

## PART II

### CHAPTER 3

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

##### 1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 Ibid., p.97.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The examination paper for the Second Class Certificate of 1860 is

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

11 Ibid, pp.22-23.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

24 De Zuid-Afrikaan, 21 March 1874.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

36 Ibid., p.140.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Give a brief account of two of the following events:

- (a) The War with Hintza
- (b) The War with Ceteswayo
- (c) The Basuto Rebellion." 42

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

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

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41 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1905-1906, p.334.

42 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1903-1904, p.452.

43 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1905-1906, p.333.

44 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1906-1907, p.99.

45 S.A.L., Cape of Good Hope University Calendar for the Years 1900-1902, p.226.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The history syllabuses for the lower standards that were compiled

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

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

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

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

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

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

73 Ibid., p.6.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 5.1 Common Characteristics of the Textbooks Examined

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

## 5.2 Analysis of the Texts

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In his preface, Noble mentions the record of colonial progress

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

secret of its purpose.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## 6. SUMMARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

## CHAPTER 4

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

#### 1 THE AWAKENING OF AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

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

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

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

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

2 Ibid., p.601.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Within a year the two Republics had been extinguished.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

15 De Zuid-Afrikaan, 28.4.1857.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For Std 4 the 1895 syllabus prescribed the history of the Republic, beginning with the Great Trek, and the history of South Africa from 1486 to 1600. For Std 5 the entire history of South Africa and the Z.A.R. in particular was required, as well as the history of the Reformation in broad outline. As before, the Std 6 classes dealt with the repetition and extension of the history of South Africa.<sup>46</sup>

The examination papers set by the Raad van Examinatoren in 1898<sup>47</sup> provide considerable insight into the nature of the history being studied in the Z.A.R. at the time. There is a heavy emphasis on conflict and disputes with Britain and on military history generally. In the three examinations (I, II and III Class) for teachers, there are questions on the Great Trek, battles such as Blood River and Ingogo, the War of the Axe, the Diamond Fields Dispute, conditions of citizenship in the Z.A.R. and the "Sister Republic", and the Sand River and Bloemfontein Conventions. In these, as well as the "Schoolwedstrijd" Examinations, there are always questions on the Annexation and the Anglo-Transvaal War, another example of bias by overemphasis, although understandable. The period 1877-1881 must have been covered in considerable detail, judging from the following examples of questions posed:

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45 T.E.D.A., Z.A.R. Schoolgids 1895, pp. 36,61.

46 T.E.D.A., Z.A.R. Schoolgids 1895, p.39.

47 A.I. Raubenheimer, Die Geskiedenis-Handboek op Skool met Besondere Verwysing na Suid-Afrika, p.19.

"What were the explicit promises made by Shepstone in his Annexation Proclamation ... with reference to :

- (a) an own legislature for the people ("volk");
- (b) the official use of the Dutch language?";

"What is the main content of the extraordinary Proclamation issued by the Triumvirate in December 1880?"

It would have been interesting to have been able to discover some of the answers to the following questions posed in the 1898 "Vorbereidend Examen":

"When did the Hottentots gain equality with the whites in the Cape Colony according to the law, and what is your opinion regarding the complete legal equality between black and white in South Africa?"

The questions on South African history contained in the 1899 Examination <sup>48</sup> also illustrate to what degree the British and the Blacks were perceived to be a threat, especially in the military field:

- "Describe the first conquest of the Cape by the English"
- "Name in chronological order ... the battles during the War of Independence ("Vrijheidsoorlog")"
- "What can you tell of the third Basuto War fought by the Free State? And the war against Makapan?"
- "Moselalatze (sic) was three times defeated by the Voortrekkers: where, when and under which Commandants did these victories take place?"
- "Name the four greatest battles of the War of Independence, referring to (a) the name of our commanders, (b) the day and the month of each battle and (c) the outcome of the conflict in each case."

The dominance of military terminology - wars, battles, victories, struggles, conquests, etc. is strongly reminiscent of Cape Colonial historical writing. In both instances, the new states had been threatened, or had felt themselves to be threatened, by external enemies on their frontiers. By 1899 when the above examinations were taken, the Z.A.R. once more perceived itself to be the imminent victim of further British aggression. The Jameson Raid and complicity of certain Uitlander elements on the

Rand in the attempt to overthrow the Republican Government had raised national sentiment to fever-pitch. The stronger the Imperial pressure on the Transvaal became, the more its citizens drew inspiration from their national history.<sup>49</sup>

The 1899 "Onderwijzerexamen"<sup>50</sup> covered a section headed "Staatsinstellingen, Z.-Afrika" with questions on the legislature, judiciary and executive of the Z.A.R. Government, and the constitutional and political issues in the other South African states, e.g., "Compare the composition of the Executive Council in this Republic with that in the 'Sister Republic'". In the papers for both teacher's certificates the following question was set:

"What are the stipulations of the present constitution of this Republic concerning the equalisation of people of colour ('gekleurden') and whites?"

A knowledge of a state's constitution and political structures is, as had been discussed in earlier chapters, regarded as an essential means of legitimating that state's authority.

## 2.2. History Teaching in the Orange Free State

After the signing of the conventions of 1852 and 1854, the bonds between the Afrikaners of the north also tended to slacken and dissolve; internal dissensions, individualism, local disputes and civil strife were the prevailing symptoms in the Transvaal of the 1860's. There were insufficient binding factors to promote unity and a true national consciousness. The renewed attack by the British government on the independence of the Republics was to alter this. The change first came about in the Free State. Unifying forces such as the wars against the Basuto drew the Free

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49 F.A. van Jaarsveld and J.I. Rademeyer, Teorie en Metodiek vir Geskiedenisonderrig, p.87.

50 Ibid., pp.36-37.

Staters together as a conscious group, with a newly discovered perception of their national personality and their common destiny. It was a spur to national awareness; the Orange Free State became their fatherland. In 1874 the President instructed that the O.F.S. anthem be set to music for use in state schools.

In their indignation at the threat from outside, the Free Staters gave thought to themselves and their history. Questions were posed as to their origin, place and future in South Africa. As a group they were requiring orientation through history. It was in this spirit that the first Free State and Afrikaner historical writing saw the light of day with its essence being the relations between British and Boer, and with the Great Trek as its first pole or starting point.<sup>51</sup>

H.J. Hofstede's Geschiedenis van den Oranje-Vrijstaat (1876) was made possible by the financial support of the Free State Government. The title reflects a limited vision that was not yet extended to the rest of South Africa. At a time of crisis (the loss of the Diamond Fields and wars on the eastern boundary), it created a point of departure in the Free Staters' history which gave them a background and a frame on which they could weave their dreams for the future. It was the product of, and stimulus for, a growing national consciousness.

