" (p.62). The establishment of the National Party and its success at the polls in 1924 are described with enthusiasm (p.64).

It is interesting that Lindeque makes use of contemporary events, in this case right up to the year of publication, to score political points, even though the official syllabus only provided for history up to 1910. Lindeque is greatly concerned with the lot of the poor Whites who had to compete with non-Whites. The economic advancement of the Coloureds and Blacks was a distinct danger to the position of the poor White. Readers are reminded that the poor Whites "are our own people and it would be

extremely uncharitable and unpatriotic of us to look down on them" (p.87).

### Gie

Dr Gie was secretary for Education for the Union, and also Professor of History at the University of Stellenbosch.

Gie's textbooks, each over four hundred pages of fine print and very detailed, were actually meant for university study. They were perennials, having first been published in 1927. The particular volumes consulted were of the sixth impression of 1955. Gie makes liberal use of sources and quotes, particularly those that support his own views.

The preface to Part I, written in 1927, contains numerous clues to Gie's historical perspective, his sympathies and his political views, making a study of his actual text almost unnecessary. According to him our knowledge of the Bushmen, Hottentots and Blacks is too limited for us to be able to reconstruct their past: in any case, "the illiterate and barbarian masses of humanity are not the field of the historian"; this is typical of the Eurocentric approach to history at that time.

The heroes of the past, "with their deeds still resounding like thunder", make "our hearts beat faster" and "strengthen our resolve to serve our nation". This was especially true of South Africa where civilization was often threatened, sometimes even to the point of a struggle for life and death, by "an almost unstoppable flood of savage heathendom". One can, therefore, understand why so much attention is given to "war and friction". The voices from our past bear witness to "the struggle" and individual heroism, and may not be smothered. They teach us to love and serve South Africa, which through their bravery, became "our country". Alongside these "mighty tones", are "other softer whisperings of the unnamed ancestors whose courage and holding

high of the honour of the White man" who made South Africa what it is. History should be inspiring and awaken enthusiasm.

Book I describes "how the torch of our civilization was lit and how it was passed from hand to hand over generations until it illuminated the coast of South Africa". The Germanic peoples "unlike the barbarian races of Africa", displayed an extraordinary talent for higher development. A distinguishing feature was their nomadic, freedom-loving habits "just like the Voortrekkers" (p.5). Gie also mentions the "great historical calling of the Afrikaner to move further and further into the interior with the rifle in one hand and the Bible in the other" (pp.27-28).

At the "peace negotiations" that ended the First Hottentot War in 1660, "the claim of the white man to a part of South Africa, and the right of the native to keep out of that part, was discussed in principle"; "so (original emphasis) principally and fundamentally that it was decided for the rest of time". The frontier could shift hundreds of miles to the east and north, but the same principles which applied to the Liesbeeck River would also apply to the Fish, the Tugela and the Zambezi Rivers. Gie legitimates in this way the White man's claim to Southern Africa.

The preface to Part II implores pupils to remain on South African soil "for it is here that we need their hearts and hands". This volume picks up where Part I left off, with the heading "Kaffir and Hottentot on the War Path", Bethelsdorp being a "breeding ground" of all the vices. All the other conventional stereotypes and epithets are repeated here. Gie devotes 70 pages altogether to the Trek, bias by overemphasis. Cilliers is described as "an Old Testament prophet" under whose guidance "those present bound their children and their children's children", in fact "the Afrikaans nation" before the Almighty (p.260). As the 10 000 Zulus attacked at Blood River, "the future of civilization in a large part of South Africa ... lay in the balance; and it is of

importance ... that not only the white man's weapons, but also his spiritual superiority, was decisive."(p.260). The fact that there was not one death on the Trekker side made the outcome appear "even more supernatural" (p.261).

Majuba too is seen as a "miraculous victory" - the Transvalers were convinced that God had restored their freedom (p.359). The Anglo-Boer War was a "war of destruction" and a "war of extermination". The Boer's heroism commanded the "enthusiastic admiration of the world" (p.421). The suffering had not been in vain: the Afrikaner nation came out of the crucible strengthened and rejuvenated. Today, Paul Kruger's statue gazes northward towards the Union Buildings - he would be satisfied "that in the great fatherland of the Afrikaner nation ... the language and traditions of the Voortrekkers are held in esteem" (p.422).

### 6.3 Negative Presentation of the Non-White Peoples

#### (a) Thieving propensities

One of the earliest and most enduring of South African master symbols is that of the thieving, plundering Hottentots, Bushmen, Xhosa etc. Skinner describes how the Khoi "stole colonial stock" (p.126), how the San attempted to halt White expansion "by stealing their stock" (p. 151), how the frontier farmers had to contend with the Bushmen and Xhosa who came to "steal and plunder" (p.151); time and again these "intruders" invaded the colony to "ravage", "rob" and "plunder" (pp. 1958, 192). Also the Basuto began to "rob" and "plunder" (p.241).

Wiechers accuses the San of stealing cattle from other tribes (p.130). Stock theft at the Cape "increased alarmingly" in van Riebeeck's time. The Khoi are blamed for this (p.165). In 1779 the internal strife among the Xhosa set off "stock-theft" and "plundering" on the frontier (p.217). The farmers were not only exposed to the "thefts of the Bushmen", but also of the Xhosa who

"robbed" and "plundered" (p.229).

Howes and Mandelbrote write of the "plundering gangs" of "barbarians" and their "depredations", and the "Hottentot plunderers", "Hottentot thefts" and the "thefts of the vagrant Hottentots" (pp.142, 149, 150). In 1808 Ndlambe's people launched "their usual cattle raids" and in 1813 the cattle raids recommenced. After 1820 both Dutch and British frontier farmers were victims of the Xhosa "thefts" and "plunder" (pp.152, 209). The fertile plains west of the Caledon River were "constantly plundered and raided" by the Basuto (p.272). Cetshwayo too was guilty of "plundering" farms on the Transvaal border (p.349).

According to Fouché, the San were "prone to theft" (p.36). Bethelsdorp became a "haven for thieves", resulting in "vagrancy" and "stock theft", while the Xhosa were "stealing and plundering" to their hearts' content (p.153). The frontier farmers were "robbed of their last stock" by the Xhosa (p.220). Fouché states with conviction that the "majority of Hottentots were thieves" (p.269).

Bauling (V) concurs that the Hottentots were "thieves who stole whenever they got the chance". In the beginning they only took clothes, tobacco and such things, but soon they also began stealing the colonists' cattle" (pp.22, 30). The frontiersmen too had to suffer much from the "depredations of the Bushmen". Bauling (VI) agrees with Fouché that Bethelsdorp was a "breeding place of evil and crime" (p.21). The result of Caledon's 1807 Ordinance was that the Khoi were "often guilty of theft" (p.27): "most of them", he alleges, were "dishonest" (p.53). Similarly the freed slaves moved about in gangs, often "robbing and plundering" (p.47).

Kammeijer and van Rooijen are no exception to the textbook writers of the period. On the young settlement's northern



frontier, the "Bushmen-plague" "robbed", "stole" and "plundered" (p.126). Following the 1834 invasion by the Xhosa ("like a swarm of locusts"), the scales fell from D'Urban's eyes - "No, the ferocious Black robbers are dangerous villains, thieves and murderers rather than innocent children of nature" (p.195).

(b) Physical appearance and filthy habits

Wiechers describes the San as "dwarfs", "yellowish in colour" (p.130). In a chapter entitled "A Strange People", Kammeijer and van Rooijen, are even less flattering their description of the "Bushmen": "Of their nose little more could be seen than two holes; the lack of nose made their faces even uglier; their forehead was so flat and narrow that there could scarcely have been much room for brains; their heads were covered with pepper corns which they attempted to pull out of one another's head when fighting" (p.1). The "Hottentots" were "neither attractive nor clean"; they rubbed themselves with fat to protect their skins from the bite of the vermin that lived in their "filthy karosses", "which they smeared with manure to look nice and dirty and smell strong" (p.94). Howes and Mandelbrote (III) also describe the Khoi as "dirty" (p.150). Bauling (V) too, views them as a "dirty", "ugly" nation (p.130). Fouché concedes that the "Kaffirs" are "a handsome people" "except for their colour" (p.11).

Lindeque (II) takes the Indians to task for what he considers their "filthy habits" (p.42). Because of their "dark skin colour" the White man is prejudiced against them, despite their "super intelligence" (p.42).

Stockenström, like Wiechers, regards the San as unintelligent: they were characterised by "the small area in their skulls left for brains"; their skin colour was yellowy brown, going over to "dirty yellow". The Khoi too was "anything but clean on his

person", his huts and skins being "alive with vermin" (pp.442, 448).

(c) Culture

The earlier authors were unanimous in their derogatory approach to the life-style, language, religious beliefs and morals of the indigenous peoples.

The Khoi were "too lazy to work", according to Skinner, so slaves had to be imported (p.123). He notes disapprovingly that the San practised polygamy, and "killed their children when food was scarce". When they migrated, Skinner avers, they "thought nothing of leaving old people behind with a piece of meat and an ostrich eggshell of water". No explanation of the sometimes desperate struggle for survival waged by the San is given as background to the accusations. Furthermore, their language was a "clickety-clack, a smacking of the lips"; of the Supreme Being "they had no conception" (pp.130-131; 203-209). Skinner also refers to the Khoi as a "superstitious lot", "believing in spirits and ghosts"; the old and handicapped "were simply left to die in remote places" and their language had "no fixed rules". He employs the epithet "Hotnots" in references to the Khoi, a term of contempt even at the time of writing (pp.131-133).

Howes and Mandelbrote report that the farmers found the Khoi "lazy" (p.150). Fouché as well writes that the Khoi were "generally lazy": the men "lay around the kraal smoking dagga", "too lazy to work" (pp.4, 266). The "Bantu" are regarded as having religious beliefs confined to "the worship of evil spirits" (p.11). In warm weather the San simply "burrowed a hole in the ground and curled up inside" (p.442).

Bauling (V) writes that the San did not even build decent huts but slept in holes in the ground or under bushes (p.27); nor did they hesitate "to devour the remains left by a predator" (p.29).

Their language was "inadequate" and they could count no "further than five"(p.30). The "Bantus" (a term used more and more frequently from the late 1920's onward) "could wage war well"; the men "spent most of their time in preparation for war, hunting, and beer drinking" (p.31).

According to Kammeijer and van Rooijen the San were "too lazy" to remove the ash from their dwellings or replace their clothes when they disintegrated - they then simply went naked; for food they merely dug out roots and ate these together with the worms and beetles crawling on them. The authors ask the sarcastic, rhetorical question, "Delicious, not so?" ("Lekker, né?"). When they received visitors, they caught a few hares, bit the long ears off the head, smeared their own heads with the blood and ate themselves "thick and round". Their language is dismissed as a "Strange click-clack" (pp.1-4). The religious beliefs of the San are belittled, yet the writers contend that they have a deeper sense of religion than the "Bantu", who gradually lost "the little religion they had" and became "wild barbarians" (p.15). The latter's beliefs are contemptuously dismissed with the comment "Foolish, no?" ("Dwaas, né?") (p.17). The "Hottentots", too, had a "funny kind of religion" - an insect ("gogga") was the prophet of one of their gods! "Creatures" who worship an insect (a reference to the mantis) are "far from civilized" (p.94).

On the culinary aspects of Indian culture, Lindeque (II) is condemnatory: "They have no South African patriotism, because their food consists of curry and rice" (p.42). Such comments may appear ludicrous today, but at the time they were taken at face value.

(d) Unreliability, deceitfulness

The pro-White, pro-Colonist bias of the writers under review is revealed in their apportioning of blame for the outbreak of

hostilities in South African history. It is always the non-Whites who cause conflict. There is a constant reinforcement of the stereotype or master symbol of the devious, cunning, deceitful, unreliable, dishonest Bushmen, Hottentots, Xhosa, Basuto etc.

So Skinner regards the Glenelg system as doomed to failure, "for the Kaffirs took little notice of treaties" (p.225). The Xhosa were always "merely waiting for an excuse to start another war" (p.192); they "ignored the Fish River boundary" and "violated" the frontier time and again (pp.56,158). The "national suicide" of the Xhosa is attributed to the "cunning" Kreli whose plan it was to send thousands of "starving, vicious and armed Kaffirs" into the Colony to drive the White man into the sea (p.230). It was always the Basuto under Moshweshwe who broke the agreements (p.247). Wiechers writes of the San as "cunning robbers" (p.230), and the Khoi as a "cunning enemy" (p.167). It was the incessant stock theft of the Khoi that caused the first "Hotnot" war (p.167). According to Howes and Mandelbrote, the farmers regard the Khoi as "unreliable", and "treaties with the barbarians" proved futile (p.150). Fouché says of the Khoi that they are "cowardly in war" and "treacherous" by nature (p.68). The Afrikaner had been in contact with Blacks, Khoi and San and thus knew and understood them best. He had learned not to trust them: "never trust a Black man" (p.267). Moshweshwe is described as the "clever rat", always up to his "old tricks", relying on the "hate of Wodehouse for the Boers" to gain British protection (p.360).

Bauling (V) writes that the farmers learned "that the promises of the Kaffirs mean nothing" (p.66). Bauling (VI) condemns the "fatal blunder" made by the British in employing Khoi as soldiers: not only did this policy result in hundreds leaving their masters' employ, but also in the Khoi soldiers joining the Xhosa "in droves" during the Third Frontier War, a further example of Khoi duplicity and unreliability (p.14). According to

Bauling, the "Hottentots" were "expert at imitating the less positive aspects of White civilization, such as drunkenness" (p.53).

The Xhosa were forever violating the "legal boundary" of the Colony, Ndlambe's subjects being the "worst culprits" (pp.32-37). Before 1850 there appeared to be calm on the frontier, yet all the while the Xhosa were "busy hatching schemes" to drive out the White man (p.84).

Lindeque (I) writes of the "treacherous Makapan" (p.65), and "the cunning of the Basuto's" (p.61), while Gie (IV) refers to the San as "dangerous, stealthy assassins" ("sluipmoordenaars") (p.118).

(e) As a threat or as problems

A consistent, multi-faceted theme in South African historiography has been that of the non-White peoples as a threat or danger, and at best as a burden, nuisance or problem. This is hardly surprising in the light of the relatively small, almost insignificant, number of Whites at the southern tip of Africa since 1652. From the very beginnings of White settlement, the Whites felt threatened by the always numerically superior indigenous peoples, especially the Blacks.

Thus Skinner (I) uses tautology to emphasize the "threatening danger" posed by the Khoi (p.126) and the San who were guilty of murdering herdsmen and colonists alike (p.151). The freed slaves became a "burden" as "vagrants" and "beggars" (p.136). Ordinance 50 was "a grave mistake", as the Coloureds "were not able to control themselves", becoming a "pest" and a "nuisance" (p.189).

Skinner treats three of the traditional causes of the Great Trek in some detail under the headings, the "Hottentot question", the "Slave question" and the "Kaffir question" (p.201 ff.). Indian immigration and their presence in Natal was "one of the dark

clouds threatening the future of South Africa" (p.248), as was the influx of thousands of Zulu refugees (p.249).

To Wiechers (II), the San were a "burden" to the farmers (p.209), Van Riebeeck had to deal with a "meat question", a "wheat question" and a "native question". By 1792 the "Native danger" had become "threatening" - the Xhosa posed "an even greater danger" to the exposed farmers than the San (p.229), with their even more "murderous attacks" (p.217).

According to Howes and Mandelbrote, after 1838 the Natal Trekkers were faced with a "Native problem" (p.225), while the early history of the Free State is largely "the story of the struggle against the Basuto" (p.272). The need to address the various "non-White problems" was a major incentive towards Union; Natal had imported "Coolies", thereby creating a further, as yet unsolved, "problem"; the Zulu "rebellion of 1906 highlighted "the dangers inherent in a divided native policy" (p.367).

In the chapter entitled "How the Border Farmers Lived", the typical frontier farmer is pictured by Fouché (II) as being robbed of his last stock, exposed to the demands of "cocky Kaffirs" and the danger that he and his family would be murdered and his homestead set alight (pp.220-221). From its inception the Orange Free State was "threatened" by "a foreign enemy", i.e. the Basuto (p.349). Similarly the young Z.A.R. was "surrounded by a host of powerful Kaffir tribes". For Natal, the Zulu were a "great danger" (p.365).

Bauling (V) writes of the Khoi as a constant "threat" and of "trouble" ("las") to the colonists (p.30). In his Std 6 work he refers to the "Hottentot danger" (p.14) and "trouble with the Kaffirs". Although most of the Khoi had been wiped out by epidemics, there were still enough of them to be "a major burden" (p.53). He too writes of the "Indian or Asian question",

one of South Africa's "most problematical situations" (p.127). Natal was also threatened by the "power-hungry" and "cruel" Cetshwayo (p.151).

Lindeque (II) discusses the "Native problem" in the Cape Colony, the "Chinese danger" in the Transvaal (the Chinese were "prone to desert and some were even guilty of cannibalism") (p.38), and the "Asian danger" in Natal. By 1910 there were 100 000 Indians in Natal, "a serious problem" and "headache" (p.42). There was an "Asian problem" in the Transvaal too - in 1904 the plague broke out amongst the Johannesburg "Koelies" (p.44).

Among the most contentious issues facing the Botha cabinet were the "non-White questions"(p.62). The section captioned "The Native Problems after 1910" mirrors the fear of non-White domination which underlies segregationist tendencies in South Africa: the delegates at the pre-Union talks realised that if the non-Whites were to be given the vote, they would dominate the Whites; if permitted to access to alcohol "they would become a burden and a danger" in White society; if admitted into the same train compartments as Whites, conditions for the latter would become unhygienic and unbearable; if allowed to own farms in White areas, they would, by virtue of their lower standard of living and ambition, soon become masters of the country (p.64).

In his chapter Lindeque sees our "Native problem and labour question" as a "survey of the native problem" since 1652. He articulates the White fears of being swamped by the Blacks in particular. The "native problem itself" consisted chiefly of the fact that there are 6 million Blacks to 1,75 million Whites. The "Natives" were "streaming increasingly in disturbing numbers into the towns and cities" (p.135).

Gie (I), like Lindeque, is acutely aware of what he terms the "native factor", which comes to the fore as history unfolds: the

"Bantu advance, the overwhelming steamroller", the inexorable lava of the vast Bantu lake", clashed eventually with the standard-bearers of European civilization, a bloody struggle which would last a century (p.28). "Murders", "plunders" and a series of burnt homes marked the passing of "the Black tidal wave" (p.222).

Closely connected with the perception of non-Whites as a danger is the heavy emphasis on military history, on wars, battles, conflicts, and also the attitude that the White man could only maintain his position through force. Thus in 1770, for example, a commando shot a large number of San, bringing to a temporary end their "theft" and "murder", according to Skinner (p.151). That author also regards the policy of the British authorities toward the Xhosa as foolish, for the latter understood "only the use of force"(p.177). British vacillation led only to more "plundering" and "stock theft" (p.183). When Cetshwayo ignored Frere's ultimatum, the British decided to "teach him a lesson" (p.251).

Fouché, like so many of his contemporaries, devotes whole chapters to military history: the earlier O.F.S. - Basuto wars, the Frontier War of 1877, the Basuto War of 1880, and the Zulu War of 1878. The Zulus were becoming "cheekier" ("brutaler") by the day - "the time had come to subdue them" (p.369). The death sentence passed on Mapoch, who had "refused obedience", served as a "useful and necessary warning" to the other chiefs (pp.388-390). Bauling (V) too places much emphasis on "clashes with the Hottentots", and the first and second "Hottentot wars" (pp.34-35). Similarly the Xhosa are only mentioned in terms of the colonists' clashes with them, and the subsequent "Kaffir wars" (p.66).

Wiechers states that van Riebeeck soon came to realise that his "soft" ("mooipraat") policies were pointless, hence the "Hotnot"



wars. In 1674 a punitive expedition captured "400 Hotnots, 800 cattle and 400 sheep" (p.175).

In a section headed "Difficulties with the Natives", Howes and Mandelbrote, make much of the fifty years of fighting with the "Hottentots", and the "even more troublesome Bushmen". The "Bantu" were "even more aggressive by nature than the Hottentots or Bushmen" (p.43).

(f) As ignorant bloodthirsty savages

Besides the unsavoury physical and moral characteristics attributed to the various indigenous peoples, many of the earlier works did not hesitate to employ epithets such as "savage", "barbarian", "bloodthirsty" and so on when describing non-Whites in general or their leaders as individuals.

So to Skinner, Shaka was "cruel and bloodthirsty", exceeding in cruelty" even Mzilikazi" (p.209), who had sent his "bloodthirsty" warriors to attack Vegkop (p.215). Half a century later the Zulu, under the "cruel" and "bloodthirsty" Cetshwayo, were once more on the war-path (p.251). In Wiechers one reads that the Portuguese usually tried to avoid the coast of South Africa because of the "barbarian inhabitants", including "verkäfferde Hotnotstamme"\* (p.129).

Fouché regards the Strandlopers as belonging to "a very low human race" (p.3), and the "Bantu" as "bloodthirsty and cruel" (p.11). Bauling (V) speaks in the same breath of "wild animals and Hottentots" (p.22). The latter, "like all barbarians, liked shiny objects" (p.23). The frontiersmen, he states, shot the "Bushmen" dead "like animals" (p.30). Bauling finds it difficult to credit the San with any kind of achievement. Thus it is a mystery how

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\* A translation is virtually impossible.

such an "uncivilized race" could draw so beautifully - some scholars believed that they had learned from the Egyptians or that they had originally come from Europe! (p.29).

