

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. Shafer¹ 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;

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.

Jeismann² 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",

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.³ 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.⁴ Kohn concurs that nationalities are the products of the living forces of history and are, therefore, fluctuating, never rigid.⁵

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".⁶ 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.).⁷ 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

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.⁸ 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.⁹ 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.¹⁰

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.¹¹ 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.

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.¹² 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, Salewski¹³ 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.¹⁴ South Africa has been, is today, and is likely to be for a long time to come, a vivid

¹² O. Hauser, Geschichte und Geschichtsbewusstsein, pp.7-8.

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

¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

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.¹⁶ 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.¹⁷ Kamenka¹⁸ concurs that nationalism is to be distinguished from "mere patriotism or national consciousness", as does Plamenatz,¹⁹ 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.

Minogue²⁰ 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,²¹ present-day nationalism is a compound of a number of factors, of which the following are the most important:

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 Kohn²² speaks of the "idea" of nationalism, as a "state of mind", an "act of consciousness". Plamenatz²³ 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.²⁴ Hertz²⁵ 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.

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.

Shafer²⁶ 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.

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

Shafer's²⁷ 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. Shafer²⁸ 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 light²⁹: the Jews, the Greeks, the Chinese, the Russians, the British, are but a few better-known examples.

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

28 Ibid., p.181.

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

Kohn³⁰ 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.³¹ Van Jaarsveld terms this the secularisation of the New Testament idea of the Christian calling.³² Similarly Hans Glöckel says of Communism that it is secularised theology.³³ 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".³⁴ That God consciously created their

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.³⁵

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,³⁶ 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").³⁷ 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.³⁸

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").³⁹ One or two

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: Snyder⁴⁰ 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, Burns⁴¹ 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,⁴² 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,⁴³ in his "The Rise of Russian Nationalism 1825-1855", writes of Russia's "great mission", while the novelist Nikolai Gogol⁴⁴ 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.

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".⁴⁵ 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 Mosse⁴⁶ 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.

Weymar⁴⁷ 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 Jaarsveld⁴⁸, too, warns of the dangers of nationalistic self-infatuation, which he calls narcissism.

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.⁴⁹

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

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.⁵⁰

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.⁵¹

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

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.⁵²

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.⁵³

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

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").⁵⁴

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".⁵⁵

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*.⁵⁶ 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.⁵⁷ This view is supported by De Kiewiet, and the

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.⁵⁸ 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.⁵⁹ 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.⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹ 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

⁶¹ 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.⁶²

In 1938, with the centenary of the Great Trek, J.J. Pienaar⁶³ could state that the commemoration was a "godly inspiration". He quotes Theo Wassenaar's poem "By die Mylpaal"⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵ 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.⁶⁶

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

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.⁶⁷ 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 ⁶⁸:

"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

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 Jaarsveld⁶⁹, 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.⁷⁰ 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.⁷¹ 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.

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.⁷²

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.⁷³

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

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 Jaarsveld⁷⁴ 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,⁷⁵ 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

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 length⁷⁶ :

"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 Greyling⁷⁷ 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, Raubenheimer⁷⁸ 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

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.⁷⁹ 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").⁸⁰ 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

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.¹ 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.²

Educational policy-making, especially in plural societies, is essentially a political activity. Davies's³ 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

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.⁴ A Frenchman⁵ 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.⁶

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. Lauwerys⁷ 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

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.

Kandel⁸ 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.⁹ 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.¹⁰ 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".¹¹

Dalhuisen¹² 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

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. Lewis¹³ 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 Jeismann¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

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.

Quandt¹⁶ 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.¹⁷

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, Dance¹⁸ 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).

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. Jeismann¹⁹ 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 open²⁰ (see Chapter 8). De Kiewiet²¹ 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 Report²² 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.²³ In 1961 F.A. van Jaarsveld pleaded for a scientific investigation of the historical views and nationalist

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.²⁴ 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

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.²⁵ 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").²⁶ 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.²⁷ 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

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")²⁸ 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,²⁹ 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.³⁰ 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

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.³¹

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.³²

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.

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.

Schörken³³ 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,³⁴ 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",³⁵ just as historical consciousness in the broader sense provides man with a fixed point, or orientation in time.³⁶ Jeismann³⁷ 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

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.³⁸

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

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

Nevins.³⁹

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 Preez⁴⁰ 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 Jaarsveld⁴¹ has sketched some of the problems confronting the writers of school history textbooks.

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.II.

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.⁴² 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.⁴³

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

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), Dance⁴⁴ 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.⁴⁵

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,⁴⁶ as this study will illustrate.

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 Fitzgerald⁴⁷ 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

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.⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰

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.⁵¹

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 Jaarsveld⁵² 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",⁵³ the symbiosis of politics and history. The historian becomes prosecutor, detective, advocate and judge.⁵⁴

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".⁵⁵ 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

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.⁵⁶

A study of textbooks can reveal the warped perceptions in the rudimentary forms of historical consciousness which are to be found in school texts. Schissler⁵⁷ 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. Dance⁵⁸ points out that some historians recommend sticking to dates which, they contend, cannot lie. He shows how

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.⁵⁹

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".⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹

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

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. Billington⁶² 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".⁶³

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 Dance⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵ The textbooks examined in this investigation also abound in examples of derogatory or loaded language.

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's⁶⁶ 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."⁶⁷

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,⁶⁸ and other negative Feindbilder lend themselves to mobilisation for political purposes. Du Preez⁶⁹ 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.⁷⁰ 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 Schissler⁷¹ point out, such an analysis reveals that stereotypes and prejudices

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 Schmid⁷² 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.

Matthäus⁷³ 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,

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 stereotype⁷⁴ (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

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.⁷⁵ 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.⁷⁶

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

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.⁷⁷

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 Preez⁷⁸ 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.

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.