The Anglo-Transvaal War of 1880-81 broadened Free State patriotism into a more encompassing Afrikaner patriotism. In contrast to Hofstede, C.P. Bezuidenhout's little book, De Geschiedenis van het Afrikaansche Geslacht van 1688 to 1882, provided a common basis for the origins and meaning of the existence of the Afrikaner people. An interest developed in the collection of source material dealing with their forebears and a great veneration of their predecessors. Monies were collected for

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<sup>51</sup> See F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History, pp. 33-35; and Die Afrikaner en sy Geskiedenis, pp. 82-92, by the same author.



a national monument to Retief and other Voortrekker heroes. The stronger the national awareness became in the 1880's, the greater was the need felt for "clear and correct" facts on the previous generation in school books, and that these facts should be presented from an Afrikaner point of view.<sup>52</sup>

The aim of education in the early O.F.S., as in the Z.A.R., was to enable children to read the Bible and prepare them for catechism, and thus for acceptance in the community. The first school in Bloemfontein was established in 1849 with an enrolment of 28.<sup>53</sup>

Three years later the first education regulation was promulgated, prescribing reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography, Dutch and English. The private English schools offered history among the fourteen subjects in their curriculum.<sup>54</sup> It is not known what history was taught, but one may safely assume that it was the same history as was being taught in Cape schools at the time, i.e. British history.

In 1863 the Volksraad appointed an education commission to revise and supplement the fragmentary education regulations already in existence. The report which was accepted by the Volksraad as the Education Ordinance of 1863 made provision for, amongst others, Bible history and history as such. The spirit and content of this ordinance was very similar to that of the Z.A.R. of 1859. It was not possible to establish exactly what the nature of the subject content was. At Grey College in 1868, for example, we do know that the subjects examined included Bible history, general

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- 52 See F.A. van Jaarsveld, The Afrikaner's Interpretation of South African History, p.36.
- 53 P.S. Malan, Onderwys in die Oranje-Vrystaat (1854-1874), p.26:
- 54 P.A. Grobbelaar, Middelbare Onderwys in die Oranje-Vrystaat, 1910-1952, Met Spesiale Verwysing na Leergange en Leerplanne, pp.6-8.

history (the history of the Netherlands according to Bosscha from 1500, and the history of England up to the end of the reign of Edward II).<sup>55</sup>

Ordinance No. 5 of 1872 also made provision for the teaching of history (Bible, general and "besonder" i.e. Free State) at both Grey College and the Normal School in Bloemfontein and the district schools.<sup>56</sup> All schools receiving state aid were subject to annual inspection. Amongst the subjects to be examined by the inspectors was general history. At this time Free State schools did not have textbooks written specifically for them, and would have been using the same standard British textbooks as the Cape schools (see Ch.3). Brebner, the Inspector of Education, makes no mention of history teaching in his inspection reports of the 1870's, although many other subjects are reported on.<sup>57</sup>

In October 1874, Brebner wrote to the University of the Cape of Good Hope concerning the administration of candidates from the O.F.S. wishing to write the University's examinations. Permission for O.V.S. candidates to enter was granted the following year.<sup>58</sup>

By 1876 however Brebner was reporting that at Winburg the pupils had an "adequate" knowledge of the history of South Africa, and at Ventersburg "a very good" knowledge. At Bethlehem they had studied only Arthur's History of England. At Grey College only general history was examined.<sup>59</sup> In his report for 1878 the Inspector of Education complained that at Kroonstad the pupils were learning "English history instead of Dutch (history)".<sup>60</sup> At the school where H.J. Hofstede, mentioned above, taught,

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55 P.S. Malan, Onderwys in die Oranje Vrystaat, p.306.

56 Ibid., 339.

57 Ibid., Ch.7.

58 Ibid., p.433.

59 Unisa, Verslag van den Staat van het Openbaar Onderwijs in den Oranjevrijstaat over het Dienstjaar 1876-7, pp.9-17.

60 Unisa, Verslag van den Staat van het Openbaar Onderwijs in den Oranjevrijstaat, 1878, p.13.

Brebner reported that the pupils knew only "a little" South African history, while at Grey College the pupils' knowledge of, interestingly, the history of the Cape Colony was "very good".<sup>61</sup>

It is strange that nowhere throughout the reports in the late 1870's does Brebner give an indication as to whether Hofstede's book was being studied, while the titles of textbooks in several other subjects, including those for English history, are mentioned. History teaching appears to have been haphazardly organised, being taught one year in a particular school, but not necessarily the next. Beside the chronic shortage of textbooks, there was also a desperate shortage of suitably qualified teachers in the Free State, as in the other South African states.<sup>62</sup>

From 1879, student teachers studied the history of South Africa to 1806 during their second year of study.<sup>63</sup> From the reports of this period, it appears that South African history was synonymous with Cape history.<sup>64</sup> In the appendix to his 1878-79 Report, Brebner lists the subjects for examinations for each standard: In Std 4, "Geskiedenis van Zuid Afrika" is introduced; in Std 5, "modern" General history, and in Std 6 "De Oude Geschiedenis".<sup>65</sup> By 1883 the syllabus for Std 7 was also being prescribed: the history of Holland from the abdication of Charles V to the death of William III, or the history of England from 1485 to 1702.<sup>66</sup> Just as history teaching in colonial schools at the time was orientated towards the British Empire and its history, so the Republican schools looked to Holland for their history. This

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- 61 Unisa, Verslag van den Staat van het Openbaar Onderwijs in den Oranjevrijstaat, 1878, pp.25-26.
- 62 E.G. Malherbe, Education in South Africa, Vol.1, p.247.
- 63 P.S. Malan, Openbare Onderwys vir Blankes in die Oranje-Vrystaat 1874-1899, p.60.
- 64 Unisa, Verslag van den Staat van het Openbaar Onderwijs in den OVS over het Dienstjaar 1878-79, p.5.
- 65 Ibid., Bijlage A, p.26.
- 66 Unisa, Verslag van den Staat van het Openbaar Onderwijs, in den Oranjevrijstaat 1883, p.35.

remained the content of the Free State history syllabuses until the outbreak of war in 1899. The higher standards, of course, followed the Cape syllabuses to qualify themselves for admission to the University of the Cape of Good Hope examinations.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century in South Africa was characterised by the emotional debate on the language issue. Dutch, English and gradually Afrikaans too, became locked in a three-corned contest for recognition or supremacy. The history of the language issue is beyond the scope of this study. It is sufficient to note that the Free State was no exception, and that right up to the War of 1899, the question of the medium of instruction in its schools remained a most contentious issue. Where the language issue does concern us is the recommendation by an education commission appointed by the Volksraad in 1891, that Free State and South African history be taught through the medium of Dutch and not English. At a teachers congress the following year there were complaints from English-orientated teachers that certain subjects, particularly history, were difficult to teach in Dutch because the available books were unsuitable for school use.<sup>67</sup>

In 1891 President Reitz urged that Free State pupils imbibe more patriotism: by studying the deeds and experiences of their forebears, their heritage, and their country, the danger that the Free State would lose its "oranje-kleur" would be diminished.<sup>68</sup> Again in 1896, at a teachers' congress, it was necessary to emphasize that " a truly national spirit and ardent love of the fatherland" should be inculcated in the schools in order that pupils be willing to defend their homeland.<sup>69</sup> This reflects the awareness of the possibility of war in the wake of the Jameson Raid.