Lindeque (I), like so many authors before and even after him, portrays Shaka as "cruel and bloodthirsty", and Dingane as "a devil", and again as a "proper devil from hell, who ordered that Retief be slain and that his heart and liver be cut out of him alive" (p.33). Lindeque (II) makes liberal use of the epithets of the time; his books are riddled with the usual derogatory references to "Hottentot enemies", "thieving and uncivilised Kaffirs", "darkies ("swartnerwe") and so on (pp.127-128). While conceding that many Blacks are intelligent, he nevertheless asserts that a large percentage will go to their graves as "morons" ("mamparas") (p.137). Fouché's paternalistic attitude is characteristic of the time: the Black man is to be fed, but given a hiding when he deserved it; in other words, "treat him in all respects as a child" (p.267).

Gie (I) refers to the non-Whites of the world as "the illiterate and barbarian masses of humanity", and "savage heathendom" (Preface). Elsewhere he refers to "the barbarian races of Africa" (p.5). Gie (II) views the Great Trek as the "great conflict" between Boer and "barbarian" (p.61).

Kammeijer and van Rooijen ridicule the missionaries, Dr Philip in particular, for their love of the "natives" which is termed "monkey love" - they were blind to the shortcomings of the natives and "loved them to death like a mother monkey loves her offspring" (pp. 188-189).

#### i.4. Positive self-image

As has already been explained, a self-image is like a coin, in that the value of the one side, that which may be termed the

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#### 6.4. Positive self-image

As has already been explained, a self-image is like a coin, in that the value of the one side, that which may be termed the

positive side, is largely determined by the opposite, in this case negative, side. It is as if the self-esteem of groups, such as nations, is dependent on a thoroughly negative evaluation of those outside the group, particularly those deemed hostile to the security of the group. The unflattering presentation of South Africa's non-White peoples in both the Afrikaans and English texts of the period 1918 to 1948 (and before that, of course), complements, indeed reinforces, the positive treatment or presentation of the writers' group or individuals from that group. Whereas the authors employ every epithet and cliché available to portray the "others" in as negative a light as possible, a completely different vocabulary is used when describing ones own.

Skinner writes of the Huguenots as being of the "noblest blood of France", belonging to the "best Puritan class". They are "efficient workers" and agriculturists, "sober" and "ferverently religious" (p.140). At Isandlwana more than 800 men were "murdered" (a strange term when applied to a battle), but the "brave" and "stubborn" defence at Rorke's Drift saved Natal (p.251).

Fouché goes out of his way to show that in contrast to other colonies, the slaves in South Africa were well-treated. In this way too, the positive, even self-righteous, self-image, is enhanced. In the 1834 frontier war the burghers "distinguished themselves" by their "heroic deeds" (p.254). Fouché, like Skinner, writes from an Afrikaans perspective. Yet, as has been observed so often in the textbooks examined in previous chapters, they do not hesitate to side with their fellow (British) Whites when the latter are ranged against non-Whites. Thus Fouché too writes of the British fighting "bravely" at Isandlwana and the Prince Imperial dying "fighting bravely" (p.369). Bauling describes how the British at Rorke's Drift "fought like lions" (p.151). Of course the Voortrekkers at Vegkop defended themselves "bravely". Retief was one of "the great men" (p.277),

and Pretorius one of "the most capable, bravest and most God-fearing men ever produced by South Africa" (p.298). The latter's commando on the way to Blood River was more like a "procession of pilgrims" than a military expedition:

"No swearing was heard, no drunkard was seen; arguments and strife were unknown ... mornings and evenings ... the air reverberated ... with psalms and hymns ...." (pp.300-301)

Bauling (V) extols van Riebeeck's "determination, initiative and inexhaustible energy" (p.26), and in his Std 6 book, the "perseverance", "courage", and "determination" of the Trekkers (p.86). Kammeijer and van Rooijen turn Adriaan van Jaarsveld into a larger-than-life, almost mythical figure: he was "born to lead", "unusually tall", "powerfully built" and "beautifully proportioned"; his "manly features, high forehead, exquisite manners and imcomparable courage", made him an "exceptional commander". He is even compared with a Saul or a Gideon (pp.145-147). There are no nuances in these authors' treatment of historical figures, who are either completely whitewashed or condemned unconditionally. Sir George Grey and the German settlers are praised too.

Potgieter and Maritz are described by Lindeque (I) as "outstanding leaders", and Retief as "the most remarkable" of the Trek leaders (p.30) and a "courageous, dignified Afrikaner" (p.35). Gie (II) is at pains to establish the excellent pedigree of his nation: they were of "good burgher stock", "the best ancestry" and "the best social basis for a new nation in a new country". These "good characteristics" of the Dutch were reinforced by the Huguenots, and the "blending of two high, equal and sympathetic races always bears lovely fruit" (p.114). By 1795 the Afrikaans "nation" (backward projection) was "landed aristocracy of the virile pioneers", "healthy to the core" (p.258).

As previously mentioned all nationalisms require a gallery of heroes and martyrs as a source of inspiration, especially for the young. In addition to the heroes portrayed above, the nation's self-esteem is further enhanced by the mention of other time-honoured national heroes, such as Wolraad Woltemade, to whom Bauling (V) devotes two full pages (pp.60-62), and the South African soldiers at Delville Wood, a more recent addition to the nation's gallery of fame, whom Bauling (VI) also lauds.

#### SUMMARY

The euphoria at the time of Union in 1910 soon dissipated in the face of the tensions inherent in South African politics of the time. The South African Party and the National Party propagated two different concepts of nationhood. The S.A.P. and its successor the United Party were either unable or unwilling (or both) to enforce their views in the schools. The N.P. was not in power long enough to have attempted to enforce this. The result was that in the period 1918-1948, history teaching was non-committal, at least as far as the official syllabuses were concerned. The constitutional changes in South Africa's status vis-à-vis Great Britain are, however, expressed in the history syllabuses of the period.

The textbooks examined demonstrate that Afrikaner nationalism, although politically in opposition, was vibrant, particularly after the Symbolic Ox-wagon Trek of 1938. The increasing assertiveness of national-minded Afrikanerdom and English-speaking sensitivity to this, are mirrored in the on-going debate on the role of school history.

Gustav Preller's interpretation of South Africa's past, and especially his unconditional eulogising of the Voortrekkers set the tone for Afrikaans school textbooks of the period. It was to some extent a mythical, certainly a very limited, image of the

country's past. Such books, as well as the British-orientated ones, treat the non-Whites as a problem at best and a danger at worst. The epithets, stereotypes and master symbols established in the nineteenth century live on through this period.

These attitudes were an inheritance of the Colonial and platteland era of the nineteenth century, which lingered on into the twentieth century. This mentality was present not only in South Africa, but was a world-wide phenomenon. The Whites were regarded as a superior race and the Blacks as inferior. A change came about only after the Second World War, with the loss of the supremacist position of the Whites world-wide and with the rising tide of Black nationalism.

## CHAPTER 7

### HISTORY TEACHING DURING THE PERIOD OF NATIONAL PARTY RULE 1948-1990

#### 1. POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL FACTORS INFLUENCING HISTORY TEACHING

##### 1.1. The Way to the Republic: 1948 - 1961

Dr Malan's coalition Government which came to power in the upset victory at the polls in 1948 was the first government in the history of the Union to consist of Afrikaners only. The question of a republic, so long shelved during the Smuts-Hertzog era, soon came to the fore. Malan himself was lukewarm on the issue<sup>1</sup>, but J.G. Strijdom's wing of the National Party advocated not only a republic, but one outside the Commonwealth. Strijdom succeeded Malan as Prime Minister in 1954. In contrast to his careful predecessor, Strijdom had a vigorous approach to matters: in 1957 he blandly announced that Die Stem van Suid-Afrika would henceforth be the only national anthem; later that year he had legislation passed that the Union Jack cease to have any standing as an official flag of the Union. These were two of the last remaining emotional ties with Britain. Only South Africa's non-republican status as a member of the British Commonwealth remained.

Strijdom's fiery support for a republic had been tempered by a lack of confidence in the possibility of a majority voting in favour of a republic in a referendum. His successor, Dr H.F. Verwoerd, had decided by 1960 that the time was indeed ripe to put the matter to the test. The 1960 Referendum produced a majority (52,14 per cent) in favour of a republic.<sup>2</sup> Developments

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1 See D.W. Krüger, South African Parties and Policies 1910-1960, pp.187-199.

2. N.G.S. van der Walt, Die Republikeinse Strewe, p.244.



at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's conference in London in March 1961, led to the Union's becoming the Republic of South Africa on 31st May, its membership of the Commonwealth terminated forthwith. The dream of republican-minded Afrikaners since 1902 had at last been realised. The offices of the Queen and the Governor-General were combined in the new office of State President<sup>3</sup>. On 31 May 1961, C.R. Swart was sworn in as first State President. According to D.W. Krüger<sup>4</sup>, through this constitutional change, South Africa had at last achieved a national solidarity based not so much on a common heritage, as on the expectation of a common future. The root cause of the English - Afrikaans division of the past century and a half (in fact since 1806) had been removed. There were now far more ominous and pressing issues facing the country. These constitutional matters are reflected in the history syllabuses of the period.

## 1.2. The Political Emancipation of Africa

After the Second World War, the wave of African nationalism began to sweep over the continent of Africa. The colonial powers were hastily compelled to adapt their colonial policies to the increasing demands for independence. By 1961 the decolonization process was already in full swing. Events in Africa after 1961 were to force the South African Government to re-consider its position on the continent and re-assess its relations with the various independent states. For many years Africa had played an extremely limited role in South Africa's foreign policy. The Union, as a White African state, remained outside the growing circle of independent African states. Criticism of South Africa's apartheid policy became increasingly vehement from within these states. The most serious obstacle in the way of normal relations was, and still is, South Africa's internal policies. To an

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3 See N.G.S. van der Walt, Die Republikeinse Strewe, Ch. XI; and T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa. A Modern History, pp.398-399.

4 D.W. Krüger, The Making of a Nation, pp.334-335.

increasing extent independent African states used their influence to manipulate world opinion against South Africa.<sup>5</sup> Pressure from Africa began to assume new proportions in 1963 when the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) was established. The granting of independence to the three British Protectorates, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland in 1966 and 1968 brought Black Africa to South Africa's doorstep. Dr. Verwoerd was not able to make much headway in Africa. His successor, B.J. Vorster, after 1966 launched a so-called outward moving policy ("uitwaartse beleid") and dialogue with African states. This introduced a phase of détente in the politics between South Africa and Africa. One of the main contributory factors to this dynamic policy was the increasing international pressure upon South Africa and her consequent isolation. By 1966 forty African states were already independent and as a pressure group, both as the O.A.U., and at the United Nations, they could no longer be simply ignored. There was a growing realization that South Africa's relations with the rest of the world were largely dependent on her relations with the African states. There was also the increasing consciousness that South Africa had a specific responsibility towards independent Africa as the regional industrial and economic power; conversely, Africa offered new markets.<sup>6</sup> Vorster's meetings with African leaders, sometimes in the African states themselves, did not lead to formal diplomatic ties.<sup>7</sup>

The Soweto uprising of 1976, and South Africa's intervention in the civil wars in Angola and Mozambique had led to the collapse of the détente policy by 1978. By 1980 Zimbabwe had been added to the semi-circle of Marxist-controlled states (Mozambique and Angola) on South Africa's northern flank. This and the

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5 See T. Cameron and S.B. Spies (Ed.), An Illustrated History of South Africa, pp.293-295, and A. Hepple, Verwoerd, Ch.14.

6 See O. Geyser (Ed.), B.J. Vorster: Selected Speeches, pp.15, 254-256.

7 T. Cameron and S.B. Spies (Ed.), An Illustrated History of South Africa, pp.297-298; G.M. Cockram, Vorster's Foreign Policy; and A. Guelke, South African Foreign Policy in Africa.

deteriorating security situation on the home front, led to the formulation of P.W. Botha's "Total Onslaught Strategy".<sup>8</sup> This resulted in increasing militarisation and growing paranoia in the White population. The "Total Onslaught" approach came to an abrupt end with the political demise of P.W. Botha in August 1989.

The various phases in the Republic's relations with Black Africa are mirrored in the history syllabuses from the early 1960's.

### 1.3. The Age of Social Engineering: Apartheid and Separate Development, 1948 - 1982

If it is accepted that school history syllabuses, and to a certain extent textbooks, serve to legitimate the political dispensation of the day, then nowhere is this more obvious than in South African history syllabuses since 1948.

After the result of the 1948 election became known, the National Party leader, Dr D.F. Malan, could exclaim : "'Today South Africa belongs to us once more'". From then on the policy of the government would be focused upon a single immutable goal - the preservation of White power in general, and of Afrikaner power in particular. The instrument used to put this policy into practice was apartheid. Segregation was nothing new to South Africa, yet it was now to be more vigorously and systematically enforced.<sup>9</sup>

From 1949 to 1961 the "cornerstone" legislation to support the policy of apartheid was passed: the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949); the Population Registration; Immorality and Group Areas Acts (1950); the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act (1951); the Native Laws Amendment Act and the Abolition of Passes

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<sup>8</sup> Readers' Digest Illustrated History of South Africa, pp.453-457.

<sup>9</sup> See W.A. de Klerk, The Puritans in Africa: The Story of Afrikanerdom, also, Readers' Digest Illustrated History of South Africa, p.367.

Act (1952); the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953); the removal of Coloureds from the common voters' roll (1956); the Bantu Investment Corporation Act (1959); the Coloured Persons Communal Reserves Act (1961); the Preservation of Coloured Areas Act (1961); the Urban Bantu Councils Act (1961). This list is by no means complete.

In its 1948 election manifesto the National Party had adopted the general principle that the various Black "ethnic groups" would, as far as possible, be concentrated in their respective territories where each could develop into a self-sufficient unit. Under Verwoerd the policy of apartheid became the ideology of "Separate Development". The patchwork of "homelands" that had been consolidated by the Natives' Land Acts became the basis of a new and ambitious scheme to create separate "nation states" within South Africa, each to develop independently of the other, and each offering political rights to its inhabitants, right up to "independence", if they so chose. Blacks living in a "white" South Africa would become citizens of whatever "homeland" or "national state" they could be traced to; finally there would be no Black South Africans. Making the plan work required social engineering on a massive scale; over a twenty year period an estimated 3,5 million people were "re-settled".<sup>10</sup>

The emergence of Transkei, Bophutatswana, Ciskei and Venda as politically "independent" entities, (the establishment of "self-governing territories") and the separate political structures created for Indians and Coloureds, created the temporary illusion that Separate Development had succeeded. History syllabuses mirror the growing dominance of apartheid policies in South African politics from 1948 onward. As will be seen subsequently,

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See F.A. van Jaarsveld (Ed.), Honderd Basiese Dokumente, pp.243-250; also T. Cameron and S.B. Spies (Ed.), An Illustrated History of South Africa, p.278; and D.W. Krüger, South African Parties and Policies 1910-1960, pp. 435-440; and A. Hepple, Verwoerd,

from the mid-1970's Black South Africans disappear from the syllabuses altogether. The collapse of apartheid, and recent pronouncements since 1986 on "one South Africa", have yet to find their way into history syllabuses, as does the history of lack resistance politics to Apartheid (See Chapter 8).

The fossilized, extremely narrow image of the past presented in current syllabuses nowhere reflects the dramatic, even fundamental shifts that have taken place in Government policy and South African society since the 1970's. The syllabuses bear little, if any, relation to the richness of South Africa's past as it is continuously being revealed by research.

## 2. HISTORY SYLLABUSES 1948-1972

### 2.1 Cape History Syllabuses

Introducing the proposed syllabus in history and civics for the Primary school in 1949, the Cape Education Department<sup>11</sup> expressed the need for "a new spirit in history teaching". True, history was "the story of the blood and tears, the devotion and the suffering, the endurance and the victories of men and women, and of nations"; at the end of the course the child should have "a fairly clear idea of the growth of his own nation"; the national traditions and customs "as they came into existence and grew out of the past, are of great cultural value, together with personal and national freedom in all its difference aspects". Amongst the general aims of history teaching was the cultural aim: "To make the pupil realise how Western Civilization came to, and developed in, South Africa and accomplished its own particular national task of influencing the country's racial groups." The civilizing mission of the Whites is clearly expressed here. There could also be little doubt as to where effective history teaching should

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11 The Education Gazette, Vol. XLVIII, No. 28, 1st December 1949, pp. 2059-2061.

lead: "In this way a sensible and enlightened patriotism must be cultivated in order that the child will cherish his own country, South Africa, above all else." Two master symbols, that of South Africa's great strategic importance and that of South Africa under constant threat by covetous enemies, are visible in the "general remarks" : "It is also essential that our pupils should understand clearly how this southern-most corner of Africa is and has been of strategic importance among the nations of the world, and has been regarded, ever since its discovery, as a desirable possession".<sup>12</sup>

In the proposed new syllabus South African history was still to end in 1910: 31 May 1910 was the "preferable closing date, because a chapter of the past ended here, and a new era for South Africa commenced. As we are still in the midst of this new period, it is not formally included in the syllabus."<sup>13</sup> The syllabus itself does not have direct bearing here as we are concerned mainly with secondary syllabuses, yet the Eurocentric approach is noticeable: "How the Cape was discovered and how the Hollanders brought civilization to South Africa"; "Civilization penetrates into the interior"; "Civilized occupation of the interior" are some of the items covered, as is the myth of "the land deserted as a result of destructive wars".<sup>14</sup>

The Secondary School Courses for 1952<sup>15</sup> contain no changes from the previous Junior and Senior Certificate syllabuses. In 1953, however, the syllabus for the Junior Certificate was adapted slightly<sup>16</sup>: in the section dealing with the Republics and the Anglo-Boer War, the course of the war was greatly emphasized.

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- 12 The Education Gazette, Vol. XLVIII, No. 28, 1st December 1949, p.2061.  
13 Ibid., p.2066.  
14 Ibid., pp. 2066-2071.  
15 Cape of Good Hope. Department of Public Education. Handbook 1952, pp. 28-29.  
16 Cape of Good Hope. Department of Public Education. Junior Secondary Course, pp.196-203.

The National Party had just increased its majority considerably in the recent elections and the Afrikaner government was asserting its authority to an ever increasing extent: there was a need to allow the second great pole of Afrikaner history to figure more prominently from then on.

The Section "How we are governed to-day" emphasized the fact that the Union was "an independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations, with full control over internal affairs"; in fact there is a separate section to reinforce this idea: "The emergence of the Union of South Africa as an independent member of the Commonwealth of Nations". This section reflects a young nation conscious of its growing importance and international role : the "increasing economic importance" of the Union; General Smuts as a member of the Imperial War Cabinet; the Union represented at Versailles, the Union as a member of the League of Nations and its part in the drawing up of peace treaties; the Balfour Declaration "increasing economic importance" of the Union; General Smuts as a member of the Imperial War Cabinet; the Union represented at Versailles, the Union as a member of the League of Nations and its part in the drawing up of peace treaties; the Balfour Declaration and Statute of Westminster, and the "further development of the Union" were some of the aspects highlighted by the syllabus.<sup>17</sup>

An extremely significant addition to the 1953 syllabus was "The Bantu in the Transkei and in the urban areas", dealing with "details of tribal life" and the administration of the Transkei, as well as the "problems" presented by the presence of the urban Blacks. Section II of the general history was concerned with the partition of Africa, including the Union's control of South West Africa.<sup>18</sup> These were two themes which were to be steadily expanded in future syllabuses.

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17 Cape of Good Hope. Junior Secondary Course, p.202.

18 Ibid., pp.202-203.

The new Senior Secondary Course came into effect in January 1956.<sup>19</sup> Amongst the general aims mentioned were a satisfactory knowledge of the history of the pupils' own country, of the manner in which their country was governed and of events which have had an influence on the South African way of life; further, history teaching was to explain the heritage of the pupils' past; to give them an insight into the origins of contemporary problems and conditions, and to acquaint them with questions ("vraagstukke") with which they would be confronted in future. The orientation function of history as a means of grasping the origins of present challenges and equipping the nation to meet them in the future, is well expressed here. Some of the "General Remarks" are rather interesting for our purposes: one of them states that a good deal of material contained in the former syllabus, which had "lost much of its significance", especially that related to the eighteenth century, had been discarded in order that the course might be extended into modern times. The new material brought the study up to the second decade of this century and, in some instances, up to the present. The under-emphasis of more distant history and the greater emphasis on recent events, had political overtones.

Comment 5, in particular, is noteworthy: "in view of the integration of the Bantu into our economic structure and the emergence of a number of concomitant problems", two aspects of "Bantu Studies" had been included in the course. These were first "The Bantu peoples of South Africa", and second "Native policy and administration". By the time this new syllabus was introduced, the Government was well on its way to restructuring South Africa according to its apartheid policies. The first theme made provision for a study of the "migration" of the Bantu into Southern Africa (the idea being that they too were immigrants with no more claim to the country than the Whites); the

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19 Cape of Good Hope. Department of Public Education. Senior Secondary Course 1952, pp. 73, 75, 135-141.



distribution of "ethnic groups" (to an increasing extent the real and imaginary differences between such groups were to be emphasized, even exaggerated), "aspects of their culture and organization", their contact with the European" and "the impact of Western Civilisation on the Bantu". "Native policy and administration" was a fairly detailed study of "Native administration in the Union", the "Formation of Native reserves", the "Natives in urban areas" and their political status both past and present. The functions of the Governor-General, the Minister of Native Affairs, the Department of Native Affairs, the Native Commissioners, Chiefs and Headmen were to be studied, as were the various Land Acts, the Trust system, present economic and social conditions in the reserves as well as in the urban areas, and legislation dealing with their political status. Blacks also featured elsewhere in the South African history syllabus but mainly as a source of labour: "slave labour", "Hottentot labour", "the role of Native labour" and "Indian labour" are all mentioned as topics.

