

# HISTORIOGRAPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL TRENDS IN THE TEACHING AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF HISTORY IN A CHANGING SOUTH AFRICA<sup>1</sup>

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**Historiografiese en metodologiese strominge in die onderrig en kurrikulumontwikkelingsproses van Geskiedenis in 'n veranderende Suid-Afrika**

Suid-Afrika is tans op die voorrand van insiggewende veranderinge op onderwysvlak. Geskiedenis as vak staan baie duidelik sentraal in hierdie veranderinge. Hiervan spreek die kontroverse om die vak boekdele. Die dryfvere vir hervertolking, innovasie en vernuwing van geskiedenisillabusse oor die afgelope aantal jare het aan etlike nuwe strukture of prosesse beslag gegee. Sommige strukture is as kontroversieel gesien, en ander is te emosioneel verbonde aan die apartheidsverlede. Die koorsagtige haas vir regstellende veranderinge van geskiedenisinhoud, sowel as die verwydering van die benaming "Geskiedenis" op skoolvlak, kan in só 'n mate eerste prioriteit word dat universele tendense in geskiedenisonderrig (metodologies en historiografies) geïgnoreer kan word, of selfs in die volgende paar jaar in Suid-Afrika kan stagneer.

In a dynamically changing South Africa, History as subject holds a key position in the striving for change. The former provincial education departments are regarded to have been autocratic white eurocentric systems. To date history syllabi used in South Africa were developed by associated members and specialists of these departments. The drive for reinterpretation, innovation and revitalisation of history syllabi over the past years gave rise to numerous discussions and new structures - some of which are regarded as quite controversial, emotional and belonging to the so-called apartheid past. So feverish may the quest for affirmative change in the contents, and even the name of History on school level, become that for example universal trends in History teaching (methodologically and historiographically) might sadly stagnate or be totally neglected in South Africa in the years to come.

## **Western Historiographical and Methodological trends and the practising of History in South Africa - a broad view**

The impact of trends in nineteenth and twentieth century Western historiography on the practising of history in South Africa over the past two centuries includes:

- (i) An initial striving towards the recalling/re-creation of the past along a specific

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ideological line. In this regard one may recall the Settler school and Afrikaner Nationalists as well the Black Consciousness Movement/Black nationalist writers, of whom the latter are still extant. A change in focus occurred from the Liberal historians to the Radical school, and it furthermore paved the way for the ideas of the History Workshop Group of the Witwatersrand University and others supporting People's History. Research into local/regional history or History from the bottom up became more popular and became regarded as part of addressing the history of the people, or "history from below".<sup>2</sup>

Since the eighties the practising of mainly political history was gradually "pushed" aside by comparative, socio-cultural and social historiography. People's History, as an outcome of social historiography, was in certain circles regarded as more representative of the history of man and countries than the history of the political "elite". However, its association with the political struggle in South Africa gave rise to criticism from several quarters.<sup>3</sup>

- (iii) Furthermore the use of the analytical or problem-oriented approach abroad to analyse underlying structures of modern society also gained supporters in the field of History. Close links developed with the social sciences in respect of their methodology, which upholds quantitative research, interdisciplinarity, generalisation and analytical processes. Controversies about how to deal with various cultures in the writing of History swept many parts of the First World countries. In the USA the 1990s still hosted lively discussions on tertiary level on issues such as how much the history of minority groups must be taught in a mainstream US History and to what extent Western Civilisation must be regarded as part of world or global history.<sup>4</sup>
- (iv) Lastly the global/universal (world) historiographical approach, at present, is gaining support amongst historians in South Africa. In the teaching of History on secondary level, this approach is not very clearly defined.

As in all Western countries, political trends also played a vital role in the historiographical development of South African history. As expected it also influenced History teaching — a trend, as indicated, that is not unique to South Africa but seems to be rooted in mankind itself.<sup>5</sup> Owing to recent political change in South Africa the differences between the various historiographical paradigms narrowed. In some circles the term post-modernism for the nineties is used, but vaguely defined.<sup>6</sup>

History as approached from all human perspectives involved in a specific historical event or object of study (for example all gender perspectives and not white female or black female or black male only) is perhaps a more acceptable approach to historiography. The

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C. Eloff, "History from below," paper read at the conference of the South African Historical Society, Unisa, Pretoria, 22-25 January 1991, pp. 1-14.