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67 P.S. Malan, Openbare Onderwys vir Blankes in die Oranje-Vrystaat, p.185.

68 Quoted in P.S. Malan, *ibid.*, p.197.

69 De Express, 10 April 1896, as quoted in P.S. Malan, *ibid.*, p.247.

It is difficult to establish to what extent the history of the Free State itself was being taught at the schools before 1899. That it was taught at all is evidenced by the report of First Inspector Kupferburger in which he deploras the poor knowledge of the geography and history of the O.F.S., and of South Africa in general, displayed by the Railway School pupils.<sup>70</sup>

### 2.3. Characteristics of Republican History Syllabuses

It has been seen that from the early 1880's history teaching in the Z.A.R. included recent events which were treated as history. In fact contemporary history received the most attention. In this way the political and national awareness of pupils could be increased, and the policies of the Republican Government legitimated.

The period of the Great Trek and the 1880-81 War of Independence emerge as the main axes of Republican history.

The Government consciously fostered a knowledge of the Transvaal's own national history to reinforce identity and to provide national orientation for the young Republic. By the early 1890's pupils were being expected to study their country's history in the context of South African history. British history was treated as part of general history. The Netherlands, rather than Britain, figured as Mother Country.

In contrast to the history being taught in Colonial schools at that time, history in Transvaal schools placed the greatest emphasis on South African or "national" history.

From the examination questions of the period, it is clear that a detailed knowledge of the events surrounding the Great Trek, the Diamond Fields Dispute, and the Annexation of 1877, was required.

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70 Unisa, Rapport van den Eersten Inspecteur van Scholen gedurende de Maanden Februari-Juni 1898, p.51.

In this manner an acute awareness of British injustices could be aroused. Both the British and the Blacks were seen as threats to the Republic's existence. This anxiety manifested itself in the heavy emphasis on military conflicts. The stronger the British threat loomed, the more the Republic could draw inspiration from its "heroic" past.

The Orange Free State, the borders of which were more secure than those of the Z.A.R., and which did not suffer the trauma of Annexation, a War of Independence or the Jameson Raid, was slower to introduce "national" history into its schools. There was not the same emphasis on current events, but rather an offering of South African history in more general terms. There was, nevertheless, an effort at establishing an identity of its own through the content of history teaching, and a consciousness of an affinity with Afrikaners beyond the borders of the Free State Republic.

#### 2.4. The Availability of Textbooks in the Republics

Until well into the 1890's both republics experienced a chronic shortage of suitable school textbooks. The imported Dutch books were often difficult for Afrikaans-speaking children to understand, and, moreover, their content was not always suited to South African conditions. Neither state produced a comprehensive indigenous history textbook in Dutch until the 1890's.<sup>71</sup> In the absence of proper books in the medium of instruction, British or Cape books in English were standard fare in Transvaal and Free State schools. This had the effect of undermining the status of Dutch as the medium of instruction, and conversely, of enhancing that of English.<sup>72</sup>

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71 Hofstede's little book (1876) was a combined history and geography text.

72 See P.S. Malan, Onderwys vir Blankes in die Oranje-Vrystaat, pp.89-93, and pp.185-188.

As noted earlier, J.H. Hofstede, a teacher, approached the Free State Volksraad in 1872 for financial assistance in the writing of a concise history of the O.F.S. to ensure that the young burghers learned the history of their own country. His request was granted in the form of a £20 gratuity.<sup>73</sup> Many years later, Brebner requested the Rev. Nico Hofmeyr of Bloemfontein to compile a reader on the history of South Africa written in "Afrikaansch-Hollandsch." By 1893, Hofmeyr's Kijkjes in onze Geschiedenis was ready for publication, and the O.F.S. Volksraad awarded him twenty pounds sterling.<sup>74</sup>

During Mansvelt's term (1891-1900), an increasing number of history books met the requirements of the Z.A.R.'s Department of Education. Books were cheaper and more readily available.

In 1893 the Volksraad passed a resolution authorising the Government to appoint a suitable ("bevoegd") person to write the history of the Z.A.R., from its origins to the present.<sup>75</sup> Ten days after this resolution, the report of the bursary commission was approved granting a gratuity of £50 to G.A. Odé for the history book he had produced.<sup>76</sup>

The amount had originally been made available in 1885. G.A. Odé, who was appointed State Historian in 1893, published his Geskiedenis van Zuid-Afrika in Schetsen en Verhalen voor de Scholen in Zuid-Afrika in 1897.

Textbooks for the 1895 syllabus caused fewer difficulties than previously.<sup>77</sup> Theal had been requested by the Cape Parliament to compile a history textbook for school use. His History of South Africa was then published in condensed form in English, as well as in the Dutch translation by President Reitz in 1890 entitled

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73 See P.S. Malan, Onderwys vir Blankes in die Oranje-Vrystaat, p.93.

74 Ibid., p.187.

75 A.I. Raubenheimer, Die Geskiedenis-Handboek, p.8.

76 T.E.D.A., Z.A.R. Schoolgids 1892, p.30.

77 T.E.D.A., Z.A.R. Schoolgids 1897, p.12.

Korte Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika, van 1486 tot 1814, and Korte Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika van 1486 tot 1835, in 1891. President Kruger was apparently persuaded by Reitz to purchase 500 copies for use in the Z.A.R. In both the English and Dutch versions, Theal's books were widely used in all four South African States.<sup>78</sup>

## 2.5 The Influence of Theal on South African Historiography

The influence of Theal on textbook writers since 1890 has been widely recognized. B.J. Liebenberg<sup>79</sup> calls him "the great pioneer" of South African history. According to Ken Smith,<sup>80</sup> no other historian has stamped his authority on the study of South African history to the same extent, while Merle Babrow<sup>81</sup> regards him as South Africa's most prolific and influential historian. Yet all agree that he is also a controversial figure; the severity of his critics was, and is, equalled by the "warmth and ardour of his many admirers".<sup>82</sup> His interpretation of South African history has been so pervasive over so long a period that a brief look at the controversy surrounding some of his views would be appropriate at this point.