Although Blacks were beginning to figure more prominently in the syllabuses, the basic approach was still Eurocentric. The theme "Immigration and expansion in Southern Africa" mentions the Free Burghers, Huguenots, Trekboers, British and German settlers, immigration into Natal, Southern Rhodesia and South West Africa, Whites all.

Other themes are the "British Empire and the Commonwealth", in which not only the evolution of the independent members is dealt with, but also the Republic of India as a Commonwealth member (the latter point could quite conceivably have been introduced to prepare the way for a South African republic within the Commonwealth); the relations between the British Government and the Boer Republics and the evolution of our form of government (from 1652 to 1932).

The Senior Certificate syllabus published in 1961 is identical to

that of 1956.<sup>20</sup> The 1969 syllabus,<sup>21</sup> however, reflects several new dimensions of Government policy and some shifts in emphasis. Under General Remarks the Coloureds and Indians are now dealt with in addition to the Bantu: "In view of the integration of the Bantu, the Coloureds and Indians into our economic structure and the emergence of a number of concomitant problems ...", Topics dealing with this were included; the theme "The Bantu peoples of South Africa" becomes in the 1969 syllabus "The Non-European Population of South Africa", covering not only the "Bantu" but also the Coloureds (their origin, and place in the economy) and the Indians (distribution, position in the economy).

In the theme on immigration and expansion, South West Africa and Rhodesia become, in the new syllabus, sub-sections in their own right. This reflects the international dispute over South West Africa on the one hand and, on the other, the importance of Ian Smith's Rhodesia in Southern African affairs in this period. In the part dealing with constitutional development, the formation of the Republic is included in the new syllabus. Under the heading "South Africa Today" there is a sub-section on the growth of the new states south of the Sahara, and South Africa's relationship with them. Thus the rest of Africa, which for so many decades had been included as the partition of Africa, i.e. in a colonial context, in the general history section, now comes under the South African history section and deals with the independence movements in Ghana, the Congo, Zambia, Malawi and Kenya, the three former protectorates and South West Africa. This was an attempt to legitimate or underscore the importance of Vorster's outward looking policy, and provides a partial African orientation for South Africa as a regional power.

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20 Cape of Good Hope. Department of Public Education. Senior Secondary Course, 1961, pp. 126-130.

21 Cape of Good Hope, Department of Public Education. Senior Secondary Course, 1969, pp. 1-10.

## 2.2 History Teaching in the Transvaal <sup>22</sup>

The development of history syllabuses in the Transvaal during the decade after 1948 followed similar lines to that in the Cape. The first real changes came about in the 1958 syllabuses, which introduced "Africa after 1939", including a survey of the British territories, of Kenya, the Central African Federation and the Gold Coast; the "struggle for independence" in the French territories; Portuguese and Belgian territories, and the independent states such as Egypt and Abyssinia. South African history was taken up to 1939. The 1958 syllabuses were already differentiated according to the T.E.D.'s system of streaming, i.e. A, B and C streams for University Entrance, Matriculation and Junior Certificate respectively.

The 1958 syllabus<sup>23</sup> is virtually identical to the Cape syllabus and need not be repeated here. For the first time the History Syllabus Committee of the T.E.D. detailed the sections of the syllabus, thereby preventing authors of school history textbooks from presenting a division in topics of their own. The latter were thus forced to follow what was contained in the detail and use this as captions for content; this limited their freedom. What is noteworthy about the Transvaal version, is the detailed nature of the section dealing with the relations between the British Government and the Boer Republics in the period 1836-1902, covering nearly half of the six pages setting out the syllabus. The reason for this can probably be traced to the greater vigour of Afrikaner nationalism in the Transvaal.

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22 Free State history syllabuses in this period are virtually identical in content and spirit to their Transvaal counterparts and are thus not discussed here. The reader is referred to M.A. Grobbelaar, Middelbare Onderwys in die Oranje-Vrystaat 1910-1952, and M.C.E. van Schoor and J.J. Oberholster, Geskiedenis vir die O.V.S.-Skoleindsertifikaat.

23 T.E.D.A. T.E.D. Syllabus for History for the Secondary School, 1958.

The history syllabus for primary schools of 1966<sup>24</sup>, provides insight into the degree to which Transvaal education, and specifically South African history, was becoming "Afrikanerised". The aids and suggested activities listed in the syllabus almost invariably make use of examples from Afrikaans history or culture: the Children's Monument at Bloemfontein, the Piet Retief, Danie Theron and Voortrekker monuments or museums, Retief's Manifesto, Blood River, Vegkop, a Voortrekker laager, Marthinus Oosthuizen, Dirkie Uys, Bennie Liebenberg, Paardekraal, Kruger, de la Rey, the Vrouemonument, and Concentration Camp cemeteries. The 1820 settlers are dealt with in eight lines; the Great Trek receives eighty.<sup>25</sup> This exaggeration of the role of one community, and conversely the under-emphasis of the role of others, remains a characteristic of history syllabuses to the present.

There are other official T.E.D. documents of the period which provide insight into the stated aims of history teaching. For example, the T.E.D. Study Guide No. 14,<sup>26</sup> with the title "The Cultivation of a Positive Attitude as Aim of the Teaching of History", highlights some of the T.E.D.'s aims in the teaching of History. In the syllabus for the junior and senior secondary phases one of the aims mentioned is the development of "the idea of nationality; the cultivation of loyalty, respect and love for (the pupils') country and its people; love and respect for ancestors". Further on we read that "from a Christian conviction and tradition, we confess that God ... controls the destiny of people and nations". The Christian National philosophy of education is clearly expressed here. Under the sub-heading, "Attitude to cultural heritage", one detects the thrust of the Government's Apartheid policy: "Every national community has its

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24 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Syllabus for the Senior Certificate, 1968.

25 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Syllabus for History in the Primary School, 1966.

26 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Study Committee for History. Study Guide No. 14. The Cultivation of a Positive Attitude as Aim of the Teaching of History, undated.

own traditions and cultural heritage which are closely connected with the ... cultural environment to which it belongs". By means of the teaching of history the child has to gain respect (original emphasis) for his language as spiritual value. Moreover, there should be a conscious endeavour to absorb an attitude of respect for the cultural values acquired and built up during the years, e.g.: national customs, traditions, mores and attitudes. A child should realise that other population groups in the country also have their own cultural and spiritual heritage. He must develop respect for these, without relinquishing his own, "because the survival of his own people as a cultural society depends on this." Once again, differences between groups are emphasized, while commonalities remain unmentioned.

The subsection "Disposition towards the National heritage" states that the child belongs to a specific country and state: "In the teaching of History a direct attempt should be made towards developing attitudes of loyalty, respect and love (original emphasis) towards the country and its leaders, also towards the leaders (and heroes) of the past ... in this way the child will come to realise that national sacrifices (original emphasis) were made ... and (become) aware of his commitment to his ancestors and to his fatherland". The Study Guide also makes provision for "political education: History explains the presence and survival (original emphasis) of our political institutions; it "guides the child to understand" the "Republican form of government and ideal". It is, therefore, important for him to cultivate an attitude of respect for, appreciation of, and obedience (original emphasis) to, the institutions and the laws". It was the authoritarian undertones and encouragement of the leader-cult contained in such official pieces that opponents of the Government and concerned educationists severely criticised from time to time (see 7.5).

The study guide enjoins the history teacher to "deliberately promulgate fundamental convictions (original emphasis) which

are basic to a Christian-National view of life, and the world". From "a particular perspective (according to the S.A. Constitution, from a Christian and widely national perspective)" the history teacher should inculcate the above habits and "positive attitudes". The Afrikaans-centric approach of the T.E.D. toward South African history is further revealed in the "examples from South African History" selected to show how certain attitudes may be instilled in history lessons. With one exception (the 1820 Settlers), all examples are from the Afrikaner past or represent Christian National Education: the concepts of diligence and industry could be brought home by a lesson on "van Riebeeck's untiring diligence and the loyalty with which he undertook his work of settlement"; the concept of faith through "the Covenant and the Battle of Bloed (sic) River" when the "steadfast faith of the leaders and members of the victorious commandos and their dependence upon God, are emphasized"; liberty as a concept by the example of the Battle of Majuba illustrating "the struggle for freedom and the sacrifices made by our forebears"; the concepts of authority and order by a study of the legislative authority of the Republic to emphasize "the necessity of a good government to upheld (sic) authority and maintain order in society"; respect for our national symbols could be brought home "by making known the origin and symbolism of the National Flag."

### 2.3 Natal History Syllabuses in this Period

As a result of the recommendations of the Natal Provincial Education Department of 1946 that all syllabuses be revised and that Natal should administer its own Junior Certificate examinations, draft syllabuses for primary schools were despatched in 1949 to selected schools for trial and commentary. By 1950 the revision of syllabuses, including those of history, were completed, so that Natal pupils took the first provincial Junior Certificate examination in 1951. For this first examination the regulations and syllabuses of the old University

of South Africa were applied. It was only at the end of the following year that the Junior Certificate examinations according to the Natal Education Department's own regulations and syllabuses were taken.<sup>27</sup>

The content of the J.C. history syllabuses used by Natal during the period up to the introduction of national core syllabuses at the end of the 1960's is very similar to those of the other provinces.<sup>28</sup> There is therefore no need to reproduce the syllabuses in any great detail here. The South African history component begins with the "Foundation of a Civilized European Settlement" in South Africa and ends with the Second British Occupation in 1806. Although the content of this component is what could be called the "standard fare", Natal did offer its schools a wider choice of themes and topics than the other provinces, all of whom were more prescriptive. Thus Natal history teachers had to treat the section on South African history which was compulsory, but could select two out of four sections dealing with general history.<sup>29</sup> The 1964 J.C. history syllabus was, with only minor adjustments, the same as its predecessor.<sup>30</sup>

In 1953 the National Education Department received permission to administer its own Senior Certificate examinations, but still provisionally according to the regulations and syllabuses of the Joint Matriculation Board. When the N.E.D. did introduce its own history syllabuses, such as that of 1956, they did not differ to any significant extent from those of the other provincial education authorities, except that the South African

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- 27 J.C. Coetzee (Ed.), *Onderwys in Suid-Afrika*, p.263.  
28 See for example N.S.L., *N.E.D. Junior Certificate Examination Handbook 1958*, pp.38-42.  
29 N.S.L., *N.E.D. Junior Certificate Examination Handbook 1960*, pp.42-60.  
30 N.S.L., *N.E.D. Junior Certificate Examination Handbook 1964*, pp. 28-34.

component was a slightly smaller part of the whole than elsewhere, i.e. about two-fifths compared to roughly half in the other three provinces.<sup>31</sup>

The topics included were:

- The Cape, 1771-1936
- The Foundation of the Trekker Republics
- Natal, 1845-1906
- Transvaal, 1872-1902
- Eastern Border, 1836-1894
- The Road to Union, including constitutional developments<sup>32</sup> between 1806 and 1936

The emphasis was still very much on political and constitutional history. In a note to the 1956 Senior Certificate syllabus, candidates were expected to know "causes, results and general principles of Acts, Treaties and Conventions", and a more detailed knowledge of the South African Convention and the South Africa Act was expected.<sup>33</sup>

The introduction to the 1958 syllabus for the Senior Certificate contained "General Aims" for the first time. They were of the lofty, idealistic variety, couched in more general, universal terms for example: "To teach our pupils to be worthy citizens appreciating their privileges and guided by the fundamental principles of justice and liberty".<sup>34</sup>

What made the Natal syllabuses different from the Transvaal and Free State syllabuses in particular, was the absence of nationalist overtones in the aims set for history teaching. The Christian National character of history teaching (and of education in general), evident to various degrees in the other three provinces, is lacking in Natal with its large English-

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31 N.S.L., N.E.D. Senior Certificate Examination Handbook 1956,  
pp.50-56.

32 Ibid., p.50.

33 N.S.L., N.E.D. Senior Certificate Examination Handbook 1958,  
pp.44-46.

34 Ibid., p.42.



speaking majority.

However, Natal's independence in this regard was to be short-lived. The introduction of a national education policy, including standardised syllabuses brought Natal into line with the other provinces after 1967.

### 3. HISTORY SYLLABUSES 1972-1984: THE NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY ACT

The National Education Policy Act (No. 39 of 1967) took effect from 1 January 1968. This Act necessitated amendments to the existing provincial ordinances. It laid down that education in South Africa be provided within the framework of certain principles. Not all of these principles are relevant to this study. The following, however, are pertinent:

- (a) Education provided by the State "shall have a Christian character."
- (b) Education "shall have a broad national character."
- (c) Co-ordination on a national basis in respect of syllabuses, courses and examinations standards shall be effected.<sup>35</sup>

The intention was that the whole school system and subject content was to be Christo-centric, to have a "Christian character", defined as "education founded on the Bible".

National character, according to the Act, was to be imprinted, amongst others, through "the conscious expansion of every pupil's knowledge of the fatherland, embracing language and cultural heritage, history and traditions, national symbols ... and national achievements"; and by developing this knowledge by presenting it "in the teaching of the ... national history of the

fatherland, civics and geography ... and further through the participation of pupils in national festivals, and their regular honouring of the national symbols, so as to ... inculcate a spirit of patriotism, founded on loyalty and responsibility toward the fatherland ... ".<sup>36</sup>

In order to equip teachers to give effect to this broad national character, their training, in terms of regulation No. R 1192, was to be so planned that "a spirit of patriotism, loyalty, and a sense of responsibility towards the fatherland and its inhabitants" be engendered. They would be required to study "the language, traditions and history of the Afrikaans and English cultural communities."<sup>37</sup> Here one witnesses a heavy emphasis, even exaggeration of, Nationalism. It is a sectional, highly exclusive Nationalism of the "White" variety.

From the above, it is clear that the Act meant history to play a central role in the development of the "National" character of South African education.

The Act also resulted in the new four-phase system of schooling. The old Junior Certificate course that had encompassed Stds 6, 7 and 8 was replaced by the Junior Secondary Phase (Stds 5, 6 and 7) followed by the Senior Secondary Phase (Stds 8, 9 and 10).

To co-ordinate syllabuses, courses and examination standards, a joint interdepartmental committee was appointed comprising representatives from all the provincial education departments, and the Department of National Education. New core syllabuses were drawn up by the joint subject committees of all the education departments, whereupon each department drew up its own syllabuses around these cores, taking into account local needs

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36 Republic of South Africa, Government Gazette. Vol.120, No. 4749 of 20 June 1975, Notice No. R. 1192.

37 Ibid.

and circumstances.

History was to be a compulsory subject in the Junior Secondary Phase, as it had been for the Junior Certificate, and thereafter it was optional. This means that South African pupils have, since the late 1960's, had one year less exposure to history as a compulsory subject. This can only have a further diminishing influence on their historical consciousness.<sup>38</sup> In Natal, for example, the percentage of Std 10 pupils taking history declined from 44% in 1970 to 24% in 1983; In the O.F.S. the percentage declined from 35% in 1974 to 32% in 1979.

The new 1972 syllabuses<sup>39</sup> differed little from the provincial syllabuses discussed above. Political history was brought forward to 1939 and constitutional history now included the constitution as in 1970. The section dealing with the social, political and economic development of the non-Whites made provision for a study of "separate development and separate homelands" in the case of "the Bantu", and the Indian Council and Coloured Representative Council with regard to the other two groups. As the various facets of the policy of separate development unfolded, they were included in the syllabuses. Part 5 of the 1972 syllabus dealt with Foreign Relations, and included South Africa's relations with the U.N. and its neighbours, as well as its "uitwaartse beleid in Afrika". In this way contemporary history was included, to legitimize current political policies.

The 1972 Junior Secondary Course made allowance for a study of South African political history up to the end of the Verwoerd era (1966).<sup>40</sup>

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38 See R.E.Chernis, The Role of Sources and Field Studies in the Teaching of History in Natal Provincial High Schools, ch.3.

39 See T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Syllabus vir Geskiedenis Hoër-en Standaardgraad. Standerd 8,9,10, Junie 1972 and G.A.P., N.E.D. Syllabus for History Higher and Standard Grade, 1974.

40 T.E.D.A., T.E.D. Syllabus for History. Standards 5,6,7, 1972; and G.A.P., N.E.D. Syllabus for History Standards 5,6,7, 1974.

These national core syllabuses were to remain in force until the introduction of the new core syllabuses in the mid-1980's.

#### 4. CORE SYLLABUSES SINCE 1985

##### 4.1 The aims of the syllabus

What is striking about the new national core syllabuses, in contrast to the first history syllabuses of the 19th century reviewed in Chapters 3 and 4, is the detailed attention given to, and the concern with, the aims of history teaching. The current T.E.D. syllabuses for the Junior Secondary Course,<sup>41</sup> for example contain six pages of aims, concerning the "Enrichment of Knowledge", the acquisition of skills (fourteen such skills are named), and attitudes (eight are listed).

There appears to be much scepticism as to the extent to which these aims are actually realised in the context of present teaching and examination methods. The Transvaal High Schools' History Teachers' Association reported<sup>42</sup> that there was "overwhelming consensus" at all their meetings that the current methods of evaluation fail to assess the mastery of skills and fall back instead on merely testing memory. The report also criticised another potential contradiction inherent in the syllabus aims - the conflict between "the need for students to recognize bias and to be able to think objectively and critically", and the stated aim (3.3.4 under "Attitudes"): "the cultivation of loyalty, respect and a love for the country, its peoples, its symbols, for its ancestors and national heroes who, by their struggle and sacrifice, gave us privileges such as religious freedom, political, constitutional development and

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41 T.E.D. Syllabus for History Standard 5 and Ordinary Grade Standards 6 and 7, 1985.

42 The Transvaal High Schools History Teachers Association Committee Report, 1988, pp.4-16

independence". The Association suggested that adherence to a philosophy of history "which saw its purpose simply in terms of positioning people politically could easily result in a situation where history became a tool of propaganda." Van den Berg and Buckland<sup>43</sup> regard present textbooks and examinations as counter-active to the aims set. This illustrates that it is not only the content of the history syllabus which is controversial, but the very aims (see Chapter 2). Exceptions to the standard textbooks, which make little or no provision for the acquisition of historical skills by pupils, are the books by Graves examined later.

#### 4.2 The syllabus content

The biographical approach of the previous syllabus has been dropped completely in the new Junior Secondary Course.<sup>44</sup> The Std 5 syllabus deals with the topic "The Development of the Cape Colony 1707-1795", and the British and Batavian administration between 1795 and 1806. The Std 6 syllabus (most of it the former Std 8 syllabus) covers events from 1806 to 1854; its three subdivisions deal with the Mfecane, the Second British Occupation and the Great Trek (still two-thirds of the Std 6 syllabus). The Std 7 syllabus attempts to cover the period 1854 to 1961, requiring pupils to study three of the following five themes: Mineral Discoveries, The Anglo-Boer War, "from Union to Republic", "the basic principles of how the Republic of South Africa is at present governed at all levels", and "Any topic in modern South African history determined by an education department". The only two themes in this course on which additional reading is recommended are the Great Trek and the Anglo-Boer War: these remain the two foci or poles of "official" school history, right up to the present day.

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43 O. van den Berg and P. Buckland, Beyond the History Syllabus, Constraints and Opportunities, p.48.

44 T.E.D. Syllabus for History, Standards 5, 6 and 7, 1985; C.E.D. Junior Secondary Course Syllabus for History Standard Grade, 1984.

When we turn our attention to the South African history sections of the new Senior Secondary core syllabus introduced in 1987<sup>45</sup> we find that a large part of the previous Std 8 syllabus has disappeared - to re-emerge as the Std 6 syllabus. The Std 8 syllabus starts with a "brief revision" of the Mfecane and the Great Trek, but deals mainly with the relationship between the Trekker communities and the British through to the 1880's. The syllabus allows for a regional study as well. A part of the old Std 9 syllabus has been included in the new Std 8 syllabus, the new Std 9 syllabus covers a much shorter period - roughly from 1882 to 1910, focusing on the socio-economic effects of the discovery of diamonds and gold, on the clash between "British Imperialism" and "Afrikaner Republicanism", on what is termed "the incorporation of independent chiefdoms" and on events leading to Union. The Std 10 syllabus again covers the period 1910 to 1970, but a significant innovation is that the material is grouped into three chronological periods (1910-1924, 1924-1948, 1948-1970), of which two consecutive periods only have to be studied, the choice to be determined by each examining body. There is, therefore, very little change in the new syllabuses, rather merely a rearranging of the material of the old syllabuses; in essence the same topics are retained, often verbatim.

#### 4.3 History syllabuses for Blacks

Before the establishment of the Bantu Education Department in 1954, schools for Blacks used either the provincial departmental syllabuses if they were under provincial control, or the J.M.B. syllabuses if they were under church control. The content of the history syllabuses used in Black schools between 1954 and 1979 warrants an investigation of its own, and cannot delay us here.

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45 See C.E.D. Senior Secondary Course. Syllabus for History Higher Grade 1985; and T.E.D. Syllabus for History Higher Grade Standards 8-10, 1985.

At present education for Blacks living outside the independent and self-governing states is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Training.