Compare for example C. Saunders, "Radical History - the Wits Workshop version - reviewed," *South African Historical Journal* 24, 1991, pp. 160-165; C. Hamilton and L. Witz, "Reaping the whirlwind: The Reader's Digest illustrated History of South Africa and changing popular perceptions of History," *South African Historical Journal* 24, 1991.

P.N. Stearns, *Meaning over memory. Recasting the teaching of culture and history* (London, 1993), pp. 1-17.

5. Compare with J. Barker, *The superhistorians* (1982); A. Cecil, *Six Oxford thinkers* (London, 1909).

6. P. Maylam, "Tensions within the practice of history," *South African Historical Journal* 33, November 1995, pp. 3-12.

essence of historiography is thus rooted in eventual globalism — not necessarily just related to a world view but also having as its objective the creating of local, regional, national and thematic globalism. This necessarily also contains the methodological approaches of for example the *Annales* historians, which are rooted in social, economic and interdisciplinary history. If these approaches are carefully considered and painstakingly accounted for in History curricula and History teaching, nation-building — a generally used concept in the presently changing South Africa — may spontaneously take place. The suggestion therefore is that historiography and History methodology in the teaching process must not be dominated, or in subtle ways be directed/steered by ideology, for example using controversial methods of selecting historical contents "to build a nation".<sup>7</sup> If the content (for example the cultural contributions of Gauteng) is representative of the past, then specific nation building may spontaneously develop.<sup>8</sup> Kapp's creative vision<sup>9</sup> captures the latter effectively:

The creative vision does not regard the fields of tension (within mankind) as tensions that will lead to disintegration or disruption, but regards them as creative tensions which, from a mental intellectual orientation, uses the possibilities of History as a school subject and as a scientific discipline to create a bridge that will establish History as an essential educational formative discipline under any circumstances, in any period and in any country. As a scientific discipline History must and can fulfil a creative interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary role and can broaden its field and vision without damaging its character.

Lately South African historians and teachers have been so involved in debates on how to ensure that its past is not historiographically and methodologically repeated, that fascinating historiographical trends abroad, such as Environmental History, the History of Technology and the uses of the computer in History and in History teaching as well as Universal History, may not receive attention for some years to come.

## **History and education in South Africa in the Twentieth Century**

### *History in education after the Anglo Boer War (South African War) in 1902*

After the military defeat of the Boer Republics by the British in 1902, Lord Milner set about anglicising all Dutch/Afrikaans-speaking children. It is said that an important element of his broad education policy was to ban South African history in favour of British and general history. Therefore it is not strange that the History syllabus for primary schools described the British Empire, with South Africa being part of a bigger universal British Empire.<sup>10</sup>

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7. P. Kallaway, "History education in a democratic South Africa," *Yesterday and Today* 26, October 1993, pp. 10-18.

8. Compare with R. Straughan, "Can we teach children to be good?" *Basic issues in moral, personal and social education* (USA, 1990), pp. 100-126.

9. Quotation translated from P.H. Kapp, "Die toekoms van geskiedenis as skoolvak in Suid-Afrika," *Gister en Vandag* 25, Mei 1993, p. 7.

10. R.E. Chernis, "The past in service of the present ...," *Yesterday and Today* 21, April 1991, p. 17-18.

Even after unification in 1910 the education authorities in all four provinces (Cape, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal) did not want to disturb the sensitive relations between the two white language groups. Therefore, for many years, the South African history of the period 1652 to 1895 was covered in schools and appeared to display a stereotyped, narrow and rather sterile view of the South African past.