According to Saunders,<sup>83</sup> the pro-Colonist, anti-Black stance which Theal adopted was the common position amongst his settler colleagues. As far as his South African audience was concerned, Theal aimed to use his writing to help reconcile Boer and Briton. Theal would have it that the Blacks welcomed White rule; he had

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78 A.I. Raubenheimer, Die Geskiedenis-Handboek, p.11.

79 B.J. Liebenberg, George McCall Theal as Geskiedskrywer, in B.J. Liebenberg et al., Strominge in die Suid-Afrikaanse Historiografie, p.12.

80 K. Smith, The Changing Past, p.31.

81 M. Babrow, Theal: conflicting opinions of him, in B.J. Liebenberg et al., Strominge in die Suid-Afrikaanse Historiografie, p.13.

82 Ibid., p.18.

83 C. Saunders, The Making of the South African Past. Major Historians on Race and Class, p.20.



no doubt that the imposition of White rule was right as well as inevitable. As a Social Darwinist, he assumed that the strongest and fittest would win, and that might was right. As Whites were superior, their conquest of others was justified. White expansion formed the vehicle of the spread of civilisation and its triumph over barbarism. Saunders contends that Theal did more than anyone else "to establish a tradition of strongly pro-colonist, an anti-Black historical writing and to create the racist paradigm which lay at the core of that tradition and which served to justify white rule". According to Saunders, later historians took over from Theal certain racial myths, which he did more than anyone else to propagate.

Before Whites arrived Theal believed there was almost constant strife, cruelty and misery. He presented an almost unmitigated picture of Black barbarism. African societies were static. He was at pains to find evidence to prove that Bantu-speakers arrived in South Africa relatively late, and therefore had no more right to land in the country than Whites. He did more than anyone else to establish a pseudo-scientific basis for the myth of the empty land. In propagating a myth of an empty interior in the 1830's, Theal was legitimating White claims to that region. Theal helped create a picture of the South African past which, if Blacks were present at all, it was in a distinctly subordinate role. Blacks might rob Whites and fight them, but they were not equal or fellow actors in the historical drama.

Smith<sup>84</sup> mentions that Theal was much beloved by the Afrikaners and by Afrikaner historians in particular. Theal was the first English historian to comprehend the striving and struggles of the Republican Afrikaners. Bosman<sup>85</sup> acknowledges Theal's "great love for the Dutch-Afrikaans Colonists", and the latter's admiration for their share in South Africa's history, but also his

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84 K. Smith, The Changing Past, p.37.

85 I.D. Bosman, Dr. George McCall Theal as die Geskiedskrywer van Suid-Afrika, p.120-129.

tendency to overemphasize certain arguments to make sure that his pro-Boer message was heard. Bosman correctly interprets the real reasons why Theal was so revered by the Afrikaners, and so harshly criticised by liberal historians: his outlook on life was in line with a great part of the Afrikaans nation of the nineteenth century, and he did not hide his sympathy with their pastoral, conservative approach to life. Theal himself was a religious man, recognizing the will and works of God in historical events.

Theal's treatment and understanding of the Boers is sympathetic and warm. It is not surprising that for several decades Afrikaners regarded Theal's history as the standard history of South Africa.

In the late 1870's and early 1880's there was a slow but steady merging of interests between the rural Cape Afrikaners and the English-speaking business community. Among other things, this led to the political alliance between Hofmeyr and Rhodes. Theal came to identify strongly with this "colonial nationalist" attitude, developing the theme of the formation of a new White South African society, ruled by both White groups. In this sense it was Theal who was responsible for the invention of the concept of a "White South Africa" in historical writing. Before judging him too harshly one should remember that Theal, like all historians, was a product of his age. On other continents too, historians were pro-White, sanctioning Western expansion by pointing to the progress and spread of Christianity and civilization it brought in its wake. To accuse him of racism in the late 20th century sense of the word would probably be anachronistic. Theal's continuing importance and influence are illustrated by the fact that not only are many school textbooks largely based on his work, but there are still historians who rely on and consult him.<sup>86</sup>

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86 M. Babrow, Theal: Conflicting Opinions of Him, in B.J. Liebenberg (Ed.), Strominge in die Suid-Afrikaanse Historiografie, p.18.

### 3. AN ANALYSIS OF HISTORY TEXTBOOKS USED IN REPUBLICAN SCHOOLS TO 1900

#### 3.1 Characteristics of Republican Textbooks

The generally anti-British tone of these works is clear throughout. In contrast to the pro-British textbooks reviewed in Chapter 3, these books are written from an unashamedly Afrikaans perspective.

The brave and gallant British soldiers of the British-orientated works now make way for the brave and courageous Boer commandos doing battle with the British and various indigeneous peoples. The Republican textbooks, like their Colonial counterparts, concentrate to a great extent on conflict. Much is made of wars, battles and rebellions, except that this time the heroes are not British, but Boer.

Where the Colonial books underemphasize the importance of the Dutch period in Cape history, and ignore or downplay events such as Slagters Nek, the Republican textbooks have an obvious Dutch orientation, and tend to overemphasize the significance of Slagters Nek, Boomplaats, and the like. There is an acute awareness of British injustices such as the loss of the Diamond Fields, and the Annexation of the Transvaal.

Yet these authors do not hesitate to take sides with the British, as fellow Whites, where the British are involved in conflicts with Blacks. This consciousness that Whites of both language groups faced a mutual threat in the form of the Black tribes, is a common thread in South African textbooks from the beginning. These textbooks are further characterised by a conscious effort on the part of the authors to establish or reinforce the particular identity of the young Republics. The trappings of nationhood figure prominently, as do patriotic verses.

The young readers are encouraged to nurture the memory of the heroic age of the Great Trek and the War of Independence. For the Transvalers in particular, their glorious past was meant to provide orientation and inspiration in the face of the British menace.

Beyond the awareness of being Transvalers or Free Staters, there is also the consciousness of being Afrikaners. The Afrikaners' claim to the land is legitimated, and given religious sanction. God brought the Whites to Africa for a purpose. The special relationship between God and the Afrikaner people, a theme which was to be much developed during the twentieth century, is already evident in the description of the Great Trek in biblical terms.