The Department of Education and Training (D.E.T.), like all other examining bodies under the Joint Matriculation Board has, since 1979, been obliged to implement the national core syllabuses. D.E.T. syllabuses for the Junior Secondary Course are consequently virtually identical to those in use in the other departments. The Std 7 syllabus allows for a regional study; thus the D.E.T. syllabus<sup>46</sup> makes provision for a study of relations between the central government and one "independent state" and one "national state" chosen from the list of the T.B.V.C. states and the other six self-governing territories. The D.E.T. does not have its own Senior Secondary Course history syllabus, but simply implements the syllabuses of the "White" Department of Culture.<sup>47</sup> What is of the utmost importance for this study is the fact that the D.E.T. has selected for its Std 10 history candidates the two consecutive periods 1910-1924 and 1924-1948.

Thus, for the Black pupil, South African history ends in 1948 with the coming to power of the National Party. In contrast the T.E.D. has made the period 1924-1948 compulsory, while year by year the other two periods are alternated. A brief look at some of the topics covered in the period which the D.E.T. has chosen to omit will bring home to the reader the serious implications for the historical orientation of the Black pupil involved here: "Policy on race relations and the ensuing reactions: Apartheid, laws to enforce it, domestic and foreign reaction; separate development with regard to the Coloureds and Asians up to 1970; Separate Development with regard to the urban Blacks up to 1970;

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46 D.E.T. Syllabus for History Standard 7. 1987.

47 Department of Education and Culture. Administration: House of Assembly. National Examinations Syllabus for History Standard 10. Code: 203/0/1/1/88.

Homeland Policy<sup>48</sup>. Three-quarters of South Africa's senior history pupils do not study their own country's history of the past forty years, a catastrophic omission.

The following statistics<sup>49</sup> show how the proportion of Whites in South Africa's Std 10 history candidates is steadily decreasing:

	Blacks (R.S.A.)	Indians	Coloureds	Whites	Whites as % of total
1986	37 651	2 438	7 831	26 163	33,9%
1987	46 419	2 682	8 892	27 887	32,5%
1988	56 814	3 269	10 565	30 492	30,1%

In 1988, 51,5% of Black Std 8 pupils included history in their subject combination for the Senior Certificate compared to only 26% of Whites in the same standard. In fact the percentage of White Std 10 pupils taking history appears to be holding steady at around 26%, while that of Indians has increased from 21% in 1986 to 24% in 1988, and that of Coloureds from 45% to 48% during the said period.<sup>50</sup> This presumably reflects a growing historical consciousness in these communities, probably arising from their increasing political awareness. In 1971<sup>51</sup> there were only 2 735 Blacks in Std 10 taking history; in 1988 there were 56 814<sup>52</sup> excluding TBVC candidates. In 1988<sup>53</sup> there were 374 624 Blacks in Std 5, 323 925 in Std 6 and 257 297 in Std 7, a total of almost a million pupils, all of whom take history, which is a compulsory subject in the junior secondary phase. This makes it all the more important that these pupils be able to identify with the kind of history they are being taught.

48 C.E.D. Senior Secondary Course Syllabus for History Higher Grade 1985.

49 SANOP Inligtingstelsel: Departement van Nasionale Opvoeding.

50 SANOP Inligtingstelsel: Departement van Nasionale Opvoeding.

51 Department of Education and Training, Annual Report 1971, pp.115 and 117.

52 Department of Education and Training, Annual Report 1988, p.322. (figure does not include TBVC pupils).

53 Ibid.



## 5. THE CONTROVERSY OVER CHRISTIAN NATIONAL EDUCATION

In 2.2. above it was seen to what extent Christian National Education policy had become official education policy and had permeated history teaching in the Transvaal for example. The clash of interests highlighted in Chapter 6 continued unabated into the 1950's. In fact, after the National Party came to power in 1948 and set about putting an Afrikaans stamp on South African society, the debate became progressively more and more heated. The F.A.K. had launched its controversial programme of fundamentalist Christian National Education in 1948. This programme was adopted by the National Party at its congress in November of the same year,<sup>54</sup> although, as mentioned before, little more than lip-service was to be paid to it in practice.

Reaction from the English-speaking teachers unions to the intentions of the C.N.E. movement was immediate and vociferous. The Transvaal Teachers' Association<sup>55</sup> asserted that the C.N.E. constituted "a threat to democracy and to the liberty of the individual", and criticized C.N.E. on religious and educational grounds; it queried the emphasis on the "volkseie" and on what it termed "exclusive nationalism which will destroy in the child all desire to be a world citizen and a true South African". Concerning history, the T.T.A. took the proponents of the C.N.E. to task for what it regarded as the emphasis on national history "to such an extent that it is obvious that the history of minority groups in South Africa would be disregarded". The same organ reported that, at a mass meeting in Johannesburg, organised by the Education League in protest against the C.N.E. policy of the F.A.K., a resolution had been passed "deploring the educational policy outlined by the F.A.K." as contrary to the spirit of Christianity and alien to the best traditions of South Africa"; the Transvaal Teachers' Association was "in full

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54 E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, Volume 2, pp.146-147.  
55 The Transvaal Education News, February 1949, p.15.

agreement with this resolution".<sup>56</sup>

Organised opposition in the Cape also attacked the policy: The S.A.T.A.<sup>57</sup> hoped that the F.A.K. pamphlet would elicit vigorous opposition. It expressed concern at the doctrine that school subjects should be expounded in the light of "'national'" truth: "We know what this means in the case of a subject such as history". All "true South Africans" were called upon to "unite to scotch and kill" the C.N.E. movement.

Commenting on C.N.E. as explained by Prof. J.C. Coetzee, the S.A.T.A. mouthpiece<sup>58</sup> claimed to recognize that "a principle of separation" was being implied between the Boerenasie and the "'English'" nation; in the S.A.T.A.'s view there could be only one South African nation. Joining its sister body in the north, the S.A.T.A. at one conference rejected and condemned the F.A.K. pamphlet on, amongst others, the grounds that "a scheme of education designed for a large section of the population (the Afrikaans speaking section) must powerfully influence the education of the rest"; that it considered it the duty of teachers "to give our children the vision and ideal of a united South African nation (original emphasis); it too deprecated the narrow definition of "national" in the pamphlet.<sup>59</sup> One recognizes in this conflict principally the differing views of nationhood which had already crystallised in the first decade of this century.

A year later the S.A.T.A. took the Cape Education Department to task for instructing teachers "to inculcate proper pride of race and language"; these the S.A.T.A. regarded as "idols of the tribe" to be worshipped; such worship could degenerate into a "denigration o f the aspirations and achievements of the other

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56 The Transvaal Educational News, February 1949, p.15.  
57 Education, March 1949, p.47.  
58 Education, May 1949, p.87.  
59 Education, July 1949, pp.160-161.

section of the European population" (i.e. the English-speakers).<sup>60</sup> Just as Afrikaners were expressing their dissatisfaction with the bias and imbalance they perceived in history syllabuses up to 1948, so now it was the turn of the English-speakers to voice their protest after 1948 at their relegation to a back place in history.

A leader article in The Star quotes a retiring principal, A.C. Martin, who condemned the "completely distorted impression of the country's history and development resulting from the presentation of carefully selected facts and the suppression of other facts." All the heroes were on one the side and all the fools and knaves on the other; the principal saw in these "deplorable school history books the political tracts of a narrow sect and an impediment to the rise of a healthy South African nation". The editor associated himself with these remarks, pointing to similar complaints from other quarters: Dr F.A. van Jaarsveld, for example, had appealed for a more objective approach to South African history by Afrikaans-speaking writers; the hope was expressed that people "with the adequate scholarship and the ability to rise above prejudice" would be found to produce "a more satisfactory type of book for the schools".<sup>61</sup>

A.C. Martin published his views on history teaching in 1953<sup>62</sup>, accusing the "Broederbond dictatorship" of "arrogance" and "racial intolerance" in attempting to override the "worthy traditions ... and aspirations" of other sections (i.e. the English).<sup>63</sup> The presentation of history in South African schools had "too often been distorted, with evil results". Describing

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60 Education, February 1950, p.19.

61 The Star, 28.2.1952. "History in the Schools."

62 A.C. Martin, "History in our Schools. Mutual Respect or Antagonism?" 1953.

63 See A.N. Pelzer, Die Afrikaner-Broederbond: Eerste 50 Jaar, pp. 136-142; and I. Wilkins and H. Strydom, The Super-Afrikaners: Inside the Afrikaner Broederbond, ch.15, for a contrasting discussion on the role of the Broederbond in South African education.

Milner as a "great man", Martin goes on to deplore the "strong forces" threatening the British heritage. By selection, omission, suggestion, innuendo and false emphasis, children were being encouraged to believe that one section of the nation had contributed nothing but good, while the contribution of the other sections had been limited to little good and much evil. School histories often disclosed an attitude that made it possible for children "to pay due respect to the traditions of only one section of the South African nation": what was said in the classrooms "is often more serious still". The educationist Franz Auerbach<sup>64</sup> concluded that Lauwerys had been right when he asserted that the South African educational system was being used to divide the people; his enquiry had shown "that a pronounced trend to greater ethnocentrism, embodied in certain Afrikaans textbooks only, has now also become part of the aims and content of the syllabuses prescribed for all schools, irrespective of language medium; "this trend had been influenced by the philosophy of C.N.E.; it was characterized by much emphasis on the history of the European in South Africa, and of the forebears of the Afrikaans-speaking section of the community especially". He quotes the presidential address to the Transvaalse Onderwysersvereniging in April 1960: "'For this group of people there is only one way out: and that is to maintain themselves in spite of the black barbarism rolling toward them which carries the beautiful name of black nationalism.'"

Such views are diametrically opposed to those expressed by, for example, Dr J.J. van Tonder, in his address to the Natalse Onderwysersunie in October 1966<sup>65</sup>: History teaching could ensure that the future citizens of the Republic would be firmly anchored in the nation's foundation ("volksbodem"); he asks whether "die volk" realised what power could be drawn from the teaching and knowledge of national history ("vaderlandse geskiedenis") in

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64 Quoted in F.E. Auerbach, An Enquiry into History Textbooks and Syllabuses in Transvaal High Schools, pp. 166-176.

65 J.J. van Tonder, Geskiedenis in die Skole, pp.29-31.

order to "maintain and reinforce the current state structure" ("staatsvorm")? Van Tonder is, of course, referring of the legitimation function of history as school subject.

Three years later the same academic pointed to the rapid decrease in the percentage of pupils choosing history for the Std 10 examination. Because of the special role of history in promoting the firmness of the national anchors ("volksankers") and national allegiance ("volksgebondenheid"), it was the duty of the State to intercede with legislation to make history a compulsory subject in both primary and high schools. Van Tonder supported his argument by reminding his listeners that such a step had already been proposed by organisations such as the Historiese Genootskap, a conference of history teachers held in Stellenbosch, and the Free State, the Transvaalse Onderwysersunie and the National Party. The latter had passed a motion asking for history to be made compulsory up to Matriculation, and that the books used should be "standard works by reliable ("betroubare") writers".<sup>66</sup>

Van Tonder<sup>67</sup> regarded the theme, "Ons Volk en sy Geskiedenis", as so crucial as actually to affect the "nature and survival of the nation" ("volk") of the Republic of South-Africa". By "volk" he meant "die Afrikaans-sprekendes". Knowledge of the nation's past was essential to the formulation of an ideal for the future; it was a source of power for the nation's continued survival; together with religion and the mother-tongue it formed the foundation of the nation.

The controversy surrounding history as a school subject in the period up to the 1970's was dominated to a great extent by the acrimonious debate between the Afrikaner nationalists and their mostly English-speaking liberal opponents. Since the 1970's the issues have become more complex, with the English-Afrikaans

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66 J.J. van Tonder, Geskiedenis Staen by die Wegswaai, p. 30.

67 J.J. van Tonder, Geskiedenis en die Onderwys, pp. 1-4.

conflict gradually being eclipsed by a far more serious Black-White clash of interests.

## 6. A SELECTION OF REPRESENTATIVE TEXTBOOKS 1948-1987

### 6.1 Textbooks examined and their authors

In sharp contrast to the earlier periods examined in the chapters up to now, the period under review is characterised by an abundance of history textbooks in both English and Afrikaans. Whereas the late 1940's and 1950's belonged to a large extent to Gie, van Dyk, Lindeque, Havinga, and Fowler and Smit, from the late 1950's onward Boyce, van Jaarsveld, Lategan and de Kock and others replaced these as prescribed authors especially in the Cape and the Transvaal. Natal has never had a policy of prescribing books, the choice of textbook being at the discretion of the teacher.<sup>68</sup> In the foreword to the 1959 syllabuses, the N.E.D. states that "there are at present no books that completely cover the work of any particular standard in the new syllabus ... As suitable books become available so will they be recommended."<sup>69</sup> From various interviews and discussions with teachers, retired teachers, ex-pupils and education department officials in Natal, this writer was able to conclude that Natal teachers made use of books selected from those mentioned above.<sup>70</sup> From 1948 until the introduction of the national core syllabuses, schools in the Orange Free State followed the syllabuses of the Joint Matriculation Board, thus using Gie, van Dyk and Lindeque and other standard works which covered the J.M.B. course. Some of the later works in use in the O.F.S. are listed below.

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- 68 Interview with Mr G.A. Chadwick, retired History Subject Adviser, Natal Education Department, on 20 January 1990.  
69 N.E.D.A., N.E.D. Syllabus for History and Geography, July 1, 1989.  
70 Titles found in the informal textbook collection of the Natal Provincial Museum Services in Pietermaritzburg include Skinner, Bryan, van Dyk, Gie, Foggins, Boyce, Howes and Mandelbrote,

In making a representative selection of books for examination, this writer attempted to include at least one work by the best-known, most widely used textbook writers of the period. In many cases several works by the more prolific writers have been examined. The textbooks selected not only cover the standard works of the time, but also all secondary school standards. The selection also spans the entire period 1948-1989.

The following is a list of the 21 textbooks examined that have been quoted in the text:

J.H. van Dyk	<u>Geskiedenisleerboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse Hoërskole (Senior Sertifikaat), 1949.</u>
B.G. Lindeque	<u>Geskiedenis Standerd VI, 1956.</u>
C. de K. Fowler and G.J.J. Smit	<u>New History for the Senior Certificate and Matriculation, 1957.</u>
Havinga, et al	<u>Geskiedenis vir St. VI, 1958.</u> <u>Geskiedenis vir St. VII, 1958.</u> <u>Geskiedenis vir St. VIII, 1958.</u>
Van Jaarsveld, et al	<u>History for Standard VI, 1958.</u> <u>Illustrated History for the High School Standard VII, 1960.</u> <u>Geskiedenis vir Standerd VII, 1958.</u> <u>Illustrated History for the High School Standard VIII, 1959.</u> <u>Illustrated History for Senior Certificate. Standards IX and X, 1962.</u> <u>Nuwe Geïllustreerde Geskiedenis. Standerd VIII, 1967.</u>
A.N. Boyce	<u>The Legacy of the Past. A History for Standard Six, 1960.</u> <u>The Legacy of the Past. A History for Standard Seven, 1961.</u> <u>The Legacy of the Past. A History for Standard Eight, 1962.</u> <u>Europe and South Africa. A History for South African High Schools, 1967.</u>
M.C.E. van Schoor et al	<u>Senior Geskiedenis vir Suid-Afrikaanse Skole, 1970.</u>
E.H.W. Lategan and A.J. de Kock	<u>Geskiedenis in Perspektief. St. 10, 1977.</u>
F.E. Graves et al	<u>History for Today 6, 1985.</u> <u>History for Today 7, 1985.</u> <u>History for Today 8, 1985.</u>
C.J. Joubert and J.J. Britz	<u>History for Std. 10, 1986.</u>

A further 17 textbooks were examined but not included in the text, being either very similar to the above titles in spirit and content, or being other works by authors already well-represented:

A.G. Coetzee et al	<u>Geskiedenis vir die Senior Sertifikaat, 1960.</u>
Van Jaarsveld et al	<u>History for Standard VI (Revised Edition), 1958.</u> <u>Geïllustreerde Geskiedenis. Standerd VI, 1958.</u> <u>Geïllustreerde Geskiedenis. Standerd VIII, 1958.</u> <u>New Illustrated History for the Senior Certificate Stds IX and X Volume II, 1970.</u>
A.C. Coetzee et al	<u>Geskiedenis vir die Senior Sertifikaat, 1960.</u>
A.N. Boyce	<u>The Legacy of the Past. A History for Standard Seven, 1961.</u> <u>Europe and South Africa. Part I. A History for Std 9, 1979.</u> <u>Europe and South Africa. Part II. A History for Std 10, 1980.</u>
M.C.E. van Schoor et al	<u>Geskiedenis vir die O.V.S. - Skooleind-sertifikaat, 1963.</u>
C.J. Joubert	<u>History for Std 8, 1980.</u> <u>History for Std 9, 1987.</u>
Geen's	<u>The Making of South Africa, 1982.</u>
A.P.J. van Rensburg and F.S.G. Oosthuizen	<u>Active History Std 9, 1986.</u> <u>Active History Std 10, 1987.</u>
H.G.L. Lintveldt et al	<u>Timelines 10, 1988.</u>

The above two lists obviously do not include every title used in South African provincial schools during the period. They are, however, comprehensive lists, containing most, if not all, of the best known textbooks.

To avoid cluttering the footnotes, textbooks are referred to in abbreviated form. For fuller details the reader is referred to the bibliography.

Broadly speaking, van Dyk, Lindeque, Havinga, van Schoor, Lategan and de Kock, Joubert and Britz were, or are, Afrikaner



Nationalists and their books reflect an Afrikaner view of the South African past. Their interpretation of historical events brings them very close indeed to the ruling National Party. Their works display a Christian National spirit throughout. These books are very similar in tone and spirit to those of the Afrikaans-speaking authors reviewed in the previous chapter.

Van Jaarsveld, South Africa's most prolific author of history textbooks takes a much broader view of events. Although to a certain extent bound by his Afrikaans upbringing and by the demands of the syllabuses, he displays an independence of thought, and his works are characterized by a less sectional approach than that of most of his contemporary compatriots. The same applies to the scholarly Fowler and Smit.

Boyce and Graves represent the older and younger generations of English-speaking textbook writers respectively. Boyce's approach is usually objective and unemotional, but he is sometimes guilty of perpetuating racial stereotypes. In his treatment of Anglo-Boer clashes, he is mildly pro-British. Graves, as will be seen subsequently, has a broad South African, non-sectional approach to South African history.

## 6.2 Analysis of the Texts Selected

### (a) History as Legitimation

Many of the texts examined make a point of legitimating the Whites' claim to the land they occupy. However this ground has been adequately covered in previous chapters. What comes increasingly to the fore in the textbooks of the mid-1950's onward, is the legitimating of the Government's Policy of Apartheid or Separate Development. Thus van Jaarsveld looks to the past for examples of a policy of segregation being applied: during the First Occupation the English adopted "a policy of segregation"; the "segregation policy" of the Batavian regime was

unsuccessful; Collins realised that "segregation was the only solution to the (frontier) problem"; Cradock took decisive steps "to enforce segregation"; even Dr Philip is regarded as "a great supporter of segregation"; "territorial segregation" was also the policy of the Voortrekkers.<sup>71</sup>

Van Jaarsveld writes that the principle of separate development had shown "a clear evolution in South African history".<sup>72</sup> In another work he stresses that the "Bantu of South Africa consist of different nations".<sup>73</sup> The answer to "the challenge of the 20th century has been the policy of separate development".<sup>74</sup> The Crux of the policy "is that the Whites regard the Bantu nations ... as separate ethnic units or nations which have temporarily and partially become intertwined with White society. Each separate ethnic unit must develop a separate nation outside the White area. It is accepted that there is one South Africa with two areas - a white area in which the Bantus reside temporarily as migrant labourers, and a black South Africa consisting of Bantu homelands which exist historically, and which have to be developed" (original emphasis throughout). The Whites "accept the demand of each Bantu ethnic unit for political self-determination in the eight homelands"; the policy aimed at "the development of separate political fatherlands" (original emphasis); the process of integration "can be reversed" (original emphasis).<sup>75</sup>

Lategan and de Kock<sup>76</sup> seek reasons for the decision "to administer the Bantu separately: the Bantu's traditional system of government differed completely from the democracy of the White man ("Just think of the dictatorial behaviour of Zulu kings

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71 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std VII, 1960, pp.114, 120, 134, 138, 188.  
72 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Standards IX and X, 1962, p.517.  
73 F.A. van Jaarsveld, St. VIII, 1967, p.269.  
74 Ibid.,p. 273.  
75 Ibid.,pp. 275-276.  
76 E.H.W. Lategan and A.J. de Kock, St. 10, 1977, pp.184-193.

such as Shaka and Dingaan"); the economic and social standards and the development of the Bantu also differed completely ("hemelsbreed"). For these differences ("andersoortigheid") a different administration had to be found. If the White man wishes to survive and maintain his identity, he is "obliged" to follow the policy of separate development. This policy was also "essential" on behalf of the Black man. Because the different Black nations were "traditional enemies", it was "impossible to throw them together"; for the same reason the Black and Whites could not be thrown together. Each "ethnic group" would develop to full sovereignty in its "own country", and the White man in his part of South Africa. This would be to "everyone's advantage". While it was true that the Blacks had no political rights in "White South Africa", the same could be said of the Whites, who had no political rights in the Black homelands.