Furthermore, political tensions between the South African Party, as leading party and as Party after 1910 that wanted to enhance a spirit of "forgive and forget" amongst the white people of South Africa, and the National Party, which appeared to cherish the Afrikaner and Dutch/Afrikaans-speaking section of the population, ideologically affected the teaching of History.<sup>11</sup> This eventually resulted in History teaching being declared non-committal during the period 1918-1948, as far as official history syllabi were concerned.<sup>12</sup> With regard to black education other weaknesses existed. South Africa followed a pattern of ethnic segregation for years — this had an effect on education, for example general development and separation.<sup>13</sup> This also appeared visibly in the History syllabi and History textbooks. The latter were written by prescribed authors from 1948 until recently.<sup>14</sup>

### *Desegregation and change as platforms for conflict*

The changes which the South African political system underwent, namely initially to accommodate Indians and Coloureds (from 1983), and then blacks (from 1994), undoubtedly played an enormous role in the change of the national education policy. This also affected the teaching of History. The education crisis during 1987-1988 led to the creation of the National Education Co-ordinating Committee (NECC). This Committee established the History Commission, which included members of the History Workshop in Johannesburg and presented People's History (section 1). This committee was seen as representative of "the best historians who could practically be assembled [sic]". People's History was hereby given a chance to act in a time of educational crisis. Basically it implied that a new curriculum framework had to be proposed in which History could be practised. An investigation was carried out into the needs in this area of education.<sup>15</sup> It failed due to its association with political mobilisation.<sup>16</sup>

According to the (NEPI)-Report of the NECC,<sup>17</sup> curriculum development in South Africa has been regarded as a white, male-dominated process which has been non-participative for the majority of roleplayers. History and Geography curricula were distinguished as those with which it had been particularly the case. Although they acknowledged the 1989 curriculum process that was initiated by the Committee of Heads of

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11. R.E. Chernis, "The past in service of the present ...." *Yesterday and Today* 21, April 1991, p. 18; T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa a modern history* (4th edition, Johannesburg), pp. 231-232.
  12. R.E. Chernis, "The past in service of the present ...." *Yesterday and Today* 21, April 1991, p. 19; A.L. Behr, *New perspectives in South African Education - a review of education in South Africa, 1652-1984* (Durban, 1984).
  13. A.L. Behr, *New perspectives in South African Education ....*, p. 35.
  14. R.E. Chernis, "The past in service of the present ...." *Yesterday and Today* 21, April 1991, p. 19.
  15. Compare with NECC, *Curriculum report of the NEPI Curriculum Research Group* (Cape Town, 1992), p. 29; S. Krige, N. Taylor and I. Vadi, *History for the future: Taking another look at what is history?*, (Education Policy Unit, University of the Witwatersrand, 1992), pp. 4-5.
  16. P. Kallaway, "History education in a democratic South Africa," *Yesterday and Today* 26, October 1993, p. 15.
  17. NECC, *Curriculum report ....*, p. vii.

Education (CHED) they did not associate with it, for the above-mentioned reason. The CHED involved a large group of experts and representatives from the education community to assist with the development of a new curriculum structure. The first phase of the CHED was concluded when a discussion document, known as CUMSA 1 (Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa) was released in November 1991. Comments were received from a wide spectrum of interested persons and parties. After analysing and processing the comments, the curriculum model was adapted as CUMSA 2. In 1993 the model entered a third phase in which the proposals of CUMSA 2 were further refined and tested. As an outcome of this 16 Core Syllabus Committees were instituted for the various fields of study. The CSC for Social and Human Science was mainly responsible for the compilation of draft core syllabi for three subjects, of which History is one.<sup>18</sup> The outcome of this draft for History will be discussed later on in this article.

In South Africa, regarded as democratic after the 1994-elections, a period of transition has followed. Transformation has characterised every sphere of life. In this context the Heads of Education Committee (HEDCOM) requested the National Department of Education (NDE) to facilitate the development of a new curriculum framework for General and Further Education and Training.<sup>19</sup> This need initially got its start from the White Paper on Education and Training of March 1995, in which a National Institute for Curriculum Development (NICD) was suggested.<sup>20</sup>

To meet the request mentioned above, the national Consultative Forum on Curriculum (CFC) was founded and considered to be more representative of the roleplayers in the country. Several aspects were debated, such as the principles for learning and teaching, the organising thereof, as well as the learning outcomes and the proposed areas of learning. Eight Learning Committees within the CFC were active in the past months to assure that the principles of equity, open access, democratic participation and accountability for learning per se, and lifelong learning, are taken care of.<sup>21</sup> The effect it will have on the compiling of a new History curriculum will also be discussed later on in this article.

