

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

**BY**

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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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. CHERNIS**

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 diegene 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.