Joubert and Britz devote fourteen pages to the justification of Separate Development. Through the use of terms such as "different", "own", "each", "peculiar" and "exclusive", the perceived differences between the country's peoples are constantly emphasized. The Whites accepted that the Black man had the right to "realise" his national identity. To allow this to happen in "as just a way as possible" and to allow every group the opportunity for "national self-realisation", Verwoerd implemented the policy of separate development. The policy aimed at the maintenance of the "established nationhood of the Whites" (original emphasis) in that part of the country that had always been theirs, and at the same time, the development of "each separate Black nation to full autonomy" (original emphasis). Much is made of the recognition of ethnic differences, ethnic groups, Black nations, national Black states and the like. <sup>77</sup>

The legitimization of Apartheid is not confined to the Blacks: van Jaarsveld points out that since the early days of the Cape

settlement, "there was a feeling" that the Coloured people should not be absorbed into the White community, but that they should develop as a "separate population group".<sup>78</sup> The Coloured population "is closely aligned to the Whites and have no homelands"; in the social and cultural sphere there were still many possibilities for the Coloureds "to climb higher on the ladder of civilization"; "naturally this process will have to take place ... within the framework of local separation."<sup>79</sup> Indeed, at present this pattern holds more possibilities in store for the Coloured people than if they were in open competition with the other population groups". The implication is clear - separate development is seen to be beneficial to the Coloureds.<sup>80</sup> It should be remembered, however, that the syllabuses did not make allowance for the dislocation, humiliation and bitterness experienced by the Coloureds in the process of the implementation of Apartheid. Van Schoor<sup>81</sup> writes that the "old road of political integration" had come to an end; the Coloureds would have to fit into the "South African policy".

Not only the policy of Separate Development as a whole, but also individual Apartheid laws are justified. Thus van Schoor<sup>82</sup> asserts that the Suppression of Communism Act was passed to put an end to the "incessant incitement" by White communists of the non-Whites. Lategan and de Kock maintain that the influx of Blacks into White areas became so bad ("erg") that people spoke of "locations in the sky"; this "was not a healthy state of affairs and caused many problems" - "all sorts of evil" emanated from these conditions; the "Luglokasiewet" of 1955 put an end to the "unnecessary gathering of Bantus in white areas".<sup>83</sup> Black protest against and resistance to Government policies is linked with Communism: the Government was not intimidated by this

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78 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Standards IX and X, 1962, p.520.

79 Ibid., p.520.

80 Ibid., p.524.

81 M.C.E. van Schoor, Senior Geskiedenis, 1970, p.594.

82 Ibid., p.527.

83 E.H.W. Lategan and A.J. de Kock, St. 10, 1977, p.144.

communist-inspired protest movement", and took measures to maintain law and order.<sup>84</sup>

Joubert<sup>85</sup> also approaches the question of Black resistance politics in a way that links all protest to Communist agitators: "At the end of 1949 the A.N.C. started a new strategy, based on mass demonstrations, strikes and boycotts ... Communists started a continuous policy of incitement of Blacks against Whites. The educated Blacks were especially susceptible to communist propaganda."

There was "increasing lawlessness" amongst the urban Blacks; this and the resistance by Blacks, Coloureds and Indians towards the government resulted in the government being forced to pass the Suppression of Communism Act. In 1953 "several Whites, communists, certain liberals, Non-Whites, the Congress of Democrats and members of the South African press, incited the Blacks against the government. Their aim was to create anarchy and overthrow the government by means of a revolution"; "the government was obliged to act against these "anarchists", and so the Criminal Procedures Act was passed to give the Government the power "to keep law and peace and safety (sic) in the country".<sup>86</sup>

In the early years of its existence the African National Congress "professed itself to be against violence, but despite this it became more militant after 1949". In this way Joubert equates militant protest with violence. Attention is given to "violent resistance by urban Blacks"; "instigated" by the P.A.C. the resistance to the government's policy gained momentum in 1960. At Sharpeville 20 000 Blacks "encircled" the police station; the police opened fire on the "threatening Black crowd".<sup>87</sup> Verwoerd had "unrest agitators (sic) arrested in large numbers". Despite the fact that the unrest of 1959-60 was widespread, the "agitators" did not succeed, "because the vast majority of Blacks

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84 E.H.W. Lategan and A.J. de Kock, St. 10, 1977, pp.182-183.

85 C.J. Joubert and J.J. Britz, Std.10, 1986, pp.334-345.

86 Ibid., p.345.

87 Ibid., p.347.

showed little or no reaction to the call of the A.N.C. and the P.A.C.". <sup>88</sup>

The A.N.C., "together with a number of listed White communists", hatched "the most serious conspiracy that South Africa had up to that stage ever had to deal with"; a group of "conspirators" was arrested; documents found in their possession revealed the "conspiracy". Later, yet another group of "agitators" was arrested. The arrests brought to a temporary halt "the international onslaught on the existing order in the Republic".<sup>89</sup> It is interesting to see how the "total onslaught" jargon of the P.W. Botha era finds its way into school history textbooks. This also reinforces the master symbol of South Africa as a threatened country.

There are also attempts by various authors to justify or explain the Vorster administration's outward-looking policy, of détente in Africa. Lategan and de Kock <sup>90</sup> are at pains to legitimize the ventures into Africa: "It would be good to indicate the reasons why the outward policy is necessary"; five pages of reasons follow. One of them is that, for the survival of the Whites, it was essential that not only Africa, but also the rest of the world "should know what separate development (original emphasis) is and implies". Boyce <sup>91</sup> describes the policy as "a conscious effort to break out of an increasing isolation", and an effort "to establish normal economic and diplomatic relations with the rest of the continent".

(b) The Orientation Function

Van Jaarsveld provides his readers with historical orientation: the story of a nation is the story of its fatherland; as a

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88 C.J. Joubert and J.J. Britz, Std 10, 1986, p.348

89 Ibid., p.349.

90 E.H.W. Lategan and A.J.de Kock, Std 10, 1977, p.239.

91 A.N. Boyce, Std 10, 1980, p.316.

nation, South Africans in their fatherland belong to a Western civilisation. The forebears of the Whites came from Europe, while those of the "Natives" came from Central Africa. The story of how the Whites' forebears settled and prospered in South Africa "constitutes the history of our fatherland."<sup>92</sup> The same author, under the heading "Who were the people who contributed to the making of our history?" emphasizes that Bantu, Boer and Briton were co-responsible for the making of South African history, an unusually broad-minded approach at the time. Reflecting the urge towards White unity in the late 1950's the "good relationship existing between these two groups" on the Cape eastern frontier is emphasized: they "lived and fought together."<sup>93</sup> Similarly, mention is made of the "thirteen brave Englishmen" who died "for the cause of the Voortrekkers ... the names of Robert Biggar, John Cane and others will always be remembered".<sup>94</sup> English-Afrikaans co-operation in the past is recalled in service of the present, thus providing orientation.

In reply to the question why it was necessary to learn more about the continent on which South Africans live, Van Jaarsveld,<sup>95</sup> points out that, prior to World War 1, South Africans had paid little attention to "this vast continent"; it was taken for granted that "the non-Europeans of Africa would always be ruled by White men. Yet events in Africa were likely to have their repercussions in South Africa; it was thus to their advantage to know of these events.

Identifying the Great Trek as the (Afrikaner) axis of South African history, van Jaarsveld<sup>96</sup> points to the forces brought about by that event that were still being felt up to the present. The central theme, according to him, is the story of the efforts

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92 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 6, 1978, Introduction.

93 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 7, 1960, pp.123-126.

94 Ibid., p.178.

95 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 8, 1959, p.89

96 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 9 & 10, 1962, Introduction.

at unity leading first to Union then to the establishment of the Republic in 1961. Contrary to the spirit of the times, van Jaarsveld stresses that all groups played a role in the building up of the country, and that all had to abide by common frontiers within which their future had to be worked out by mutual co-operation. In this way a common past could show the way to a common future. The author states that no attempt had been made to write a book from an "English" or "Afrikaans" point of view; the approach was rather that South Africa was one indivisible unit and, therefore, a South African perspective was called for. The hope is expressed that the book would help pupils to become better South Africans.

In a later work, van Jaarsveld<sup>97</sup> provides orientation with regard to the Government's race policies. He refers to the tradition of segregation and trusteeship: the policy of Separate Development (original capitals) was directed to the past, the present and the future (original emphasis); it rested on "traditional principles of separation", and aimed at changing relations between the various national groups in such a way that a new future would be constructed in which "the separate population groups" would "co-exist in peace, security and prosperity without the loss of identity by any group."

We have seen in previous chapters how writers at various times orientated their youthful readers by looking to the British motherland and Empire, and later, Commonwealth, as an anchor, or to the rise of the Dutch Empire as a link with a non-British past. As discussed elsewhere, after 1958 both the syllabuses and the textbooks reveal an increasing awareness of the African continent. An African orientation, hitherto completely absent, is evident in textbooks such as those of Havinga. In the Std 8 textbook examined, some forty pages of the general history section are devoted to the partition of Africa and a study of

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97 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 8, 1967, p.275.



African territories up to 1958.<sup>98</sup>

(c) The Identity-formation function of history teaching

In his introductory chapter on the Cape in the 18th century, van Dyk<sup>99</sup> places the embryo Afrikaner national at the centre of the historial stage. By then, he maintains, the White inhabitants of the vast interior, apart from minor regional differences, were one (original emphasis) nation, with one language and one Church; this was the "nation" with whom the English came into contact in 1795. This is another example of backward projection. The Dutch colonists' treatment at the hands of the British reinforced their understanding of themselves as "an own nation with its own culture and own destiny".<sup>100</sup> Through the Great Trek, the Afrikaans language and culture was "removed from the Cape", where it had come "under the influence of Anglicisation", and established in the north, where it could "unfold and develop pure" ("suiwer"). The future existence of the Afrikaans nation "with its own language and culture" was thus guaranteed; the Trek provided the Afrikaans nation with "a glorious past", heroes and inspiration upon which to build; furthermore the Trek confirmed the "apartheid" of the two White "races" and the formation of an "Anglo-Afrikaner volk" was avoided.<sup>101</sup> In this way van Dyk reinforces the separate identity of the Afrikaners.

Havinga, et al.,<sup>102</sup> describe 6 April 1652 as "the birth day of our fatherland"; on landing van Riebeeck expressed the wish that "God protect the country and bless the new 'volksplanting'". The "new nation" would have "many clashes in the future", clashes which would give birth to its special characteristic, its

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98 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 8, 1958.

99 J.H. van Dyk, Senior Sertifikaat, 1949, pp.203-204.

100 Ibid., p.245.

101 Ibid., p.255

102 J.F.E. Havinga, Std VI, 1958, p.69.

"striving for freedom and racial purity". In another example of backward projection Havinga<sup>103</sup> writes of "the national or patriotic feelings" among the Trekkers, who came to realise that they were "an own and separate nation". Kruger, the "purest representative of the Voortrekker ideal", the "guardian of the spiritual treasures of his nation", placed "spiritual gold above earthly gold", importing educated Hollanders from the Netherlands, the "Calvinist 'Voedingsbodem' of the Afrikaner volk"; these teachers laid the foundation of the "sturdy Christian nationalism" of the Afrikaner volk through which "the interests of Afrikaner youth could be protected".<sup>104</sup>

Reflecting the increasing sense of unity between the two White language groups in the face of increasing external and internal pressure, van Jaarsveld gives full recognition to the contribution of the English-speaking section who exploited and financed the world's greatest gold industry: their money and readiness to undertake enterprises made the Transvaal prosperous and enabled South Africa to become the leading industrial centre in Africa. Their business acumen and initiative prevented South Africa from remaining poor and backward. South Africa's identity as a sovereign state is stressed: since 1910 the Union had changed from a self-governing colony to a sovereign independent nation (original emphasis) with the Commonwealth. The coming of the Republic is anticipated: A member of the Commonwealth had the right to leave and become an independent Republic if it so desired.<sup>105</sup>

According to the new spirit of co-operation between English and

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103 J.F.E. Havinga, Std VI, 1958, pp.149; 128.  
104 J.F. Havinga, Std VIII, 1958, pp.127-128.  
105 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 8, 1959, pp.163; 231.

Afrikaans-speakers after the establishment of the Republic in 1961, van Jaarsveld stresses that there was "a great deal of unity" (original emphasis) and co-operation transcending the disputes, and binding the language groups together "as a common community in a common fatherland". The enterprise and economic progress of the English-speaking section created the opportunities for Afrikaners in the cities. The reciprocal cultural influence between the two made South Africans of both language groups South Africans. The traditional cause of friction between English- and Afrikaans-speakers had been removed on 31 May 1961, and "the time was ripe for a White South African national identity to be formed."<sup>106</sup> In another textbook,<sup>107</sup> van Jaarsveld again articulates the desire of most Whites to close ranks against real and perceived threats from both within and without at that time, pointing out that the period of tension, conflict and attempts at unification ended in 1961. The two groups had developed "a unique common character" which differentiated them from other new nations.

It is noteworthy that the strong identity-finding and identity-forming accent of earlier, especially Afrikaans, textbooks gradually weakened until it virtually disappeared after 1961. By then the identity of the Afrikaners was no longer in doubt; Afrikaans was finally established as an official language, and the Afrikaners' flag, anthem and republic had become those of the whole country. From the mid-1950's one detects the first hesitant steps towards a broader White South African nationhood. Past unity and co-operation between the two language groups is held up as an example for the present. In this way the identity of the White "nation", consisting of Afrikaner volk and the loosely grouped English-speakers, is reinforced.

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106 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Stds 9 and 10, 1962, Introduction.

107 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 8, 1967, p.315.

(d) Bias and subjectivity

(i) Afrikaner nationalism and the Afrikaners' sense of mission

Van Dyk asserts that the colonists' Calvinism reinforced their conviction that "the calling of the White man was to bring the heathen natives to a realisation of the higher authority of the White man." For the Blacks the Great Trek was of the greatest importance: under the White man's wing the different Bantu tribes could develop and multiply.<sup>108</sup>

Van Dyk discusses the Anglo-Boer war under the heading "The Conquest of the Transvaal and Free State". The war is seen as the final phase in the expansion of British power in South Africa. The root cause of the war was British capitalism in the form of gold-mining interests. Whenever Britain interfered in the affairs of the Z.A.R., she did so to the advantage of the capitalists. The war was the climax of a hundred years struggle by Britain to establish its paramountcy over a united South Africa under the British flag.<sup>109</sup>

Kitchener applied his scorched earth policy with "cold-bloodedness"; the "notorious concentration camp system was in fact war being waged against the non-combatant civilian population". The loss of the 28 000 women and children in the camps and 5 000 men on commando was a tremendous blow to the small Afrikaner nation, "leaving a deep, bleeding wound".<sup>110</sup>

Havinga's textbooks are also written from an unashamedly Afrikaans perspective in which the Calvinist influence is clearly evident: "The value of history for the intellectual, social, ethnic and religious forming of the pupil can hardly be exaggerated; it

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108 J.H. van Dyk, Senior Sertificate, 1949, pp.204; 256.

109 Ibid., pp. 336-337.

110 J.F.E. Havinga Std 8, 1958, pp.143-146.

should also be remembered that for the believer the Hand of God reveals its markings in the history of our volk".<sup>111</sup> God planted a new nation at the southern tip of Africa. Against all odds and expectations this nation expanded and took possession of the interior. There was much struggle and and conflict, but also "great faith in the Creator". This nation would on many occasions find itself on the brink of extinction, "only to be miraculously saved".<sup>112</sup>

Van Riebeck's instructions were to treat the Hottentots well and to preach the Gospel to them. The Whites brought the greatest of all treasures with them to Africa, i.e. the Bible which was to be "the guiding light of the new volk".<sup>113</sup> One of the essay topics in the author's Std 6 textbook reads: "Write an essay on the topic: 'God plants a new nation at the Southern Tip of Africa'".<sup>114</sup>

Havinga believes that the Great Trek made it possible for the smaller tribes "to live and expand in peace under the protection and trusteeship of the Whites".<sup>115</sup> His Afrikaans nationalist perspective is clear in the choice of pictures, including one of a Voortrekker wagon crossing the Drakensberg, a highly dramatised portrayal of the oxen pulling the wagon literally through the clouds at an impossible angle; when viewing Natal from the Drakensberg, the Trekkers could not have known that that verdant land would within months "be drenched in the blood of hundreds of Afikaner men, women and children".<sup>116</sup> The belief in the guiding, and protecting, hand of God in Afrikaner history is revealed in

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- 111 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 8, 1958, preface.  
112 J.F.E. Havinga, Std.8, 1958, p.65.  
113 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 6, 1958, pp.67-68.  
114 Ibid., p.149.  
115 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 8, 1958, p.147.  
116 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 7, 1958, pp 148-149.

several places: the Transvalers' "covenant with God" at Paardekraal ensured their victory over the British in 1881; Paul Kruger's words on hearing of the victory at Majuba are quoted: "It is God the Father who helped us - the God of our fathers'".<sup>117</sup>

In another the Afrikaans perspective is evident in the treatment of the establishment of the Republic outside the Commonwealth: the conquest of the Boer Republics in 1902 "had burned like coals in the hearth of Afrikaner hearts", and was carried from generation to generation; we should know of this striving to understand why the Union became a Republic in 1961. What follows is a history of the National Party and its republican strivings; there are photographs of E.G. Jansen, Drs. Malan, P.J. van der Merwe and Verwoerd, and of Hans Strijdom and C.R. Swart. On 31 May 1961, "an (Afrikaner) ideal was realised".<sup>118</sup>

While Afrikaans perspective is still visible in certain textbooks right up to the present (e.g. Joubert's books), the heavy emphasis on Afrikaner nationalism becomes gradually weaker after the establishment of the Republic in 1961.

According to van Jaarsveld, the principle of guardianship envisaged White control over the Blacks, "but not for all time"; the Whites, as guardians, were called upon to guide the Bantu on the road to development and civilization".<sup>119</sup> Lategan and de Kock, also write of the White man, with his "superior knowledge and development, having the duty" to "develop and train the Bantu".<sup>120</sup>

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- 117 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 8, 1958, p.106.  
118 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 8, 1967, p.226.  
119 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Stds 9 and 10, 1962, p.517.  
120 E.H.W. Lategan and H.J. de Kock, Std 10, 1977, p.185.

(ii) Bias by omission, exaggeration and under-emphasis

Like so many of the earlier textbook writers already reviewed, Havinga and his co-authors exaggerate the importance of the Great Trek, and glorify the Voortrekker past and its heroes. Thus Hendrik Potgieter is portrayed as a mythical, almost God-like figure: "Big and powerful of stature; he was strong and muscular, yet agile and an excellent horseman; he was a man of commanding appearance and strong, impressive personality; he was strictly religious, a firm, conservative Calvinist who led his life according to the Bible; he was a courageous, experienced warrior, possessing all the necessary requirements for competent leadership".<sup>121</sup> Sarel Cilliers too was a "virtuous ('vrome') man of God; Gert Maritz had a good intellect, was handsome and impressive of build, six foot tall, neat and upright in posture"; Piet Retief had "a very good Christian education, the basis of his deeply rooted sense of religion"; Jacobus Uys was an "honourable old patriarch".<sup>122</sup> Pretorius appears almost as a superman: he was known for his bright intellect, keen sense of judgement, extraordinary physical strength, impressive appearance and physique; he was an upright, tall figure, so strong and symetrically built that a sculptor would have found in him an excellent model for a Hercules image; he was the fastest man on commando, he was friendly and likeable, and outstanding military leader and good organizer.<sup>123</sup>

Such descriptions are, of course, also part of the positive self-image cultivated by Afrikaner nationalists, just as British imperialist writers had done before them and Black nationalists are doing now.

In van Jaarsveld's earlier works, the events of the 1880-81 War

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121 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 7, 1958, p.137.

122 Ibid., pp.139-145.

123 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 8, 1958, pp.151-154.

are given a disproportionate amount of attention - Amajuba alone receives an entire page and three illustrations in one book.<sup>124</sup>

Bias by emphasis is evident in van Dyk's treatment of Slagters Nek. An historical impact out of all proportion to its actual importance is attributed to this event.<sup>125</sup> The same author is also guilty of bias by omission: General Smuts's name is not once mentioned in his book. As with so many writers of South African history textbooks, Havinga cannot conceal his antagonism toward the missionaries with their "exaggerated, unreasonable, and sentimental concern for the Hottentots"; a philanthropist or negrophile is defined as someone displaying "an unbalanced and totally exaggerated feeling for the 'non-Whites'".<sup>126</sup> Havinga's subjective approach is betrayed both in his description of Slagter's Nek as a symbol of "harsh British suppression",<sup>127</sup> and the emphasis on Transvaal victories over the British at Laing's Nek, Ingogo and Amajuba, which receive three pages;<sup>128</sup> Paul Kruger is given eight pages, and President Steyn one line;<sup>129</sup> the establishment of the Het Volk Party is not mentioned, but the founding of the National Party receives considerable attention ("the N.P. grew wonderfully rapidly").<sup>130</sup> The questions in Havinga's books also show a certain bias: they relate almost exclusively to Hertzog, the National Party, Jopie Fourie, the Rebellion of 1914 and Afrikaans cultural figures and issues.<sup>131</sup>

Van Jaarsveld's textbooks, although largely free of the bias and subjectivity so characteristic of many other books examined, nevertheless display an Afrikaner-centric approach at times.

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- 124 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 8, 1959, p.152.  
125 J.H. van Dyk, Senior Sertifikaat, 1949, p.237.  
126 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 7, 1958, pp.100; 118.  
127 Ibid., p.105.  
128 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 8, 1958, p.106.  
129 Ibid., p.129.  
130 Ibid., p.163.  
131 Ibid., p.170.