However, despite change that intends to portray a democratic country, the present education picture is accompanied by uncertainty and the fear that thousands of teachers may lose their jobs. A few see it as a new system trying to reverse the old apartheid days by using "forced removals methods" to change the face of education.<sup>22</sup>

## The changing face of history teaching in South Africa, 1994-1997

### *History Committees under attack*

The year 1994 must undoubtedly be seen as the year in which history syllabi for schools, amongst others, were extensively debated. The Sub-Committee for History of the National CSC for Social and Human Sciences produced an in-depth report in 1994 in which they

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18. Committee of Heads of Education Departments, *A Curriculum Model for Education in South Africa* [CUMSA] (Pretoria, 1993), pp. 1-11.
  19. NDE, "Curriculum framework for general and further education and training" (Discussion document) 7, December 1995, pp. 1-41.
  20. CFC Report, 1996, pp. 3-4.
  21. NDE, "Curriculum framework ....", pp. 1-41; CFC Report, 1996, pp. 14-15.
  22. C. van Rensburg, "Onderwys kan Suid-Afrika kelder," *INSIG*, Junie 1996, pp. 14-16.

proposed changes to the curriculum.<sup>23</sup> The findings and recommendations of this committee were negatively received by the History Task Team Committee, mainly inspired by the African National Congress (ANC). They criticised the Department of National Education's CSC for History as consisting of white middle-aged men only and of not having such expertise as they had professed themselves to have.<sup>24</sup> The narrow selection of expertise was under dispute, because major English-speaking university campuses and "reputable [sic] historically black campuses" were not represented.<sup>25</sup>

The History Task Team, consisting of nine members, in its turn wanted to appear representative of all the cultural, gender and academic sections in South Africa. They too, unfortunately failed because they in their turn excluded academic specialists/role-players from for example the then traditional Afrikaans Universities and bilingual (Afrikaans and English) universities, as did the History Commission of the NECC in the late eighties, as mentioned earlier.

After the CSC for History and the History Task Committee, the National and Education Training Forum (NETF) was founded shortly after the parliamentary elections in 1994 as a result of the change in educational context. Field Committees were appointed, including the Committee for Social and Human Sciences, which took care of History in one of its sub-committees, named the History Sub-Committee (HSC), under the auspices of the Curriculum Technical Sub-Committee (CTSC).

The CTSC and its sub-committees regarded themselves as more representative of the population than the previous CSC for Social and Human Sciences. From the CTSC process an Interim History Committee was also appointed to address the process of rearticulation of History syllabi, which the Workshop on School History Textbook Writing, held from 28 to 30 July, criticised severely.<sup>26</sup>

The convenor of the HSC, Stephen Lowry, viewed the negative and positive participation of "role-players [sic]" in the HSC and the sub-committees as follows (he failed to indicate which aspects he regarded as negative and which ones as positive):

For the first time classroom teachers and the public were involved in the process [the latter were invited to make submissions] ... Apart from department officials, representatives of other educational organisations also participated ... Not all "stakeholders [sic]" in society participated [the mentioned examples like labour, business, political parties and other interest groups] .... There was no "expert [sic]" participation [academic historians or subject methodologists].

Lowry's first two views, as mentioned above (with the exclusion of "public" opinion), must be regarded as a positive step towards democratic decision-making. Concerning the last remark, it was indeed a matter of general concern amongst academic specialists in the field that they were left out of this process. In this regard Lowry's view, namely that the process was not a properly constituted curriculum development process and designed around political

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23. Kernsillabuskomitee, Verslag, 1994, pp. 3-43.

24. J. Reid and R. Siebörger, "From principles ... to practice," *Workshop on School History Textbook Writing*, University of Cape Town, 28-30 July 1995, p. 19.

25. CEPD, History Task Team, 1994, pp. 26-28.

26. J. Reid and R. Siebörger, "From principles ... to practice," *Workshop on School History Textbook Writing* ..., 1995, pp. 17-43.

expediency and compromise,<sup>27</sup> is wholeheartedly shared.

However, from an academic point of view it is unsure why so many "role-players [sic]" such as the man in the street, and the "stakeholders [sic]" as proposed by Lowry, must have a "right" to propose curriculum suggestions. Most of them are not acquainted with the scientific aspects that accompany the process of developing curricula, and all the various criteria that need to be considered in this regard. If, therefore, they are given an opportunity to take part or to make an input, one may expect ideological and/or, political and/or emotional or even ill-considered opinions and decisions.