A positive self-image is reinforced by references to the noble Dutch and French stock from which the Afrikaners are descended. As in the Colonial works, the non-White peoples are dealt with in the customary stereotypes. The images of the filthy, drunken Hottentots, the wild, thieving Bushmen, and the savage, bloodthirsty Blacks, are no less prevalent in the Republican textbooks than they are in the books examined in Chapter 3.

## .2 The Textbooks Analysed

- (a) Hofstede, H.J.: Aardrijkskunde en Geschiedenis van den Oranjevrijstaat (voor Schoolgebruik), (1884)

This little book is a mere 100 pages long. More than two thirds are devoted to Part II: "Concise History of the Orange Free State" and the remainder to geography. In its parochial approach, and its conscious seeking of an individual identity, this work

is similar to Bryan's book on Natal. Chapter I deals with the history of the Cape Colony from 1486 to 1835. As with all other history textbooks of the time, the Eurocentric approach is obvious. The opening sentence sets the tone: "The First European to sail past the Cape was Bartholomeus Diaz" (p.43). The most important events of the first 150 years were the "invasions by the Hottentots and the resulting conflicts" (p.45). In this and other books reviewed, it will be obvious that there is little if any difference in the approach of Afrikaans- and English-speaking textbook writers toward the indigenous inhabitants. The stereotypes, master symbols and general bias are for all practical purposes identical.

The Huguenots receive detailed attention., bias by overemphasis. Afrikaners have every reason to be proud of the blood of these "noble and religious men" (p.48) in their veins. In contrast to the lengthy discussion of the French immigrants, the 1820 settlers are not mentioned at all, a case of bias by omission. It will be remembered that the British- orientated works reviewed earlier generally down-played the importance of the Huguenots and over-emphasized the role of the British settlers. The Dutch fought "bravely" against the British invaders, but were left in the lurch by the "cowardly" Hottentot troops; the Dutch were "forced" ("gedwongen") to accept the British terms (p.50). The Afrikaans perspective on events such as this is in marked contrast to that of pro-British works.

Chapter II of the book is devoted solely to the causes and course of the Great Trek, once more a case of bias by overemphasis. All the traditional causes, including the legacy of Slagters Nek, are given. The myth of the empty interior, used so often before and after to legitimate White occupation of the interior, is expounded: Potgieter found the Vaal region "uninhabited" due to the extermination of the early inhabitants by the "bloodthirsty" Mzilikazi. The action at Vegkop is described

vividly. Mzilikazi is again referred to as "this bloodthirsty and cruel one" (p.54). Special mention is made of the first Nagmaal held north of the Orange, and the courage and faith of the Voortrekkers, termed "Pilgrim Fathers" ("Pelgrimvaders") (p.56). The religious dimension to early Afrikaans historiography is evident here, as is the master symbol of the Afrikaners as a nation with a calling.

Further chapters deal with the history of the Free State after the Trek. An entire chapter is, understandably, devoted to the Bloemfontein Convention and the young Republic's constitution.

Chapter VI makes mention of the trappings of nationhood acquired by the new state, i.e. a coat-of-arms, a flag and the now officially named "Orange Free State" (p.75). The book is strongly supportive of attempts at federation, and expresses regret that they should have failed: "So the prospects of a United South Africa vanished once more" (p.86).

The emphasis on conflicts is characteristic of the times. Thus in a further example of bias by overemphasis, the Battle of Boomplaats is dealt with in two pages (pp.62-63), and much is made of the "raids and robberies" by Moshweshwe's followers (p.64). From its inception, the Free State was burdened "with the troublesome Moshesh as its neighbour" (p.73). Meanwhile the "cattle rustling and depredations" by the Basuto continued (p.81). The Koranna chief, Sihele Kobus, without provocation, "attacked and murdered" several families in the Boshoff district (p.81). The departure of Adam Kok's Griquas was a great boon, for the O.F.S. rid itself once and for all of these "troublesome neighbours" (p.87). Moshesh is termed a "cunning and deceitful neighbour" who was adept at using "clever talk" to manipulate his opponents (p.88). As with a wayward child, Letsoane had to be "chastised" ("tuchtigen") for his "violent deeds" (p.91). Other chiefs committed similar "raids" and "depredations" (p.92). In one incident the Basuto, under the cover of a flag of truce,

murdered a settlement of Basters in a "treacherous and cruel manner" (p.93). Similarly the Botes family was attacked and murdered "in a gruesome way". In the Kroonstad district 7 burghers and 21 Coloured servants were "murdered" (p.94), and other burghers were "murdered" on Natal territory (p.94). The next war was sparked off by the murders ("in a treacherous manner") of numbers of burghers (p.99).

The Second Basuto War produced its quota of heroic deeds: Field Cornet Robertse and his 15 men fought off "thousands of Kaffirs"; a farmhouse was defended by a half dozen burgers "against thousands of Kaffirs" (p.92). In Louw Wepener, "that brave warrior", the Free State gained its own folk-hero: "Long may the name of Louw Wepener be remembered and honoured by all" (p.95).

The Free State claim to the Diamond Fields is vigorously defended. The British intervention is termed a "violent occupation" of an area to which Waterboer "had not the slightest claim"(p.104). The loss of vast tracts of land to the north, east and west had to be accepted by the Free State in its weak position, but it was at least assured of permanent, recognized boundaries (p.107). From then on the country experienced steady growth in agriculture, education, and commerce. The book pays tribute to God, to its brave and faithful citizens, and to President Brand, for the twin blessings of freedom and peace (p.109). It concludes with an inspiring patriotic verse:

"O Vaderland, geliefde grond.  
Tot's levens allerlaatsten stond  
Blijft ge aan ons harte heilig;  
En zijn uwe ook klein, in tal en kracht,  
Geen nood, want eendracht schenkt ons macht,  
En met haar zijt gij veilig." \*

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\* "O Fatherland, beloved soil.  
To life's last moment  
You will remain sacred to our hearts;  
And though yours are small in number and strength,  
Do not be concerned, 'cause unity gives us strength  
And with her you are safe."

(b) N. Hofmeyr: Kijkjes in Onze Geschiedenis. Een Leesboek Voor School en Huisgezin, (1893)

Hofmeyr, first a teacher in Bloemfontein, later became a lecturer in history at the "staatsgymnasium" in Pretoria. During the Second Anglo-Boer War he was official chronicler of the war for the Z.A.R. Government. His Kijkjes, first published in 1893, became immensely popular throughout South Africa, and by 1921 one hundred thousand copies had been sold.<sup>87</sup> It was later published in Afrikaans as Longmans se Leesboek oor die Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika, and in English as Longman's Readings in South African History. The edition reviewed was already in its ninth impression. The book includes numerous cameos of episodes and personalities in South African history.