In comparing Rhodes and Kruger, van Jaarsveld devotes two pages to Kruger's early life and character, but only half a page to Rhodes.<sup>132</sup> The same writer also shows a measure of bias against South Africa's Indian population, which is described as a "non-assimilative", to a large extent "foreign" (original emphasis) group, "not always loyal towards South Africa", and unwilling "to co-operate in any way in efforts to effect repatriation".<sup>133</sup>

Bias by emphasis is evident in Joubert's treatment of urbanisation: the White migration to the cities receives six and a half pages, that of the Blacks one and half, and that of the Coloureds and Indians together half a page. Although Joubert displays a measure of sympathy for the plight of urbanised Blacks, the emphasis is on the Whites and the place of the Afrikaners in the economy in particular. Several tables are presented featuring the Afrikaner's share of trade and professions. Afrikaans politics during World War II is given coverage of nine pages.<sup>134</sup>

### (iii) Stereotypes and master symbols

The stereotyped presentation of the San as treacherous, thieving, murderous semi-animals; of the Khoi as unreliable, dishonest, filthy, lazy and so on; and of the Blacks as cruel, savage, full of duplicity, warlike barbarians, so common in almost all the books reviewed up to now, and examples of which have been given abundantly, continued well into the 1970's and is even evident up to the present. Because this ground has been more than adequately covered, a few examples will suffice, mainly to illustrate the extraordinary longevity and tenacity of such stereotypes.

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132 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 8 (English), 1959, pp.180-187.  
133 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Stds 9 and 10, 1962, pp.530-531.  
134 C.J. Joubert and J.J. Britz, Std 10, 1986.

Van Dyk writes of the Hottentots who concentrated on "theft" and "plunder", and became a "burden"; those outside the mission stations unsettled the entire country through their "vagrancy", "thieving" and "violence".<sup>135</sup> Dingane is depicted as being "even more tyrannical and cruel" than Shaka; Moshesh as "cunning", and Mzilikazi bent on "slaughter", "murder" and "plunder"; Sir George Grey introduced public work schemes to counter "the traditional laziness of the Xhosa".<sup>136</sup> Fowler and Smit also write of the thieving of "Hottentots and other natives".<sup>137</sup>

Van Dyk, while confidently asserting in the preface to one of his books that all offensive terminology has been omitted, goes on to use all the conventional negative value-judgements, epithets etc. so characteristic of his earlier works. The "cunning Hottentots continuously troubled" the settlers., the "villains" ("skelms") stole their cattle, and set their grazing alight. They were "very warlike", "revengeful", and "troublesome". The Bushmen, too, were "cunning", "superstitious", and "gluttonous".<sup>138</sup> The Xhosa, of course, were "savage", and caused "no end of trouble" by stealing the farmers' cattle. The "purported converts" at Bethelsdorp were "a filthy lot", who "never worked", but "mostly stole".<sup>139</sup> Havinga describes the Hottentots as "extremely troublesome", "sly", and "murderers",<sup>140</sup> while the Bushmen were "hardly good-looking" and "always busy stealing and killing stock".<sup>141</sup> The Xhosa "caused the frontier farmers much suffering by plundering their cattle"; they were "openly hostile", "robbed" and "plundered".<sup>142</sup> Fowler and Smit refer to

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- 135 J.H. van Dyk, Senior Sertifikaat, 1949, pp.232-233.  
 136 Ibid., p.291.  
 137 C.de K Fowler and G.J.J. Smit, Senior Certificate and Matriculation, 1957, p.238.  
 138 J.H. van Dyk, Senior Sertifikaat, 1949, pp.81-84, 86, 97.  
 139 Ibid., pp.151, 158.  
 140 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 6, 1958, p.72.  
 141 Ibid., p. 132.  
 142 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 6, 1958, p. 145.

the "double game" played by Hintsá, thus alluding to his supposed duplicity.<sup>143</sup>

Havinga's texts are riddled with the stereotypes of Bethelsdorp as "a breeding place of all evil", where "dirty" and "lazy" Hottentots lay about,<sup>144</sup> of Shaka as a "bloodthirsty tyrant" and Mzilikazi as "cruel".<sup>145</sup> Hendrik Potgieter knew the Blacks' "savage ways and nature".<sup>146</sup> The laagers at Blaauwkrantz were attacked by the "hordes" of "bloodthirsty" ("bloeddronk") "savages".<sup>147</sup> Cetshwayo was "a very power-hungry native king", with "the fiery desire to wash his assegais in the blood of the white man and particularly confrontational in his attitude."<sup>148</sup> Boyce writes that the Khoi "led to certain problems", for they "stole cattle and sheep".<sup>149</sup> Dr van der Kemp, "instead of encouraging the Hottentots to improve their standard of living

... sank to their level".<sup>150</sup> The Khoi were "a constant menace" because of their "thieving habits", the Trekboers had to contend with the "marauding Bushmen"; the Xhosa were often "dangerous and troublesome neighbours"; Shaka was "a tyrant known for his cruelty".<sup>151</sup>

The stereotyped approach to non-Whites as labourers is evident in Lategan and de Kock's book: the Coloureds did "skilled and unskilled work" in the factories. Coloured women "did their bit

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- 143 C. de K. Fowler and G.J.J. Smit, 1957, p.240.  
144 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 7, 1958, pp.85, 90.  
145 Ibid., pp. 130, 132.  
146 Ibid., p.137.  
147 Ibid., p.149.  
148 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 8, p.111.  
149 A.N. Boyce, Std 6, 1960, p.92.  
150 A.N. Boyce, Std 7, 1962, p.120.  
151 A.N. Boyce Stds 9 and 10, 1967, pp.94, 118, 128, 159.

in the factories too".<sup>152</sup> Van Jaarsveld makes much of the role of "Bantu workers" in building up the country: "today they still play an important role - not only as domestic servants, but also as stable boys, etc."<sup>153</sup>

The master symbol of the Afrikaners' special mission in Africa has been dealt with elsewhere. There are other, by now familiar, master symbols present in the textbooks under review. In many cases they are interwoven, even synonymous with, the images of others and of the self.

The master symbol of the non-Whites as a threat at worst, or as a problem or burden at best, is still everywhere evident. Once again, only a few examples from the many possible illustrations will be given, to avoid unnecessary repetition.

Van Dyk writes of the Hottentots who were a "danger"; after the smallpox epidemics they no longer posed a "national danger to the whites".<sup>154</sup> For Sir George Grey "the frontier problem" was part of a "great national problem" today known as the "native problem"; the "native danger" was even greater after the discovery of diamonds - their migration by the thousand soon led to "a national widespread threat".<sup>155</sup> To Lindeque Whites and Blacks were "sworn enemies" from the start.<sup>156</sup> Havinga reinforces the master symbol of the incessant warfare amongst the Blacks, which only came to an end with the arrival of the Voortrekkers: pupils are urged to have a debate "on the future of the Bantu had the Voortrekkers not moved to the interior."<sup>157</sup> Van Jaarsveld refers to the "Basuto danger" confronting the young

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152 E.H.W. Lategan and A.J. de Kock, 1977, p.145.

153 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 8, 1967, p.295.

154 J.H. van Dyk, Senior Sertifikaat, 1949, p.232.

155 J.H. van Dyk, Senior Sertifikaat, 1949, pp.291, 303.

156 B.G. Lindeque, Std VI, 1956, p.144.

157 J.F.E. Havinga, Std 6, 1958, p.87.

Free State Republic,<sup>158</sup> while Boyce<sup>159</sup> uses the terms "problem" and "trouble" ad nauseam when referring to the role of non-Whites in South African history: the "Basuto problem", the "Native problem", the "Sekukhuni problem", the "Indian problem" and the "Bantu problem". His view of the Indians and Coloureds of his own time is still in terms of them as problems rather than as fellow citizens: "Discuss some of the problems connected with the Coloured people today"; "explain the presence of the Indians in South Africa".<sup>160</sup>

After about 1960, the master symbol of South Africa as an isolated, threatened state becomes increasingly prominent in school history textbooks. Van Jaarsveld asserts, for example, that the Black states "want to bring the last White controlled governments to a fall"; "it seems as if the powers of Black Africa have unified to break down the 'White South'"; to achieve their aim, "a vendetta (original emphasis) had been launched in the U.N. against the White South"; at the U.N. the Republic was subjected to "unfriendly remarks", "insults" and "threats". To ensure that the Republic was not "caught off-sides", its security system against "internal unrest", and its defence against "foreign aggression" had been improved.<sup>161</sup> The U.N. had become "a threat to the security of the Republic"; the progaganda emanating from the Afro-Asian block "aimed at the destruction of the R.S.A.; the Republic was treated like a "pariah" ("uitgeworpene") and "stood isolated".<sup>162</sup>

Joubert's textbooks is riddled with terminology that reinforces the above master symbol. He writes of "criticism at the U.N." against South Africa; of "hostile feelings", "increasing isolation", "boycotts", "embargoes", "expulsions", "attacks" and

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- 158 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 7 (Afrikaans), 1958, p.190.  
159 A.N. Boyce, Std 8, 1963, pp.81, 105, 144, 154, 169.  
160 A.N. Boyce, Stds 9 and 10, 1967, pp.720-727.  
161 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 8, 1967, pp. 138, 139, 141.  
162 Ibid., p.156.

"terrorist onslaughts".<sup>164</sup>

(iv) Positive self-image

In contrast to the above-mentioned hostile images of others and the negative stereotypes discussed elsewhere in this chapter, comfortably positive self-images are projected in many of the textbooks reviewed. Besides the numerous other examples found in the other sub-sections of this Chapter, the following are further illustrations. Lindeque portrays the Cape Burghers as "pious", "hospitable", "reserved" "family-bound".<sup>164</sup> Havinga too extolls the virtues of the White settlers: their "piety, hospitality, trust, strong feeling of family, and perseverance".<sup>165</sup> The frontier farmers, despite all they had to endure remained "true", "honourable", "religious" and "noble".<sup>166</sup> Havinga also quotes Sir Benjamin D'Urban's favourable view of the Trekkers as "orderly", "patient", "industrious" and "religious".<sup>167</sup> In the same way van Jaarsveld boosts the Afrikaners' positive self-image by including Somerset's reported appreciation of "the courage of the Boers and their willingness to make sacrifices".<sup>168</sup> Boyce stresses the fine qualities of the Voortrekkers: they "blazed the trail and opened up the country for civilization", they were very "godly" people, noted for their "hospitality", "hardy", "self-reliant", "independent", "resourceful" and "always upright".<sup>169</sup>

(e) A New Textbook Approach

As mentioned in 7.5. the Textbooks examined so far make little or no provision for the acquisition of historical skills. Refreshing

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- 163 C.J. Joubert, Std 10, 1986, pp.349-350.  
164 B.G. Lindeque, Std 6, 1956, pp.119-120.  
165 J.E.F.Havinga, Std 6, 1958, pp.116-117.  
166 Ibid., p.135.  
167 J.E.F. Havinga, Std 7, 1958, p.129.  
168 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Std 7, p.140.  
169 A.N. Boyce, Stds 9 and 10, pp.103; 116; 117-120.

exceptions are the series of textbooks written by F.E. Graves (with L.H. Consul, T. Eksteen and E. Viglieno). In the introduction to the Std 6 book Graves<sup>170</sup> explains how each chapter exploits a particular historical skill. Particular emphasis is placed on evidence (pictorial, written, documentary) so that pupils can learn to appreciate that the story of the past is not definitive but is reconstructed; the chapters are written "with a view to the need to correct long held and historically untenable myths/legends/ interpretations". In this way children can be shown that there is no "final story" and no "correct version": "Appreciation of past peoples and heritage need not mean the adoption of hero-worship nor villain-denigration stances ... Southern Africa's best interests will be served if all who study History ... do so without judgement."

In many respects Graves's approach to South African history in particular could show the way to the much needed multiperspective treatment of historical issues (see Chapter 8). In her discussion of the Slogters Nek incident, for example, Graves gives the colonists' point of view as well as that of Lord Charles Somerset and of various historians, even pointing out that the incident took place soon after Somerset's wife had died, thus explaining his distress and possibly his stern action.<sup>171</sup>

In the same way Graves attempts to put across several divergent perspectives on other controversial issues such as the Eastern Frontier, the emancipation of the slaves, the causes of the Great Trek and the annexation of Natal.

In the Std 7 book, in a note to the pupil, Graves<sup>172</sup> points out that the past is about people: "Like us, they had emotions such as anger, fear, hate and love. Like us, they made mistakes, had

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170 F.E. Graves, History for Today 6, 1985  
171 F.E. Graves, History for Today 6, 1985, pp.184-185.  
172 F.E. Graves, History for Today 7, 1985.



had successes and failures. If we can look on their actions with understanding ... then we can apply the same understanding in Southern Africa today." The remarkable thing about Graves's book is that her stated intentions in writing these books are actually carried out in the texts. There are conscious efforts to explain the behaviour of historical personalities, to offer differing explanations of historical events. Quoting from the preamble on aims contained in the new core syllabus, Graves points out that "'a systematic study of the past ... based on evidence: a selection of facts and events that are arranged, interpreted and explained'", requires more of both teacher and pupil "than the old concept that History was a collection of truths and that the main activity of the pupil was to listen, learn and rewrite it."<sup>173</sup>

The conventional, and indeed sterile, approach of most school history textbooks simply does not meet the demands of present day South Africa.

## 8. SUMMARY

The National Party have, at the time of writing, been ruling South Africa for over forty years. During these four decades both the N.P. and South Africa have undergone fundamental changes. In 1948 the Government came to power promising to bring about separation in every sphere of South African society. It was exclusively an Afrikaner government, determined to ensure the eventual establishment of an Afrikaner Republic, a "volkstaat". In 1990 this same party has as many English-speaking as Afrikaans supporters, has shared political power with the Coloureds and Indians, has undertaken to scrap every last vestige of Apartheid, and is involved in negotiating with all who would engage in discussion to bring about majority rule in a unitary state.

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173 F.E. Graves, History for Today 6, 1985, Introduction.



The pace of change has been accelerating ever since the unrest of 1976, yet the history syllabuses presently in use cover events up to 1970 only. Moreover, they still reflect a narrow, sectional, petrified image of a largely mythical past, in which the struggle for supremacy between Boer and Briton still furnishes the central theme. In essence the syllabuses which were in use in 1948 are the same as the most recent core syllabuses of 1985. Some of the detail may have changed, but the spirit and the message have not.

The textbooks examined, especially those recommended or prescribed by the State education authorities, are understandably the products of both the syllabuses and the prevailing times. While the use of negative epithets and openly derogatory language continued well into the period under review, bias and prejudice in textbooks has, it is true, become less obvious. These books are still being written by Whites, usually Afrikaans-speaking, and, like the syllabuses upon which they are based, are still expected to fulfill an orientation, legitimation and identity-formation function for Afrikaans-speaking Whites only.

## CHAPTER 8

### CHALLENGES TO THE OFFICIAL INTERPRETATION OF SOUTH AFRICA'S CONTENTIOUS PAST: SOME CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 1. CHALLENGES TO THE "OFFICIAL" VIEW OF THE PAST

No school history anywhere has ever satisfied an entire community. We have seen that the more heterogeneous or divided a country's population, the more controversial its history teaching is likely to be. In a country as fragmented and deeply divided as South Africa, a fundamental questioning of the legitimacy of the official version of the South African past, as reflected in the present syllabus, is to be expected. The criticism levelled at the teaching of history in South African public schools is not only widespread, but also extremely varied. We can only concern ourselves here with that criticism relevant to this study, i.e. the role of history in the self-understanding of a people, in particular the orientation, legitimation and identity-forming functions of history teaching.

Current history syllabuses (and by implication the officially sanctioned textbooks in use at schools) mirror the image of the South African past held by the dominant political order, i.e. the White, Afrikaner-dominated National Party Government of a decade ago. Until the late 1970's there was little questioning within the Afrikaner Establishment of what was being offered in history syllabuses.

However, the National Party has, in the last decade, undergone a fundamental transformation. It is unlikely that it still speaks for a majority of Afrikaners. It relies to an increasing extent on the support of English-speaking voters. Its ideological shift to the left has certainly estranged it from many of its traditional supporters. There are signs that it is about to

expand its power-base to "moderate" elements in other population groups.

All this means, of course, that a Government pre-occupied with the awesome problems of present South Africa, and challenged with the ushering in of the "New South Africa", can no longer afford the luxury of dwelling on past grievances, some of which are now over 150 years old. The ruling party's historical consciousness has decreased dramatically. It is now the Conservative Party which has taken over as custodian of the Afrikaner's past. There is in the ranks of this Party, a nostalgic longing for an Afrikaner-dominated, Republican past, as witnessed by, for example, the flying of the Vierkleur by C.P.- controlled local bodies.

In short, the National Party Government appears to have left the conservative (in the non-party political sense) officials responsible for drawing up history syllabuses far behind. Such a time lag is not new, and not necessarily unusual. In Chapter 7, one saw that the new C.N.E.- influenced history syllabuses were only introduced five years or more after the N.P. came to power. There are other similar examples to be found here and elsewhere. However, it is the pace and depth of the change of N.P. policy, and the remarkably static nature of South African history syllabuses, that has resulted in an unusually large gap. Present syllabuses are perpetuating an image of the past not necessarily still accepted by the ruling party, and helping to prop up a political and social dispensation which no longer exists.

While there was an active debate (see Chapters 3, 5, 6 and 7) on the content of history teaching up to the early 1970's, with a vigorous defence of syllabuses by Afrikaner Nationalists, the present challenge to, and dissatisfaction with, history syllabuses is no longer a debate as such. The only defendants of the current syllabuses are those Whites to the right of the

Government, representing about one-third of the White electorate.

The rest of the Whites, and of course, the other 86% of the population, appear to be insisting, with varying degrees of vehemence, on an immediate and drastic revision of history syllabuses.

Dissatisfaction has been expressed by a wide range of critics not only by those who feel themselves excluded from the current political (and socio-economic) dispensation, but also by independent thinking Afrikaners, such as F.A. van Jaarsveld and J.M. du Preez. The range and depth of dissatisfaction with history at school would warrant a study on its own. The following pages represent a cross-section of some of the views expressed in recent years.

The Transvaal High Schools' History Teachers' Association, affiliated to the T.T.A., took Joubert and Britz to task for the "highly biased treatment of many areas in the syllabus and of South African history in particular" in their textbooks; it suggested that it was essential to recommend a variety of textbooks which embodied different points of view. The Association claimed that there was a tendency in the Std 10 examination "to concentrate almost entirely on questions deemed important by Afrikaner Nationalists and to ignore the history of the majority of South Africans. Remarking that history has always been used as "a tool to enforce a particular world view of the educational authorities", the Association is sceptical as to whether the "particular ideological slant" in history in the Transvaal would change. In their view the overriding theme throughout the Std 10 syllabus (as mirrored for example in the book by Joubert and Britz) is the struggle against Communism: "This is the case patently because history can effectively be used by those in power to maintain and extend their world view". White pupils left the school system "with little understanding of crucial issues of the S.A. situation and almost no understanding of the grievances of other sectors of the community", because of

a lack of balance in the selection of the issues presented.

The Section covering 1948-1970 was "an apology and motivation for apartheid. There is never any discussion as to the excellence of the policy ... This is surely not a balanced presentation of the issues." Similarly, the examination paper was "extremely limited in its themes reflecting a very one-sided view of South African History", the questions being "almost solely based on Afrikaner History". The Association's wide-ranging and spirited attack on the official approach to school history in the Transvaal ends with a call for "the approval of a book which does not have as its base an Afrikaner-centric approach but rather, one which tries to present a balanced view of ... particularly the South African past."<sup>1</sup>

The Pretoria News<sup>2</sup> reported that "History boffins" had "slammed" the 1987 Std 10 paper as 'a history of the Afrikaner'; one teacher had described it "as a test on the history of the Afrikaner people". In a series of articles, beginning with "History as she is wrote in the Transvaal", the educationist Janice Farquharson took the T.E.D. to task for its "apparent racial obsessions and narrow political sectarianism". The fact that the T.E.D. could even have considered Joubert and Britz's book "must give rise to doubts as to the quality of history taught to thousands of South Africans of all races, and the kind of answers expected from the pupils". The South African half of the syllabus, as presented in that textbook, gave the impression of being intended for one very limited section of the community.<sup>3</sup>

The T.E.D.'s response was that the book was the only history textbook for Std 10 to have been submitted to the T.E.D. by the

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1 Transvaal High Schools' History Teachers' Association, History Committee Report, 1988, passim.

2 Pretoria News, 18 November 1987.

3 Pretoria News, 13 August 1987.

time arrangements had been made for its publication.<sup>4</sup>

In the second article ("Whose past? How the T.E.D. learns you ous history"), Farquharson asserts that Joubert's book "was not an isolated phenomenon, but symptomatic of a wider malaise". She asks also who decides what themes are to comprise the history syllabus, what sort of a past is being created by those who make the decisions; did the T.E.D. vision of the past encompass all South Africans or was history an "'own affair'" in which the aim was "the perception of the grievances of a limited section of the community, with everyone outside the charmed circle constituting a 'problem'"; in her opinion the South African history syllabus was "limited and stultifying", precluding "any independent thought".<sup>5</sup>

Farquharson's article, "The examiners anonymous", criticizes the fact that the T.E.D. Std 10 history paper in 1987 contains quotations solely from Afrikaans newspapers; furthermore the essays were "narrowly sectarian"; she quotes a "frustrated historian" who said of the paper that "it was not history, but indoctrination".<sup>6</sup> In response to a call by the T.T.A. for the history examination to be set on the syllabus and not the textbook, a T.E.D. spokesman replied that teachers should not prescribe to the examination panel how to set the paper.<sup>7</sup> Joel Mervis, in an article entitled "History warped in Transvaal", asserted that there had been "three generations of purposeful brainwashing in schools".<sup>8</sup>

Van den Berg and Buckland<sup>9</sup> concur with the above critics that the present syllabuses reflect an essentially White perspective; the

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4 See SAIRR Survey, 1990, p.257.