A counter-argument can rightly be that even specialists can use their position to promote emotional and political agendas, such as those mentioned earlier in the discussion. Although academics are trained to serve their field of speciality in as scientific and honourable a way as possible, abuses may occur. As far as history is concerned, this can for example be countered by the National Education Department, by carefully considering whom they appoint on committees. A better option may be to nominate specialists (namely historians, History didacticians, educationists dealing especially with how a curriculum should be processed, practising History teachers and experts of interest groups that are identified as vital with regard to the academic input that must be made), irrespective of colour and gender, from a variety of educational/academic institutions.

In this regard the view that was stated by Professor Neville Alexander when he reacted to the NETF process by saying we needed an independent curriculum development unit, made up of professionals, who were obliged to consult all relevant interest groups,<sup>28</sup> is supported. These relevant interest groups also must be mostly representative of the academic circles as mentioned above. This is a more certain way of assuring that political and ideological agendas are excluded as far as possible.

Although some people would prefer to think of History as a subject/discipline that must be steered by the community or the political agendas of the time, this must not and cannot be the case. As acknowledged discipline/subject world-wide, which also involves in-depth scientifically directed research and applied methodologies of writing and teaching (old and modern), its curriculum process, as well as the careful selection of contents that present a representative, balanced view of events/people in a specific time slot, cannot possibly be carried out or steered by laymen. The participating members of the History Sub-Committee of the NETF accommodated organisations with a layman appearance.<sup>29</sup> They were SASCO (South African Students Congress) and COSAS (Congress of South African Students).

However, in the case of South Africa, committees under the auspices of the CTSC were set up to review syllabi and process all the submissions that have been received from the public and organisations/institutions over a wide spectrum after August 1994.<sup>30</sup> The CTSC of the NETF also acted on various submissions that were made from academic level to grassroots level after a public invitation by the Minister of Education, Professor Sibusiso

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27. J. Reid and R. Siebörger, "From principles ... to practice," *Workshop on School History Textbook Writing ...*, 1995, pp. 25-26, 32.

28. J. Reid and R. Siebörger, "From principles ... to practice," *Workshop on School History Textbook Writing ...*, 1995, p. 39; Compare with views of A.E. Carl, *Teaching empowerment, through Curriculum development: theory into practise* (Kenwyn, 1995), p. 3.

29. J. Reid and R. Siebörger, "From principles ... to practice," *Workshop on School History Textbook Writing ...*, 1995, p. 20.

30. J. Reid and R. Siebörger, "From principles ... to practice," *Workshop on School History Textbook Writing ...*, 1995, pp. 19-20.

Bengu, in September 1994.<sup>31</sup> The History Sub-Committee of NETF was starting to "purge" history syllabi from contents seen as discriminating and incriminating according to many of the submissions they dealt with.<sup>32</sup> The History Sub-Committee noted complaints such as the following:

The present History syllabi and textbooks are inherently biased and ideologically distorted, based on a narrow Afrikaner Nationalist or Eurocentric view of the past ... History is important for developing values such as non-racialism, non-sexism, democracy, mutual respect, peaceful co-existence, tolerance, defence of rights and academic freedom ... Curriculum practice in South African schools is determined by the historical interpretation found in textbooks ... A lack of new methodologies to ensure that teachers are taught to teach critical thinking.

After defining a number of other complaints as well, the History Sub-Committee made recommendations that concerned: i) changes to syllabi, especially those themes that deal with pre-colonial and pre-industrial South Africa; the lifestyles of the inhabitants of South Africa; slavery; the movement of indigenous inhabitants in the nineteenth century; the establishment of the Union of South Africa (from a multicultural perspective); the road to democracy, 1970-1994, and the coverage of a more recent period; traditional medicine; and the independent African States, ii) the development of criteria against which textbooks can be evaluated and any new or old texts scrutinised.<sup>33</sup>

Recommendations by the History Sub-Committee of the NETF, namely to report how the process of changing the History curriculum for schools need to be addressed, were made in a very short period of time — two days! Thereafter they were forwarded it to the Interim Committee of Heads of Education Departments (ICHED). These recommendations afterwards were widely criticised as either ill-considered and/or not a true reflection of the original recommendations that were adopted by the History Sub-Committee of the CTSC.<sup>34</sup>

Recommendations that were made by the History Sub-Committee mainly revolved around the changing of textbooks to form part of the Interim Core Syllabi and to prepare support material. The latter aspect aroused much dissatisfaction amongst experts<sup>35</sup> (because they were not consulted or included). It could further be argued that not all the members of the History Syllabus Committee were academically trained to prepare support material to serve as source material for teachers on any of the new topics suggested for the Interim Core Syllabus.