The Afrikaans perspective is manifest from the start. The introduction is in the form of a letter "Aan de kinderen van Zuid-Afrika":

"Dear children,  
Has mother or father ever told you of Jan van Riebeeck or Andries Pretorius, of Slagters Nek or Dingaan's Day? ... So you should get to know the history of your fatherland. Yes, it is a sacred duty ... to learn about the history of your country and your nation ... Yes, the older you become, the better you will understand what it is to be an Afrikaner (original emphasis)" (pp.5-6).

The first chapter opens in 1486 ("De Kaap ontdekt"):

"Four hundred years ago our country looked utterly different from today. There was not a single white person, the earth was wild and uncultivated. Our beautiful fatherland was then a desert, and where our towns and cities are now, stood perhaps a few 'Kafferpondokken'. South Africa did not even have a name in the civilized world at that time, because nobody had ever seen it (p.7). Only in 1486 was the dark veil which had so long hidden our beautiful shores lifted" (p.7).



The usual flattering language is used in relation to the Dutch inhabitants, and the customary disparaging terms employed for those other than Whites. Although Hofmeyer specifically mentions that the Xhosa generally spared women and children in battle, his vocabulary and the stereotypes thus created, are otherwise typical of the time: He refers to the "horrific and moving" scenes, the "Kaffir rage", "murder and destruction", a trader being "cruelly murdered in front of women and children" (pp.52-54). Hintza was a "brave but treacherous" chief (p.57). For ten years the "courageous" founder of South Africa and the first "Voortrekkers" wrestled with the rough forces of nature, wild animals, and the "cunning natives" who surrounded them (p.20). The use of the term "Voortrekker" for the Dutch settlers in 1652-1662 is an illuminating example of historical backward projection ("terugprojeksie").

The Huguenots were a "blessing"; their "simple, child-like, honest belief" remained a characteristic of the Afrikaner (p.24). Woltemade is an "unforgettable hero" (p.35). Similarly Louis Trichardt was "exceptionally brave" (p.67) and his trek a "courageous undertaking by a "small brave band" into the wilderness inhabited by "wild peoples" and animals. Uys was a "dignified," "universally respected patriarch"(pp.70-71). The Trekkers sought to buy or lease land in a "peaceful" and "honest" manner, but Mzilikazi was a "cruel, bloodthirsty heathen ... a tyrant almost without equal in the world", a "cruel" and "cunning Kaffer", and his warriors "wild savages" (p.74). Hofmeyer makes much of the massacre of burghers by the Basuto in a "treacherous" or "bestial" manner. Among the many "horrific" atrocities committed by the "cunning" Basuto, the massacre of the Basters and the group of Transvalers during the Second Basuto War "forms one dark page in history ... which will be imposed forever on the Afrikaner's memory" (p.117). This overemphasis of atrocities, and alleged atrocities, is actually a form of bias.

While the texts reviewed in Chapter 3 generally down-played

incidents such as Slagters Nek, (bias by under-emphasis or omission) Afrikaans historians tended to over-emphasize their importance. Hofmeyr devotes two chapters in highly emotive language to Slagters Nek. The importance of such grievances, whether real or imaginary, for the growth of nationalism was indicated in Chapter 1:

"Place yourself in your imagination at the foot of the hill ... where we witness a heart-rending scene. See! On the hill stands a gallows with five ropes attached to it. For whom has the gallows been erected? ... For five Afrikaner farmers ... the nooses are placed around their necks: they grow pale as they gaze at the gallows ... Here and there stands a mother or wife ... who sobs and weeps ... with broken heart and tearful cheeks the crowd returns home, but ... to this day the Afrikaner cannot forget the word 'Slagters Nek'".\*

In a eulogy uncharacteristic of its time, Hofmeyr pays tribute to the stature of the Xhosa chief Makana: he was "one of the most remarkable Kaffirs South Africa has ever produced", "a man of noble heart and inspired by high ideals, one of the most noble, deep-thinking, greatest Kaffir heroes to be found in history", etc. (p.49). Unlike Wilmot, Noble, Whiteside and other colonial writers, who reserve their praise for British troops only, Hofmeyr praises the unequalled bravery of the Xhosa warriors, whose "unbelievable courage" allowed them to face the deadly hail of the White man's bullets. In defeat, Makana's behaviour was worthy of a Roman noble: "Noble Makana! we honour you for the greatness of your rough soul" (p.50). A singular tribute indeed from a nineteenth century Republican historian.

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\* "Verplaatsen uw ons in de geest aan de voet van de heuwel ... zo zien wij er een hartroerend toneel plaatsvinden. Ziet! op de heuwel staat een galg met vijf touwen er aan gehecht. Voor wie is de galg opgericht? ... Voor vijf Afrikaner boeren ... De stroppen worden hun om de hals gedaan: zij verbleken terwijl zij de galg aanschouwen ... Hier en daar staat een moeder, een echtgenote ... die onophoudelijk snikt en weent ... Met gebroken harten en betraande wangen ging de schare huiswaarts, maar ... tot op deze dag kan de Afrikaner dat woord (Slachtersnek) niet vergeten" (p.47.).

The causes of the Great Trek are found in the usual factors. Under British rule "the natives ... although still savage barbarians, were suddenly placed on an equal footing with the white man" (p.62). The Trek is viewed as a heroic age, in which heroes such as Potgieter, Maritz, Uys, Celliers and Retief were moulded: "In one word, the history of the great trek is the history of our heroic age" (p.63). Roughly one-quarter of the work is devoted to the trials and tribulations of the Trekkers, bias by over-emphasis.

The saga of the Trek is narrated in colourful, often emotive language. The farewell to the Cape frontier soil, bought with blood, sweat and tears, in which loved ones lay buried, the last Nagmaal in a familiar environment, "a quiet tear of farewell", then at last the command to embark on a road of no return: "Trek!" (p.66). Hofmeyr alludes to the idea of the Afrikaners as God's chosen people; a parallel is drawn between the Voortrekkers and the Children of Israel: God called up the Moses' and Aarons to lead the Afrikaner people out of the Colony. The biblical allusion is maintained in the figure of Piet Retief, who like Moses of old, led his people into Canaan: "Forward then in the name of the Lord" (p.77); Dingane's last "toast" was in fact a "kiss of Judas" (p.79). The women of the Trek are referred to as "noble heroines", "mothers in the Afrikaans Israel" (p.96). Blaauwkrantz and Bushmans River, "the price which the Afrikaner Boers paid for Natal in 1838, was dear and unforgettable" (p.81). In their darkest hour God provided the desperate Trekkers with a leader, Pretorius. In contrast to the colonial historians of the time, Hofmeyr quotes the traditional version of the Vow in full (pp.86-87). At Blood River the outcome of the battle was never in doubt: "God was on their side" (p.87).