5 Pretoria News, 22 October 1987.

6 Business Day, 21 December 1987.

7 See SAIRR Survey, 1990, p.258; and Business Day, 21 March 1988.

8 Business Day, 26 August 1988.

9 O. van den Berg and P. Buckland, Beyond the History Syllabus, pp. 12-13, 31-33.

overall impression is that Whites made South African history. Where reference is made to persons not classified as White, this was done in a variety of ways: as background information to "White" history, as "people", as persons having separate history requiring attention in "segregated syllabus compartments", or "as persons constituting incipient or established separate nations, thus providing a backdrop for an understanding of the racial-constitutional policies of the recent past." They accuse the syllabus of perpetrating the discredited view that there was (original emphasis) no South African history before 1652. The paradigm of South African history that is required to be taught and learnt corresponds solely to the interpretation of history propagated by "the ruling Afrikaner Nationalist power elite" in particular and accepted by the White population in general. Given this group's dominance of education departments, it was "not surprising that ... with very few exceptions", the books that came to be approved were those sympathetic to this paradigm; thus it was that a view of history that is "heavily Eurocentric and white-orientated" comes to be taught and learnt in schools.

The appearance of the Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa in early 1989, although not published as a school textbook, was widely greeted in popular, and anti-Government circles as a refreshingly new approach to history, and a corrective to "official" school textbooks. A review in the Citizen was positive: "Prof. Saunders achieves his ambition of telling the story without nationalistic bias; wherever possible, even telling the history from the point of view of the ethnic peoples (sic) and the invaders";<sup>10</sup> Gerald Shaw's review "S.A.'s sad and violent past"<sup>11</sup> complimented the authors on "getting away from the old divisive tracts", the "deplorable sectional bias and partiality of most school history books" had perpetrated "division and conflict". Graham Linscott<sup>12</sup> praises the book for

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The Citizen, 5 June 1989, "Illustrated History of SA."

Cape Times, 1 April 1989, "SA's sad and violent past".

The Star, 6 May 1989, "Titillating history of South Africa."

"breaking new ground" and "challenging this country's fund of myths and stereotypes"; it would give any child a fresh insight into the land and society in which he lives, "something which the straitjacketed and deadly dull school syllabus will never do". Unfortunately it demolishes so many historical myths that it is "unlikely to be prescribed by any education department controlled by Pretoria". The book's reception among professional historians was less enthusiastic because of its obvious ideological approach.

Other challenges to the traditional Euro-Centric interpretation of South African history have also come from academically far sounder, rather less ideologically inspired works by respected historians. In recent years a number of general histories have appeared, representing a renewal in South African historical writing: R. Elphick and H. Giliomee (Eds.), The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840 (1989)<sup>13</sup>; H.J. van Aswegen, Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika tot 1854 (1989)<sup>14</sup>; and T.R.H. Davenport, South Africa. A Modern History (Third Edition, 1987)<sup>15</sup>, and T. Cameron and S.B. Spies (Eds.) An Illustrated History of South Africa,<sup>16</sup> are examples.

Vrye Weekblad<sup>17</sup> wrote of the "unravelling of myths which the Afrikaner has linked to apartheid". The educational supplement to New Nation, "Learning Nation", asked its readers how much of the true history of South Africa they knew; they "certainly won't find it in school textbooks", "Learning Nation" contends. It was very important for students to know "what really happened", because it would help readers to understand life in South Africa

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13 See T.R.H. Davenport's review in, Historia, November 1989, Volume 34 No. 2, pp.119-120.

14 See F.A. van Jaarsveld's review in, Ibid., pp.120-122.

15 See C Saunders' review in, South African Historical Journal 19, November 1987.

16 See E. Bradlow's review in, Historia, November 1986, Vol.31, No. 3.

17 Vrye Weekblad, 12 May 1989, "n Kans om mites te bekyk".



today. Dr Johan Malan of Potchefstroom views prejudice as the result of stereotyping.<sup>18</sup> Ken Owen asserts that "the teaching of history has been displaced by propaganda".<sup>19</sup> Harvey Tyson, in an article entitled "Wean us off historical junkfood", calls history "the crystallisation of popular beliefs". Several generations of South African school children had "escaped death from boredom merely by going into a trance during history lessons": they had been "spoon-fed junkfood history" in the form of recorded stereotypes.<sup>20</sup>

Even the mass-murderer Barend Stydom is seen as a product of history teaching: a newspaper correspondent<sup>21</sup> wonders what "those responsible for the teaching of history in this country feel about their most shining product. Gerald Shaw in an article "NP sowed the wind, SA reaps the whirlwind"<sup>22</sup> puts "White - supremacist South African society" on trial alongside Strydom, but hopes that "the new generation will be spared this vicious brand of brainwashing ... A new uniform history is planned for all schools."

Opening the Natal Teachers' Society's 74th annual conference, Prof. Colin Bundy examined conflicting versions of South African history. According to Bundy,<sup>23</sup> the first framework for understanding the South African past as presented in the "white supremacy history" or "history by denial", a framework that goes back to the settler histories of the nineteenth century. It was typical of both popular and academic Afrikaner nationalist history and for a long time deeply entrenched in school textbooks. It proceeded essentially by denying that Black South

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- 18 Cape Argus, 19 June 1989, "Prejudice must go, social workers, academics told".  
19 Cape Times, 31 July 1989, "NP is Mickey Mouse steeped in failure".  
20 Saturday Star, 17 December 1988.  
21 The Star, 16 May 1989, "Wean us off historical junkfood".  
22 Cape Times, 26 May 1989.  
23 Natal Mercury, 21 June 1989, "The problems that different kinds of history create for SA".

Africans have a history. The history of South Africa was the history of Dutch trekboers and English settlers:

"Many of you may have been exposed to this kind of history when you were at school, and you will be familiar with the texts that concentrate, complacently and relentlessly, on the history of governors, generals, voortrekker leaders, British administrators, missionaries and prime ministers. When Blacks do impinge on this history, they do so largely as external irritants - like locusts, rinderpest or droughts. They are cattle raiders, work-shy squatters, unruly frontier crossers and uncivilized heathens."

Joubert's textbook was a kind of "anti-knowledge", and the syllabus for black schools "a move towards the retribalisation of the past ... a new ethnic idyll in which black heroic figures are invoked to legitimize separate development". He maintains that "large numbers" of Blacks have quite simply rejected the kind of history offered at school. Blacks perceived history at school as "profoundly disabling", as it was ideologically controlled: "to deny people their history is to cripple them intellectually and to maim them psychologically".

The reaction to this has been "anti-apartheid history", "history by assertion", or simply "Black history", concerned above all to establish that there was an African past, to write into the historical record an African identity.<sup>24</sup> In South Africa, Black history has re-established Black people as the subjects, and not the mere objects of history; it restores to them the status of makers of their own history, rather than victims of "White" history. Bundy asserts that the weakness inherent in this history is that it is locked conceptually into the framework of "White supremacist" and "apartheid" history to which it merely responds. Thus for example, Dingane becomes "a goody", and the Mfecane more important than the Great Trek; there is the danger too of "Black

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24 See W.R.L. Gebhard, Black Perceptions of South African History, and J.C. Moll et al., Tussengroepverhoudinge soos Weerspieël in die Suid-Afrikaanse Historiografie, pp.21-28.

history" celebrating a fictitious golden past, investing an idyllic, precolonial society free of conflict or oppression, thereby ignoring the uglier side of African history.<sup>25</sup>

A further and perhaps more serious challenge to the prevailing version of the past has come in the form of "people's history", or "history from below", a movement which encompasses "Black history" as well. People's history has its origins in the anti-colonialist, anti-capitalist writings of Frantz Fanon and other Marxist writers of the Third World, and in the history workshops of left-wing historians in the United States and Britain. It is closely linked to the radical historiography which came to South Africa in the 1970's. The History Workshop conferences held at the University of the Witwatersrand, the first in 1978 and then at three-yearly intervals focused on "grassroots history", and were a "deliberate attempt to democratise the study of history".<sup>26</sup> Since 1986, the idea of "people's history" and the "history workshop" has spread throughout the country, a direct result of the two "National Consultation Conferences on the Crisis in Education" held in 1985 and 1986. The Conferences gave birth to the "National Education Crisis Committee" (NECC) articulating the rejection of "apartheid education". The NECC appointed a "People's History Commission" to establish an alternative image of the past.<sup>27</sup> In answer to the question why the NECC focused specifically on history, Witz<sup>28</sup> states that it was primarily due to "the distortions and myths" that pervade South African school history, the peripheral role of Blacks in that history, and the uninspiring methods used in the teaching of

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25 C. Bundy, "History - Then and Now", in Mentor, Vol.71, No. 3.

26 C. Saunders, Towards Understanding South Africa's Past, in South Africa International, Volume Nineteen, Number Two, October 1988, p.67.

27 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolgeskiedenis, Historia, November 1989, pp.1-21.

28 L. Witz, History of the People, For the People and by the People: A Brief Examination of the Development of People's History in South Africa, 1977-1988, in South Africa International, Volume Nineteen, Number Two, October 1988, p.91.

history.

This reinterpretation of South Africa's past displays elements of Black nationalism as well as Marxist theory: key concepts include colonialism, exploitation, dispossession, national liberation, the workers' struggle, and capitalism. It is a history geared to the "liberation struggle", in which the traditional white-centred image of the past is inverted by the use of alternative or counter perceptions. Yesterday's villains become today's heroes and vice versa. According to Saunders, much of the new work has deliberately sought to "counter the myths embedded in received versions of the past". What was for so long taught in the schools "has been turned on its head". The myth of a past in which the Whites were the only dominant actors has been demolished.

Ethnicity, multiculturalism, cultural plurality and so on are rejected out of hand as government propaganda, a ploy to divide and rule. The "people's history" is trans-ethnic, based on the Marxist paradigm of the oppressed classes struggling to overthrow the exploiting class. Because there is no official recognition of the "people's history" movement, its activities take place outside the formal education system.<sup>29</sup>

This is not the place to debate the merits or shortcomings of "people's history". What the sudden and spectacular spread of the movement does do, is underline the most glaring weakness in the present syllabuses: their White-centredness.

On the assumption that a national identity rests to a very significant degree on a nation's historical consciousness, in this case a mutually agreed upon version of the past (allowing of course for regional, class and other nuances), the present South

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29 C. Saunders, Towards Understanding South Africa's Past, in South Africa International, Volume Nineteen, Number Two, October 1988, passim.

African crisis invites the question of whether a mutually agreed upon past is possible, let alone likely. More pertinent, what role could history teaching play in the current identity crisis, lack of national orientation and challenge to legitimacy? The solutions offered to these problems and questions are likely to be as varied and controversial as the problems themselves.<sup>30</sup> Before reaching any conclusion or venturing any recommendations, a brief look at some European and international attempts to resolve similar questions could be useful.

## 2. INTERNATIONAL TEXTBOOKS REVIEWS<sup>31</sup>

As early as 1849, "peace congresses" held in Europe pleaded for the revision of manuals of instruction which could eliminate false and misleading representations. In 1893 G. Pitt published his A History of England with the Wars Left Out, regarded as a landmark in textbook revision. In the Scandanavian countries since the 1920's there has been mutual examination of one another's school books. In 1924, the report of the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace found all fifty-three countries that had participated in the First World War guilty, in varying degrees, of national prejudice in their history textbooks. In 1926 the League of Nations took a significant step forward in textbook reform: it invited every member country to set up a national committee charged with the task of examining foreign history books and reporting instances of national bias to the home country of the book concerned. A report published in

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30 F.A. van Jaarsveld: Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse Schoolgeskiedenis, Historia, November 1989, pp.17-21 see also F.A. van Jaarsveld, Hervertolking in die Suid-Afrikaanse Geskiedenis, pp. 10-11.

31 See O. Schüddekopf (Ed.), History Teaching and History Textbook Revision, pp.190-218, for a comprehensive list of multilateral and bilateral History Textbook Revision Conferences between 1946 and 1965.

1930 on history teaching in 55 countries produced a wealth of evidence about harmful national perceptions.

In 1931 the South American republics resolved that in future textbooks and syllabuses should not contain any expressions or judgements which reveal a feeling of hostility towards another country. It was realized that the most significant problem was not factual inaccuracy, which is relatively easy to detect, but verbal nuances. In 1947 a joint U.S./Canadian report was published on the Study of National History Textbooks used in the Schools of Canada and the United States.<sup>32</sup>

As early as the 1920's the historians of Denmark, Norway and Sweden began to examine their nation's textbooks in order to "purify" them. The Norwegian historians' commission identified certain Norwegian elementary school textbooks which stated that, during the Swedish invasion of Norway in the 16th century, the Swedes had behaved like "savages", no mention being made of the fact that Norwegians and Danes had killed and plundered in exactly the same way during their raids into Sweden. This example illustrates the tendency of historians to describe wars in a most prejudiced way, attributing all blame to the enemy and all virtue to one's own country. Each nation's heroes are glorified at the expense of the great men of other nations.<sup>33</sup> What applies to prejudice against other nations internationally applies to group prejudice within South Africa.

In the late 1940's UNESCO announced a detailed plan of action in the form of the booklet, A Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials, leading to an international seminar on textbooks. The seminar recommended that there be revision of textbooks by means of mutual agreements, starting

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32 E.H. Dance, History the Betrayer. A Study in Bias, pp. 127-132.  
33 UNESCO, Better History Textbooks, pp.1-2.

with the negative process of eliminating errors and tendentious or biased statements.<sup>34</sup>

The German-Polish bilateral textbook revision is another example of what may be achieved. Between 1972 and 1976 there were twelve meetings between Polish and German experts. By 1976 the joint commission could express its satisfaction at the first concrete results in both countries in the form of improvements to the textbooks in both countries.<sup>35</sup> This project continues today. Between the Federal Republic and its western neighbours (For example France and the Netherlands) Feindbilder and prejudices in history textbooks have largely disappeared, thanks to the bilateral examination of textbooks.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Germany and Israel established a joint schoolbook conference for mutual analyses of geography and history textbooks in 1979.<sup>37</sup> Germany and the United States developed a collaborative project between 1979 and 1981.<sup>38</sup> Boden<sup>39</sup> discusses the Anglo-Dutch geography textbook conference, as a further example.

The Georg Eckert Institute's project has already been described in the Introduction.

### 3. THE SEARCH FOR A EUROPEAN IDENTITY

The examples given of mutual textbook revision point the way

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- 34 UNESCO, Better History Textbooks, pp. 11-21.
- 35 Georg-Eckert-Institut, Empfehlungen für Schulbücher der Geschichte und Geographie in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in der Volksrepublik Polen, pp.159-161.
- 36 H. Schissler (Ed.), Schulbuchverbesserung durch Internationale Schulbuchforschung?, pp.9-10.
- 37 Georg-Eckert-Institut, Band 25, Das Deutschlandbild in Israelischen Schulgeschichtsbüchern.
- 38 Georg-Eckert-Institut, Band 30, Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und die Vereinigte Staaten von Amerika. Empfehlungen zur Behandlung ihrer Geschichte nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg.
- 39 P.K. Boden, Promoting International Understanding through School Textbooks. A Case Study, p.51.

towards intergroup analyses in South Africa. The search for a European identity, currently so intense in western (and indeed many eastern) European countries, also illustrates the possibilities for, and hurdles in the way of, the attainment of a South African identity.

The European Economic Community is due to become a "united Europe" in 1992, when all economic frontiers will disappear.<sup>40</sup> Addressing the problem, Jeismann<sup>41</sup> asks what Europe actually is, where its boundaries lie, what its definite ethnic, cultural, political and economic substance is, and whether one can at all hope to find a European identity in European history, whether history teaching can make a contribution to the building of a European identity, or merely serve to destroy illusions, such as the dream of a united Europe on the model of the United States.

These are pertinent questions to be asked of the present, and future, South Africa. Jeismann describes Europe as a collection of identities in tension ("Spannungsbündel"), a cross-section of a variety of identities.<sup>42</sup> He believes that no teaching can create an identity, it can only reinforce, reflect, and strengthen identities where they already exist, and he warns that, although historical teaching can help promote a European consciousness, the division of Europe's national histories cannot be dissolved in one generation. Pellens<sup>43</sup> agrees that the search for a European identity will not lead to a monolithic identity, but rather to a plural identity; there can also never be a unified historical consciousness.

Europe's multicultural or multi-ethnic character, strongly

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40 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolgeskiedenis, pp. 17-24.

41 K.E. Jeismann, Internationale Schulbuchforschung oder nationale Staatsraison?, pp.260-276.

42 Ibid., pp.260-261.

43 K. Pellens, Die Internationale Dimension der Geschichtsdidaktik, in K.Pellens et al., Geschichtskultur-Geschichtsdidaktik, pp.38-43.



reminiscent of South Africa, is undoubtedly an obstacle in the path of European unity and a common "European" syllabus for history teaching. Jeismann has established that there is resistance of a "European" history syllabus. Each nation is still inclined to its own "church tower perspective": it perceives its own country, its neighbours and the rest of the world from the perspective of its own church tower. Thus a broad European dimension is lacking. His conclusion is that the "European idea" in history teaching is not yet possible. It can only be set as a political goal for the future, probably unattainable in the present generation. As mentioned above, he is sceptical of the capacity of history teaching to establish a new European identity in the face of separate national identities, and a variety of historical consciousnesses.<sup>44</sup>

An investigation into the state of the "European idea" in the history syllabuses and textbooks in five European countries yielded disappointing results.<sup>45</sup> The message for South Africa in this is that there is no instant formula for establishing a South African identity through history teaching.

It will be a gradual process demanding insight, tolerance and above all, patience. It is unlikely that a monolithic identity could be formed in the foreseeable future. South Africa should perhaps aim at the establishment of a plural identity, such as that of the Americans.

#### 4. SOUTH AFRICA : UNNAMED, INCOMPLETE AFRICAN STATE

Probably never before in its history has South Africa been in such a state of flux. From its inception in 1910, the new state was ruled by Whites. Until well into the 1960's their authority was never seriously challenged. The collapse of the European

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44 F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolgeskiedenis*, in *Historia*, November 1989, pp.12-17.

45 See E. Bruley and E.H. Dance, *A History of Europe?*, passim.

empires in Africa and the rapid urbanization of South Africa's Black population, changed all this. In 1976, and again in 1984-6, the Blacks' acute dissatisfaction with their political, social and economic lot was articulated by way of mass protest and unrest. White authority was being challenged as never before.

In some ways the tri-cameral parliamentary system introduced by P.W. Botha in 1983 was an admission that South Africa was no longer (it had never been) only a "white man's country". The inclusion, for the first time, of people who are not White in the central government, albeit with limited power, and the Government's oft-stated intention since 1986 of sharing power with "all South Africans" are the first tentative steps towards a shared future. The White South African "nation" was expanded in 1983 to accommodate Coloureds and Indians. The Government's admission since 1986 that separate development has failed, and that South Africa is henceforth to be regarded as one nation in indivisible unitary state has ushered in a new political era,<sup>46</sup> and launched South Africa, apparently rudderless, into as yet uncharted waters.<sup>47</sup>

This political upheaval and the fundamental changes in National Party thinking has caused a national identity crisis with a sudden absence of historical orientation.<sup>48</sup> For a century or more Whites, and Afrikaners in particular, could use their image of the past to grasp their present situation and plot a course for the future.<sup>49</sup> Just how constant and secure that historical image has been, is adequately borne out by this investigation. It is now no longer only White political authority which is being

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46 See "Voting rights for all on horizon - Viljoen", Star, 6 February 1990.

47 See "Afrikaners at the crossroads", South 5 to 14 February 1990.

48 See F.A. van Jaarsveld, Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse Skool-geskiedenis, in Historia, November 1989, pp.17-18.

49 See "van Verwoerd tot by F.W. de Klerk", Transvaler, 8 February 1990.

challenged, but also the legitimacy of the South African past, as viewed from a White perspective and offered in history syllabuses and textbooks in all public schools. The sublime assumption that the past was unchanging, fixed for all time, has been shattered. Every stereotype, every myth, every master symbol upon which the Whites' historical image has rested for a hundred years or more, is being scrutinised, questioned and in many cases hurled contemptuously onto the scrapheap.

The heroes of yesterday have become, in the eyes of all those opposed to the Government, as well as the "international community", the villains. The wrong-doers in the official version have become the innocent victims of racism, colonialism and exploitation. The Boer-Briton clash which so long sustained Afrikaner nationalism, and which has stood central to the historical stage, is suddenly irrelevant. Both Afrikaners and English-speaking Whites are now seen as co-responsible for wrongs perpetrated against the Black majority.<sup>50</sup> White South Africa stands dazed and bewildered by the "unexpectedness" of it all.