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31. NETF, History Sub-Committee-report, 1995, p.1; also compare with J. Reid and R. Siebörger, "From principles ... to practice," *Workshop on School History Textbook Writing ...*, 1995, p. 20.
  32. NEFT, History Sub-Committee-report, 1995, pp. 1-2.
  33. J. Reid and R. Siebörger, "From principles ... to practice," *Workshop on School History Textbook Writing ...*, 1995, p. 23.
  34. J. Reid and R. Siebörger, "From principles ... to practice," *Workshop on School History Textbook Writing ...*, 1995, pp. 23-24.
  35. J. Reid and R. Siebörger, "From principles ... to practice," *Workshop on School History Textbook Writing ...*, 1995, pp. 34-43; S. Lowry, "History syllabi for South Africa - a reappraisal," Paper read at the joint conference of the SAHA and SASHT, Potchefstroom, 10-12 January, 1996, p. 2.



*A continuation of controversies and perspectives for history education that came to the fore during the 1996 Joint History Conference in Potchefstroom*

From 10 to 12 January 1996 two history societies of South Africa, namely the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA) and the South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT), entered their first phase of change since the first non-racial parliamentary elections in the country in April 1994 by organising a joint conference. This conference was of historical significance since both the traditionally Eurocentric, Afrikaans dominated societies spontaneously committed themselves to transparency and renewal. In this respect the newly appointed executive committees of both societies represent, more than ever before, a broad spectrum of the South African community. With time this will become even more representative of the population composition.

Despite rumours of the need to form another national association because of the so-called attachment the present historical associations have with the Afrikaner Nationalist historiographic tradition,<sup>36</sup> no change was adopted at this joint meeting. What was significant from the general meetings was that the HASA and SASHT committed themselves rather to renew from within existing structures than to give rise to any further division between academics and experts in History than already perhaps existed.<sup>37</sup>

Experts from various academic fields and cultures were represented at the conference. Some of the main topics that were covered in the joint conference portrayed the following concerns in the teaching of History:

The paradigmatic confusion that is caused in South African historiography, especially owing to the dawning of the new political dispensation .... The awareness of multiperspectives in history and the careful methodological consideration that this requires to prevent subservience to ideologies .... The future History curriculum process and the role-players who will be responsible.<sup>38</sup>

The most important proposals made with regard to History curriculum change in schools were that syllabi must provide for a national perspective as well as a regional component. It was also stressed that great care must be taken as to who will be responsible for this major task and that experts definitely must be involved in the process. History educators also felt that those involved in curriculum change must have the courage to leave out or remove content in the process of creating a balance between world history, a history of Africa and of South Africa, as well as regional history.

On the last day of the joint conference Lowry made a few comments which basically originated from the History Syllabus Committee during the NETF exercise. He mentioned for example that i) the debate about the History curriculum had to be rooted in the context of broader curriculum policy and that ii) the skills levels of teachers would also determine the extent to which the History curriculum could be innovated.<sup>39</sup> With regard to Lowry's first remark, a start with a broader curriculum policy has indeed been made.

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36. J. Reid and R. Siebörger, "From principles ... to practice," *Workshop on School History Textbook Writing ...*, 1995, pp. 33, 41-42.