Boomplaats added a further seven names to the Afrikaans hall of fame, "their names forever engraved in the hearts of the Freestaters" (p.102). Also, the storming of the Basuto position during the Second Basuto War was " a brave undertaking"; victory

may be attributed to the "bravery" of the "courageous" Louw Wepener (pp.124-125). There is also a poem devoted to his "heroic death". A gallery of heroes, essential to all nationalisms, was provided by this, the Afrikaners' heroic age.

Hofmeyr, a Free Stater, provides an orientation for the younger generation of Republicans by urging them to draw inspiration from their forebears: "The children would do well to listen to the tales of their parents and grandparents, for they foster respect for previous generations, love for their country and nation ..." (p.112). The O.F.S. was "moulded in the crucible of the Basuto Wars" (p.112).

Just as the pro-British textbook writers, while generally anti-Boer, inevitably take sides with the Boers in Boer-Black conflicts, so Hofmeyr's anti-British stance does not prevent him from taking the part of his fellow Whites in the Anglo-Zulu War. At Isandlwana there were "miracles of courage" against the "cruel Zulus". One after the other the "brave troops" were cut down by the "bloodthirsty Zulu hordes" (pp. 136-137).

The victory at Majuba was the "most remarkable and outstanding victory in the struggle for freedom" (p.140). The British officers and men who died were, of course, brave too, and full homage was paid by the victorious Boers to General Colley. It was after all God's victory, not theirs (p.142). The book ends with "Een Zuid-Afrikaans Volkslied".

- (c) D. Aitton : Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika met een Inleiding over de Algemeene Geschiedenis voor de Scholen in de Zuid-Afrikaansche Republieken, (1887)

This work, published by the Netherlands-South Africa Society in Amsterdam in 1892 (the copy studied was from the 1897 Second Impression), like so many other South African school history

textbooks, leaned heavily on Theal (see above). In the preface, Aitton concedes that free use was made of the work of Theal: had the Society known that Theal was to publish his Korte Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika 1486-1835, they might not have proceeded. Yet Aitton's book also covers events after 1835, it is more compact for school (especially primary) use, and contains general history as well. The language was adapted to Afrikaans readers and the events of 1896 are included. Odé's book<sup>94</sup> also borrowed largely from Theal. Because the content, style and perspective in the two works is so similar, it has been considered unnecessary to examine both. In any event, these were the first scholarly textbooks written in Dutch suitable for school history teaching. The book under discussion is 326 pages long, 210 of which deal with South African history.

In the preface to the 1897 edition, Aitton writes that this is an expanded and improved edition of the Leesboek on Geschiedenis voor de Scholen in de Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek of 1892, which had been in use in the two Republics (and perhaps unofficially in certain Cape Dutch circles?). Aitton was even recommended reading for Natal history teachers<sup>95</sup>. The preface to both editions attempts to explain why the history of the Z.A.R. in the first place, and that of the neighbouring states in the second, should be taught to the youth. One gains insight into the self-understanding of the Transvalers (and Afrikaners) at this time: they had grown into a "dynamic race ... known to be god-fearing, courageous in battle, persevering and full of initiative". In the "Hollandschen Afrikaan" we recognize the "spirit of freedom" and "religious sense" of the 16th and 17th century Dutch, and of the "fine, industrious French Huguenots", the two having blended into "one nation". An extremely positive self-image is cultivated in this way. The Afrikaners of 1897

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94 i.e. Geschiedenis van Zuid-Afrika in Schetzen en Verhalen voor de Scholen in Zuid-Afrika, referred to earlier in this chapter.

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

were keenly aware of their distinct identity, an identity which was to be reinforced in the history classroom.

In its spirit and content the education being offered in Transvaal schools at the time was clearly Christian National: in wanting to teach the children the history of the "volk dezer Republiek", Church history, especially that of the Reformation was to be included. Beside "love for their own Fatherland", and the "National (Vaderlandsche) history of the Afrikaner nation", the "South African youth" should also become interested in general history. It is clear that, though this textbook was primarily produced for schools in the Z.A.R., it aimed at reaching "Zuid-Afrikaansche" youth i.e. young Afrikaners countrywide; it was to be the history not of the Z.A.R. alone, but of the whole Afrikaner nation and its fatherland. Aitton provides an orientation toward a united nation and country.

The textbook opens in traditional style: "On the 9th April van Riebeeck formally took possession of the land" (p.121). The later "treaty" with Schacher cannot strictly be viewed as a purchase of land, because the land "was already long in the possession of the settlers"; through it though the Khoi recognized the Company's "rightful possession" of the peninsula and surrounds (p.134) - thus the White man's claim to South Africa is legitimated. To provide further legitimation for the Whites' claim to the land, Aitton mentions that at various points along the coast, beacons were erected as "proof of possession", and that in August 1779 the Dutch flag was raised at the river named after the Prince of Orange (pp.159-160). In the same way further legitimation is provided for the White occupation of the interior, which on the eve of the Trek was "a wilderness ("woestenij") inhabited solely by wild animals"(p.220). At Vegkop the Trekkers placed their lot in God's hands; He granted them victory over Mzilakazi thereby giving them possession over a great part of the present Transvaal and Orange Free State. The right of the White man, and in

particular of the Afrikaner, to this half of South Africa is accorded religious sanction. (This is an argument still being used in certain political circles today). The many tribes who had earlier inhabited this region had either disappeared or ceased to be independent. Thus Potgieter could issue a proclamation whereby the whole area over which Mzilikazi had ruled became the possession of the Emigrants ("aan de Emigranten vervallen verklaard werd") (p.229). An historical event had legitimated possession of the land.

The native inhabitants are described in the derogatory terms so typical of the period: "They soon made the acquaintance of the savages ('Wilden')". They were "enemies from the start" (p.122). The "Hottentot hordes" who stood at the "lowest level of development, knew no religion, but held all sorts of superstitions and believed in witchcraft" (p.123). They were, and still are, "hideous ('walgelijk') in their appearance and stinking from filth and fat"; those without stock eagerly devoured "snakes and all sorts of insects". The settlers bore with "Christian forbearance" and "patience" the continuous "raids", murder and plunder of the "wild" inhabitants (p.125). Fifty years after the "volksplanting" the natives remained what they had always been: "lazy, working only to earn tobacco or strong drink: the Hottentots "degenerated ... through brandy" offering up health, honour and independence (p.134). The smallpox epidemics spread because of the "filthy lifestyle of these savages ('Wilden')" (p.149). The Bushmen were even lower, "wild and treacherous"; even those brought up by farmers had a "treacherous nature" (p.123). The "thieving" and "cheekiness" of the Bushmen became intolerable: they "murdered", "burned" and "stole". One can understand why "a deep hatred" towards these "raiders" ("stroopers") took root in the hearts of the colonists (p.150).