If South Africa is indeed now a unitary state and all its inhabitants citizens of that state, it should be possible to talk of a South African nation in the process of becoming. As yet this nation-to-be lacks any kind of identity. There is no common language, culture, religion, tradition, not even common loyalties and allegiance to national symbols. These are not even mutually accepted boundaries. This has led F.A. van Jaarsveld to refer to South Africa as an "unnamed, incomplete African state" ("onbenaamde, onvoltooide Afrikastaat").<sup>51</sup> As German thinkers could ask for centuries: "Deutschland? aber wo liegt es?" ("Germany? but where is it situated?"), and not be able to answer ("Ich weiss das Land nicht zu finden")<sup>52</sup>, so we can enquire after the whereabouts of South Africa. Our country is, like Germany, "Das Schwierige Vaterland".<sup>53</sup>

The United States, with all its staggering diversity of peoples enjoys the allegiance of the overwhelming majority of its inhabitants. The American anthem (as well as other patriotic songs) and flag command universal respect, devotion and affection throughout that vast nation. There are national symbols that transcend group, ethnic, state and class differences. South Africa at this stage does not even possess a name upon which all are agreed: in radical and pan-Africanist circles this country's name is Azania. The Government appears open on this question too.<sup>54</sup> Our very borders are a matter of dispute: are the "non-independent national states", such as KwaZulu or Lebowa part of South Africa or not? Are the inhabitants of the TBVC states necessarily to be thought of as foreigners? Many regard the "bantustans", including the Transkei as a farce, and therefore, still as integral parts of the Republic. There is even open talk of their re-incorporation.<sup>55</sup>

Taking into account that South Africans cannot agree on the exact extent of their country, or even on a name for it,<sup>56</sup> it is not surprising that national symbols, a focus for national unity in most states, are a source of constant friction here. A Labour Party Member of Parliament stated that "he never could nor ever would stand for the national flag or sing the national anthem 'Die Stem'", symbolising as they did "white history and white values". He could not identify with the words of the anthem: "We need a new flag and a new anthem to symbolise the ideal for the future, not the hurtfulness of the past".<sup>57</sup> Wynand Malan of the Democratic Party has said that "for a new South Africa we shall

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54 See Beeld, 14 March 1990, "SA se naam: Regering sal daaroor praat"; and Pretoria News, 15 March 1990, "SA could well become 'Azania', Viljoen tells newspaper".

55 See Vrye Weekblad, 13 October 1989, "Verwoerd se groot droom is aan die verbrokkel", South, 5-11 October 1989, "Holomisa: No lip-service to Pretoria" and "Nuwe era vir TBVC-state", Rapport, 4 Februarie 1990.

56 See Saturday Star, 28 October 1989, "You can't stop march on the road to Azania".

57 Pretoria News, 15 April 1989, ("MP rejects SA flag, anthem").

have to develop a new flag, a new anthem as well as other national symbols"<sup>58</sup> Martin Dibodu of the Methodist Episcopal Church stated bluntly that the anthem and flag meant nothing to him: "I am not proud of them and don't recognize them".<sup>59</sup> Vrye Weekblad noted that "only 8 per cent of South Africa's national monuments commemorated the history of people other than Whites".<sup>60</sup>

In June 1989, the synod of the Anglican Church in Southern Africa passed a motion calling Die Stem "unsuitable and unacceptable".<sup>61</sup> Commenting on this, the editor of The Natal Mercury wrote that if Die Stem was not "genuinely acceptable to the majority, there can surely be nothing wrong in finding something that is".<sup>62</sup> The Citizen<sup>63</sup> conceded that "one day, in a new South Africa, there may be a new anthem negotiated by, and acceptable to, all its peoples". Die Kerkbode was quoted<sup>64</sup> as voicing its support for the use of Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika alongside Die Stem. In a leader, Die Volksblad acknowledged "that in the South Africa of the future there would be a need for a new anthem".<sup>65</sup> Dr Pierre Roussouw of the DRC was of the opinion that "all communities would have to thrash out a new dispensation for the country and that would include national symbols".<sup>66</sup> Die Beeld, in a leader, foresees that a new dispensation would lead to insistence on a new or at least additional national symbols.<sup>67</sup> The Conservative Party reacted to the controversy by advocating partition in accordance with which each nation would have the right "to recognize and honour its own national symbols".<sup>68</sup>

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58 Vrye Weekblad, 26 May 1989, p.11  
59 Vrye Weekblad, 26 May 1989, "Monumente vir 'n wit geskiedenis".  
60 Ibid.  
61 The Star, 13 June 1989, "Anglican Church rejects anthem".  
62 The Natal Mercury, 13 June 1989, "Die Stem".  
63 The Citizen, 13 June 1989, "Die Stem".  
64 The Citizen, 22 June 1989, "NGK backs Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika".  
65 Die Volksblad, 12 June 1989, "Die Stem".  
66 Weekend Argus, 10 June 1989, "National song 'must be for all'".  
67 Die Beeld, 14 June 1989, "Volkslied".  
68 The Pretoria News, 26 June 1989, "CP warns on results of NP idea of unitary state".

The flag and the national anthem are not the only symbols of the historical image of a nation. National commemoration days are another. As is to be expected South Africa's national days are also being questioned. Willie Esterhuyse, for example, objects to the way symbols are interpreted, particularly the narrow "volksnasionalistiese politiekery" around the the Day of the Vow.<sup>69</sup> On the 150th anniversary of the Great Trek, the public debate on the significance of the Day of the Vow flared up yet again. The details need not concern us here. What is important is that December 16, May 31 and October 10 have widely differing meanings for South Africans. To some they are symbols of a glorious, heroic past; others view them as the commemoration of events which led to their dispossession and enslavement.<sup>70</sup>

Not all would agree with P.W. Botha when he addressed the "official" crowd at the amphitheatre of the Voortrekker Monument in 1988: "A century and a half ago Blood River was an hour of victory - the victory of faith in the power of God over unbelief and violence."<sup>71</sup> In a statement, the Inyandza Youth League of Kangwane describe December 16 as "the day on which our historic forebears under the command of one of the outstanding revolutionaries, Dingane, had clashed with imperialist marauders and land plunderers". The League was to commemorate "the heroism of Dingane's impi's at the Battle of Ncome (Blood River)".<sup>72</sup> South Africa truly has a controversial past, an "omstrede verlede".

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69 Rapport, 11 December 1988, "Die laers moet oop!".

70 See "Die Groot Trick?", Saturday Star, 17 December 1988, p.11; "What we can all learn from the Great Trek", Sunday Times, 11 December 1988, p.20; "The Great Trek enigma", The Star, 15 December 1988; "Die laers moet oop!", Rapport, 11 December 1988, p.27.

71 Address by the State President P.W.Botha on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Great Trek, p.1.

72 New Nation, 16 December 1988, "Chiefs to salute impi's Blood River Sacrifice".

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

History teaching fulfills an important function in the areas of legitimation, orientation and identity-formation. The historical consciousness of the ruling party, group, class is intimately bound up with its national consciousness, and its self-image. History syllabuses world-wide mirror the image of the past as sanctioned by the existing order. In South Africa, government after government has imposed its image of the past on other groups.<sup>73</sup> A distinctly pro-British, anti-Black view of the past is discernable up to 1948, with the British link becoming ever weaker : syllabuses and most textbooks emphasized South Africa's place as an integral part of the Empire. The non-White peoples were relegated to the position of "problems" at best, and a "threat" at worst. Through a system of inter-connected stereotypes, master symbols and Feindbilder, constantly reinforced by bias, prejudice and negative language, those perceived to have opposed the existing order were presented in a negative light. The consistency and tenacity of these negative images has been shown. In contrast, a positive self-image of the Whites, especially those Whites favourably disposed to South Africa's British connection, is projected.

We have seen that since 1948, a fundamentally Afrikaner view of South Africa's past has been imposed on the entire country. This view has its roots in the 19th century, manifesting itself in history teaching in the Boer Republics, but was not officially sanctioned after 1902 until the National Party Government came to power in 1948. The role of Blacks in history, as viewed by the Afrikaner, was virtually identical to their role in the "official" history up to 1948. It was the Afrikaners' reaction against British domination, beginning in earnest in about 1877, that led to a different presentation of the past. Now it was those that had opposed British imperialism and South Africa's

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73 F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolgeskiedenis*, in Historia, November 1989, p.19.

links with the Empire, that became the heroes.

Just as most Afrikaners rejected what they regarded as a British version of their history, and consciously sought to develop an alternative interpretation (a kind of counter history), so most English-speaking Whites feel disadvantaged by the current syllabuses and textbooks. Needless to say, Black, Coloured and Indian South Africans are no happier now with the way in which they are presently portrayed than they were at any other time in the past. They are insisting, as never before, on their own interpretation of South African history. Since 1948, an Afrikaner-centric past has been presented in public schools, and even in private schools following provincial or JMB syllabuses. As has been noted, this version of the past is now regarded as untenable, even by the National Party Establishment.

The vehemence of the objections to current syllabuses would indicate that they are simply not representative of the great majority of South Africans. 78 per cent of the present South African school population is Black, and a further 11 per cent Coloured or Indian. Fewer than 11 per cent are White<sup>74</sup> and by no means all of them are satisfied with the content of history teaching.<sup>75</sup> The question, therefore, which has to be answered is whether an image of the past, applicable to roughly 5 or 6 per cent of the country's school population, can possibly be legitimate. The crisis in history teaching and the questioning of this image even in certain Afrikaner circles would seem to indicate that the "official" version of South Africa's past is no longer tenable.

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74 Department of Education and Training, Education for Blacks in South Africa: Statistics.

75 This author knows from personal experience that at many English-medium schools, the South African section of the history syllabus is dealt with quickly and without much enthusiasm, while the general history component claims the lion's share of the teachers' and pupils' time and attention.



As Jeismann<sup>76</sup> points out, outdated historical dimensions cannot, and should not, be reclaimed, and in any case a monolithic approach to history is undesirable. Society for its maintenance and further development demands a multi-perspective approach to history. None of the new insights, knowledge and perspectives gained through historical research over the past few decades is reflected in the current syllabuses. It is still a largely political/constitutional approach to an extremely limited section of the past that is being presented.

History as taught at school has little application to the new world for which it is supposed to prepare the nation's future citizens. Education authorities traditionally tend to be conservative. Those who control South African education are no exception. It is therefore to be expected that those responsible for drawing up syllabuses would tend to be conservative as well. In societies where the pace of change is slow, such conservatism need not pose too great a problem. South African society is dynamic, and the pace of change breathtaking. It is beyond dispute that South African school syllabuses, particularly those pertaining to history, now lag very far behind the political and constitutional developments of the past decade.

What Dance<sup>77</sup> says about British history is strikingly applicable to South Africa:

What we have to do ... is to re-assess our basic values. History is a medium of education, and we are educating not a leisured class like that for which Arnold started the teaching of history ... but people who will have to face problems, political and social, of which Arnold could never have dreamed."

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76 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichte als Horizont der Gegenwart, p.23.

77 E.H. Dance, History the Betrayer, pp.49-50.

Ever since 1976 South African society has been characterised by tensions, conflict, and change to a degree unusual even for this country. White South Africa in particular, indeed the country as a whole, is in the midst of political and social turmoil in which values and "certainties", hitherto unquestioned, are being drastically revised, even rejected out of hand. The collapse of Apartheid and the rapid erosion of the White monopoly on political, and even economic power, has resulted in an identity crisis, a serious lack of historical orientation, and the realisation that power is no longer accepted as legitimate. The character of the present period is overwhelmingly one in which an old order is fragmenting, yielding and being reshaped, and in which a new order is struggling to define itself, to win acceptance (and legitimacy).<sup>78</sup>

While the Government now speaks of a new South Africa, a unitary state in which all will be regarded as South Africans with full rights, our present syllabuses and textbooks still reflect a White-centred, largely Afrikaner-centric view of an idealised past, in which the White man occupies almost the entire historical stage. Whereas the central conflicts in South Africa have long been between Black and White nationalism on the one hand, and between labour and capital on the other, our history textbooks would have us believe that the conflict between Briton and Boer, long irrelevant, is still the major issue. As van Jaarsveld<sup>79</sup> points out, a view of the past that fails to take cognisance of new circumstances will appear anachronistic.

International schoolbook revision challenges, confronts, relativises and exposes and is, therefore, of necessity drawn into the political arena, and must touch sensitive nerve centres

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78 C. Bundy, *History - Then and Now*, in *Mentor*, Vol.71, No.3.  
79 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Lewende Verlede, p.77.

of public opinion. Jeismann<sup>80</sup> points out that many of the mutual recommendations of the German-Polish project clashed with the tabus of the Party in Poland and could not be implemented. He stresses that an open society is a pre-requisite for meaningful research, as is an education system free of central indoctrination: a high degree of tolerance and plurality of opinion is required. It is open to question whether South Africa at this moment meets these requirements. Jeismann<sup>81</sup> illustrates the problems involved with the examples of the refusal of Soviet historians and authorities to concede the secret clauses of the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939: as soon as vital political interests are threatened, politics does not allow the truth to be included in the state education system. The political order ("Staatsräson") can react massively against any attempt to question its assumptions. This happens especially when the elementary self-assuredness of being correct, of having right on one's side, is questioned. The need for legitimation and the reinforcement of identity through history teaching are powerful, and the Feindbilder are insolubly linked to the positive self-image. An attack on long nurtured Feindbilder is perceived as a fundamental assault on a nation or group's self-image, for the self-image is only completed by the delineation of the Feindbilder.

However, far from a massive reaction from the prevailing political order in South Africa, one could now expect official sanction of a fundamental syllabus and textbook revision. It is only in Conservative Party circles where one can expect a defensive stance in favour of the existing content of history teaching.

Very recently a senior cabinet minister and leading Afrikaner establishment figure, Dr Gerrit Viljoen made a most significant speech, in which the Government's receptiveness to fundamental

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80 K.E. Jeismann, Internationale Schulbuchforschung oder nationale Staatsräson?, p.194.

81 Ibid., pp.6-7,13.

curriculum revision was signalled. Dr Viljoen correctly stated that in South Africa there are clearly distinguishable groups, having different demands and needs. These differences had their origins in traditions and convictions and could not be ignored by education. Acculturation and even an integration of the different cultural groups had, however, already resulted in an indisputable unity and commonality of interests between these different groups of South Africans. By virtue of common citizenship and a commonality of interests the different groups shared a common destiny:

"It is this commonality, rather than the differences, that should increasingly be our point of departure in our thinking and planning for the future. It is possible that we have neglected this commonality and over-emphasised the differences in the past ... The curriculum must make provision for that which the people of this country have in common and which is universal ... , while still leaving enough room to accommodate specific needs and demands ...

In this way provision is made for the complex societal situation in the Republic ...

There is another, more socio-political, reason for urgent revision of existing syllabuses ... found in the predominantly Eurocentric or White-orientated content of existing syllabuses, due to the initiative and leadership of White educationists thus far in the development of curricula and syllabuses. It is essential that the experience, ideals, values and aspirations of all communities within the South African nation find a true reflection in our learning programme. To this end it is essential that all further curricula development be undertaken as a task involving the best educationists and subject experts from all population groups and communities".

Dr Viljoen went on to emphasize that the State President had requested that urgent attention be given to the revision of the existing syllabuses.<sup>83</sup>

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83 Department of National Education, Speech on Curriculum Renewal by Dr G. van N. Viljoen, Minister of Constitutional Development and of National Education, on the occasion of the opening of the annual congress of the Education Association of South Africa, Cape Town, 10 January 1990.

That such revision will touch sensitive nerve-centres is evident from the immediate and unequivocal reaction of the Conservative Party<sup>84</sup> to the above speech:

"The CP rejects uniform syllabuses for the different peoples of South Africa. Particularly a subject such as history cannot be presented from a general South African perspective. The Afrikaner and the broad White community insists that history be transferred to the next generation from its own perspective and ... world-view."

It is significant that, although Dr Viljoen never mentioned history specifically, the Conservative Party interpreted his speech as an assault on current history syllabuses.

Differing or conflicting forms of historical consciousness within one society are at once the cause and result of strong political opposition and tensions. With the rise of the national states, the idea of the nation was central to history teaching and historical consciousness could become identical with national consciousness. The crisis in a national state (e.g. Germany in 1945, South Africa/Afrikanerdom in 1902 and 1989) brings with it a crisis of historical consciousness, which leads to the questioning of current historical consciousness, and to the need to achieve through new syllabuses a reorientation of this consciousness. Such a crisis offers the opportunity to examine anew the relationship between historical consciousness and history teaching. Jeismann<sup>85</sup> refers to a process of "historical enlightenment" ("historische Aufklärung), a reflective process whereby an explanation is sought for differing interpretations of the same event or phenomenon. Such a reflective attitude is the prerequisite for mutual correction. The resulting teaching

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84 Die Konserwatiewe Party van Suid-Afrika, Persverklaring uitgereik deur Mnr Andrew Gerber LV (Brits) woordvoerder oor Nasionale Opvoeding 1990-01-11.

85 K.E. Jeismann, Geschichtsbewusstsein, in K. Bergmann et al., Handbuch der Geschichtsdidaktik, pp.40-42.

attempts then to defuse the conflict potential contained in divergently accentuated memories.

These examples as well as the Georg-Eckert-Institut model show what is feasible in the way of mutual textbook revision. Under the auspices of the Department of National Education or some other "General Affairs" body, a multicultural, representative panel consisting of educationists, historians, textbook writers and others, could ensure the elimination of most, if not all, overt bias, negative and emotive references, stereotypes, Feindbilder etc., in history textbooks. If Germany could succeed in its bilateral agreements with former arch-enemies such as Poland, France, and Israel, South Africans should be able to succeed. This would be a positive beginning. The identification of such negative aspects in textbooks is relatively easy, as this investigation proves. Their elimination should also be fairly easily achieved. The textbooks by Graves, discussed briefly in the previous chapter, prove that this can indeed be done. They also show that a more critical, analytical approach to the past is possible, and of course desirable.

The possibility of reaching agreement on the content of history syllabuses is more difficult. There would appear to be certain general principles for syllabus revision on which most South Africans could probably agree. From the foregoing pages it is clear that the criticism of the present syllabuses centres on their Eurocentric vision, their White - even Afrikaner - centredness. Syllabus revision would have to take this into account and establish a more acceptable balance between "White " and "Black" history. A revised self-image and a more positive image of other groups are called for, so that history syllabuses can serve to unite, rather than divide. Syllabuses will have to accommodate a spectrum of diverse, sometimes opposing, historical

positions, with the emphasis on unity in diversity.<sup>86</sup> Insofar as South African history is highly controversial in terms of the different interpretations, it offers an extraordinarily fertile field for teaching and learning about history as a process, whereby historical skills may be acquired. A more open attitude to the problems of historical interpretation, particularly South African history, in other words a multi-perspective approach, is called for.<sup>87</sup>

Defining culture as "a unity of differences," Laeng<sup>88</sup> makes a case for a multidimensional approach to education (and by implication history teaching) leading to the acknowledgement of diversity and richness in a framework of mutual enrichment. In similar vein, Durojaiye<sup>89</sup> describes how in many multicultural African countries an important aim of education is to foster a sense of nationhood among different groups, "to weave together a diversity of cultural yarns in a colourful and enduring garment of nationhood".

Where two or more groups experienced a common event or series of events (for example the frontier wars), their versions are likely to differ. If the historical events concerned cannot be presented without bias, then all the versions should be offered to enable the pupil to reach his own conclusions.<sup>90</sup> In 1930 the eminent educationist, E.H. Brookes,<sup>91</sup> wrote : "We should perhaps feel a

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86 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolgeskiedenis, in Historia, November 1989, pp.19-21.

87 O. van den Berg and P. Buckland, Beyond the History Syllabus. Constraints and Opportunities, pp.47-51.

88 M. Laeng, Culture et Multiculturalisme entre le passé et l'avenir, in W. Mitter and J. Swift (Ed.), Education and the Diversity of Cultures.

89 M.O.A. Durojaiye, Multiculturalism - A Challenge for African Education, in W. Mitter and J. Swift (Ed.), Education and the Diversity of Cultures.

90 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolgeskiedenis, in Historia, November 1989, pp. 18-21; and J.C. Moll, et al., Tussengroep-verhoudinge soos Weerspieël in die Suid-Afrikaanse Historiografie, pp. 73-75.

91 E.H. Brookes, Native Education in South Africa, p.70.

little shamefaced at telling a class of Native children the story of Bloedrivier (sic) in exactly the same way as we should tell it to a class of white children. Our heroes should not all be white men". His advice still stands.

Future history syllabuses, to allow for diversity, will have to display a strong regional flavour, in keeping with the increasing tendency toward decentralisation, also in the provision of education. This could make pupils' identity-formation and orientation easier. Such syllabuses will have to reflect a greater involvement with the African continent of which South Africa is an important, integral part.<sup>92</sup>

If history teaching is to fulfil its functions of making a contribution to national orientation, legitimacy and a new identity for the new South Africa, then the history syllabuses need to be drastically revised. Syllabuses should allow for local, regional, cultural and ethnic diversity, as they already do to a very limited extent.

The Department of National Education's imminent investigation into the content of South African school courses<sup>93</sup> provides an ideal opportunity to produce, as a matter of urgency, history syllabuses which will include, rather than exclude, most of the country's inhabitants as participants. As van Jaarsveld<sup>94</sup> succinctly points out, the nature and content of future syllabuses will depend on who is governing South Africa.

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92 See O. van den Berg and P. Buckland, Beyond the History Syllabus Constraints and Opportunities, p.51.

93 Address by Dr R Stumpf, Deputy Director General, Department of National Education, at DET Macroplanning Conference, 28 September 1989.

94 F.A. van Jaarsveld, Omstrede Suid-Afrikaanse Skoolgeskiedenis, in Historia, November 1989, p.18.



South Africa's past never did belong to the British, it does not now belong to the Afrikaners, nor should it in a future South Africa belong to the Blacks. Our past, like our future, belongs to all who call South Africa home.

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