37. HASA minute, 1996; SASHT minute, 1996 (in possession of author).

38. HASA/SASHT, Conference Programme, 10-12 January 1996, pp. 7-17.

39. Notes made by author during the Conference, 12-01-1996.

## The present process of setting a new agenda for history teaching and history syllabi within the framework of curriculum change in South Africa

With South Africa, by 1995, in a period of transition in every sphere of life, including the sphere of education and training, HEDCOM considered that the time was ripe to request the new NDE to facilitate the development of a new curriculum framework for General and Further Education and Training. A national CFC was appointed which was representative of a wide variety of stakeholders and role-players in education and training across South Africa. The basic aim which the CFC anticipated in its draft curriculum was to fulfil the right to relevant, quality basic education and training for all, whilst also paying increased attention to areas such as mathematics, science and technology as ways of preparing the nation for the future.<sup>40</sup> (For History the role of the CFC came at a very critical stage of its own positioning in South Africa because, owing to the critical "alterations" that need to be made in curricula, History is regarded as one of the subjects at the top of the list.)

The present situation is that the NDE wants to correctly and painstakingly take cognisance of all the educational steps needed to identify the needs in all curricula. These involve criteria that are regarded as inevitable in reaching the aims, subject-wise and vocationally, to set a curriculum and syllabi for each subject within various timeframes. Therefore the National History Curriculum Committee, with Lowry as chairman as previously mentioned, has informally dissolved. For History there nevertheless has been a selected National Committee in the meanwhile which assisted and helped the NDE with the compilation of support material for history teachers to use in 1996-1997.

A start was made with the above-mentioned timeframes from August 1996. In the first phase experts/specialists were nominated and organised into eight Learning Area Committees, which also accommodated History, particularly in the Social and Human Sciences Committee. However, History could also possibly be accommodated in a number of the other Learning Areas. These specialists/experts of the Learning Area Committees have made recommendations in the form of draft reports for each area, which a Technical Committee of the NDE refined in February 1997. Three stakeholder representative committees from April 1997 onwards, drafted learning programmes for the General Education and Training (GET) phase. The GET only focus on Grade 1 to Grade 9. It is unsure if History as subject will be able to maintain its position as separate learning unit (or subject) because there appears to be a strong drive for the integration of the Social and Human Science subjects. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) aims at shifting the focus from a subject-based approach to an integrated approach to education and training, and further aims to move from a so-called content-based to an outcomes-based (OBE) curriculum.<sup>41</sup> The NQF still has not yet reached a final print on the detailed process on how the changing of the Grade 10 to 12 level will look like. This educational phase is part of further education and training (FET). It therefore can only be assumed at this stage that History as learning unit will be part of the FET-learning programme for Grade 10-12. My impression regarding the future of History in the FET-phase at this stage, (which will be steered from 1998), is positive. Hopefully it will not be in a disguised form. By April 1997 the NDE was scheduled to give

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40. CFC, *Draft Curriculum*, 1995, pp. 1-2.

41. V. Iona, "Are we running out of time?", *The Teacher*, July 1996. Also see *Rapport*, 23 March 1997, p. 2; *Outcomes Based Education, Draft Curriculum Framework*, April 1997.

the Publishers Association an opportunity to negotiate about new textbooks, also for the new national History curriculum and for the regional sections to be implemented by the provinces, scheduled for 1998.<sup>42</sup>

While this process of implementing is not yet finalised, historians and History lecturers/teachers will continue their debate on the future of school curricula or learning units for History, or for subjects with a History base. This is of vital importance to ensure that the outcome is as transparent as possible. The recent Potchefstroom meeting, as well as the Workshop on History Teaching at the University of Zululand<sup>43</sup> and the University of the Western Cape's conference on "The future of the past",<sup>44</sup> were all aimed at promoting this goal. It is even noticeable that the South African textbook market is already booming with history books<sup>45</sup> in which each and all attempt already to provide innovative ways in which the culturally diverse population of South Africa can be represented.

## Conclusion

Through the 344 years of European involvement in South Africa, History has always been part of the formal education process. The history of the country developed in such a way that eventually, by the mid-nineteenth century, three History curricula existed, namely one for the Cape and Natal colonies under British rule (which mainly revered the British), one history curriculum for the Orange Free State Republic and one for the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (which mainly revered the White "Voortrekker"/emigrant for gaining freedom from British rule). Schools in the interior were at this stage very undeveloped and a lack of qualified teachers, the required supplies and finance were the order of the day. Therefore most of history, as seen and experienced, was orally communicated in an informal way. In their turn the missionaries in South Africa educated the black people in various subject areas, but for many years not as far as a specific history is concerned.