Two master symbols emerge clearly: the filthy, drunken Hottentot, and the wild, thieving Bushmen. The Blacks too were

"treacherous" in battle, fighting either "in masses" or "by means of ambush". By nature "bloodthirsty", they "leave no living soul behind on their raids": "sometimes they are even cannibals ('menscheneters')" (p.124). Dingane, for example, ordered the Retief party's heads to be crushed ("verbrijzeld"). The heart and liver were removed from Retief's body and laid before Dingane (p.231). Thus a comfortably positive self-image and a ferociously negative Feindbild of all three indigenous peoples are firmly established.

The "boundaries" of the Colony such as the Fish River were, of course, violated by the "deceitful" Xhosa. The repeated raids and invasions ("herhaalde invallen") received only reluctant attention by the British authorities. The belief took root that the British would always favour the "native" in a dispute with a farmer, thus increasing the farmers' bitterness towards the British (p.185).

Aitton's anti-British perspective is evident here and elsewhere in his book. The British took control of the Free State with "brute force" and the "thunder of cannons" ("kanongebulder") (p.257), only to grant both Republics their freedom later: "Gratitude toward God filled all, and as one they joined in prayer and the singing of psalms" (p.261). In 1857 the Vierkleur, the coat-of-arms and the motto "Eendracht maakt Macht" were adopted as symbols of the Z.A.R.'s nation and statehood. The young Trekker State south of the Vaal also acquired these symbols at this period (pp.268-271). Considerable attention is given to the mutual aid offered each other by the two "Zuster-Republieken" in times of need (p.273-274).

Understandably Aitton deals at length with the Annexation of 1877 and its consequences. The "Proclamatie" issued at Paardekraal in December 1880 is quoted in full. The most famous "heroic deeds" at Laing's Nek, Ingogo and Majuba followed, names "which the Afrikaner may in future mention with respect and justifiable



pride" (.298). Majuba was stormed with "superhuman" ("bomenschelijke") effort (p.301). The concessions made by the British in the Pretoria Convention were made out of fear "of a general movement among the Afrikaner from Simon's Bay to the Limpopo. A great strength may still go out from them, when they are united in their endeavours". A vision of Afrikaner unity and an awareness of the political and military potential of such unity is evident in these words (p.303). The chapter on the War of Independence ends with the poem, Transvaalsch Volkslied 1880, written significantly in Afrikaans, not Dutch. The sentiments and perceptions expressed are of interest to this study, as the following extracts show:

"The vierkleur of our beloved land,  
Waves once more over the Transvaal, ...

"Many storms has it withstood ...  
Stormed by Kaffir, Briton and Lion ...

"Four years long we spoke sweetly  
To regain our land  
We asked you, Briton ...  
To go away, and leave us alone.

"And with God's help we threw off  
The yoke of England ...  
So the Lord saved us once again  
All honour to Him. \*

God clearly interceded in this conflict, smiting the enemies ("Kaffer en Brit") of His people. As in the past, God enabled

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\* "Di vierkleur van ons dierbaar land,  
Di waai weer o'er Transvaal, ...  
"Veul storme het zij deurgestaan ...  
Bestormd deur Kaffer, Leeuw en Brit ...  
"Vier jaar lank het ons mooi gepraat,  
Om weer ons land te krij  
Ons vraag jou, Brit ...  
gaat weg, en laat ons blij.  
"En met "Gods hulp het ons die juk  
Van England afgegooi ...  
So het di Heer ons weer verlos;  
Ons geef Hem al die eer. "

the Z.A.R. to ward off the threat posed by the Jameson Raid: "with God's help the Transvalers also overcame this threatening danger" (p.323).

In the concluding section, "Besluit", Aitton writes of the "old struggle" between British imperialism and the "Hollandsche Afrikanen", of British contempt for the Boers and of repeated interference in South African affairs. There is also the conviction that in the future, the British Empire would hinder "the free development of the Afrikaner nationality" (p.321). The recent Raid had soured relations between the two "main elements" of the South African population, yet the book nevertheless contains a vision of the future, a united South Africa:

"Then and then alone unity will be possible, when all, regardless of their descent, regard South Africa not only as the country where they are temporarily resident, but as their Fatherland"(p. 324).

The book concludes with Een Zuid-Afrikaansch Volkslied in which a love of the land (i.e. the whole of South Africa, not merely the Z.A.R.), so dearly bought, is expressed:

"O land, bought with blood  
With noble, heroic courage ...  
My dear Fatherland  
South Africa." \*

Aitton's textbook, like so many others of the period, attempts to provide its young readers with an historical orientation: an explanation of the Z.A.R.'s present predicament is sought in past conflicts (and victories), which are greatly over-emphasised and a vision of the future is offered.

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\* "O land, gekocht door bloed,  
Door vromen heldenmoed ...  
My dierbaar Vaderland  
Zuid-Afrika."

## SUMMARY

Before 1879 there was little national consciousness or cohesion among Afrikaners. This is reflected in the lack of historical consciousness in the curriculum of Republican Schools. The crises of 1879-81 led to a national awareness among Afrikaners, in particular in the two Boer Republics. After that time it became possible to speak of Afrikaner nationalism. The two Afrikaner states became increasingly aware of their past. Inevitably, Republican youth were taught the history of their fatherland. The Republican Governments recognized the role of history teaching in the formation of an identity, in legitimating the existence of the young states, and in providing national orientation.

Soon after 1881 it was evident from the history courses in both Republics that the two poles or foci of Afrikaner history were to be the Great Trek and the War of Independence, or First Anglo-Boer War. These early syllabuses also reveal that contemporary events were included for their obvious political value. Similar to the Cape and Natal syllabuses, Transvaal and Free State history syllabuses emphasized military and political history almost to the exclusion of anything else. The syllabuses (and textbooks) of the Republican period are characterised by an acute awareness of the threat posed by both British Imperialism and Black tribes. Whereas, in Colonial history teaching, it was the British Empire that provided orientation, in Republican schools pupils were urged to look to the Netherlands as "mother country".

Gradually the Republics were able to replace the English-language Cape history textbooks with their own Dutch texts. The influence of Theal on the authors of these early works is obvious. The books display an anti-British stance. They also generally portray non-Whites as a threat and describe them in negative terms.

The foundations of Afrikaans historiography were laid in this period.