After South Africa had become a Union in 1910 more centralised school structures were encouraged. Black education, however, was still excluded from the broad educational structures of government and regarded as a separate affair. Missionaries therefore still played a vital role with regard to black education. The history curriculum in schools for whites changed from three versions to one and mainly reflected a general European and an Afrikaner nationalist perspective. In many respects the political ideology of the day, and of those opposing it, were mirrored in the historiography and history methodology of the day.

The main historiographic perspectives of white writers, to be identified in South Africa in random order of development, were the Settler school, followed by the Afrikaner Nationalists and Liberals. Much later, in the seventies, the Radical or Revisionist perspective gained momentum. All of them were embedded in the political ideology and trends of the day. The Liberal and Radical perspectives, in many ways, sympathised with the poor

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42. The CFC was replaced by the National Curriculum Development Committee (NCDC) and the Curriculum Management Committee (CMC). The CFC to handle curriculum matters and the latter to drive the process.
  43. J.W.N. Tempelhoff, "The historian and History teaching: the way ahead," Paper read at the Workshop on History Teaching, University of Zululand, February 1996, p. 1.
  44. University of the Western Cape, Invitation pamphlet of conference: Future of the past, 10-12 July 1996, p. 1.
  45. K.L. Harris, "Transforming school history texts," *South African Historical Journal* 34, 1995, pp. 1-3.

political position of and conditions in which black people found themselves. The apartheid government constituted after 1948 spontaneously encouraged these historiographical perspectives. Thence onwards the apartheid government also took control of the long neglected black education systems. This one-sided approach — which dealt with black education separate from white education — and the way in which it was implemented gave rise to dissatisfaction. The same applied to the implementation of the national history curriculum in black schools. Only history up to 1948 was taught in black schools, until recently. As for white schools, they were able to teach pupils history up to the seventies. Needless to say, the contents of the South African History syllabus covering the period after 1948 mainly dealt with positive aspects of Afrikaner nationalism and the then ruling National Party.

Gradual political change in South Africa since the eighties was the catalyst for the change of the History curriculum according to the "needs" of the day. In the meanwhile a very stormy process of trying to change the face of the History curriculum over the past decade took place, institutionally as well as by means of curriculum committees, history conferences and workshops. Whilst this happened, some historians and many of those involved in teaching History wrote and are still writing and/or compiling culturally diverse materials to be used in future textbooks, even though everyone is still unsure of exactly what the new History curriculum for South Africa will look like. In many ways the exercises and proposals of each of the History Committees, which were established by various Departments and/or Forums since 1985, failed politically but were academically instructive.

Whereas History teaching on secondary level in South Africa until recently has been linked to especially Afrikaner Nationalism, a new politically inspired wave may, yet again, pave the way in History texts for a distorted over-emphasis of sections of the population who suffered injustices in the past. This trend seems to be embedded in the concept of democratisation.<sup>46</sup> Apart from the fact that one-sidedness may still prevail, another warning light that might be flashing for the teaching of History is that its real meaning is again not considered in its teaching. It is for example incorrect to suggest that history "from above" is not history or is of less importance than "history from below" (as the People's History group initially regarded history). It surely cannot be correct to distort methodological approaches to history teaching with any political developments of the time. This concerns for example the so-called "democratic" and "Human Rights" approaches. The striving must rather be to use acknowledged and innovative educationally accepted approaches in teaching to address for example History content.

For History teaching the NDE curriculum-changing process can only have a positive outcome if, up to the final stages, the process is steered sufficiently along culturally diverse principles and academic educational criteria. For too long a period in the history of South Africa the History curriculum has been the victim of political ideologies. It even appears to have been steered in the very same way in recent years, amidst the sound of voices proclaiming a new and changing democratic South Africa, by emotional precipitousness as well as a lack of transparency and sound consideration.

The idea that a new History curriculum for South Africa must contain three "basic

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46. M.C. O'Dowd, "South Africa in the light of history," Paper read at the Conference of the South African Historical Society, UNISA, Pretoria, 22-25 January 1991, pp. 1-8.

pillars" (namely national history, world history and African history),<sup>47</sup> is not really new. Past education systems and several tertiary institutions, especially those who mainly use English as medium of instruction, followed this pattern before traditional Afrikaans universities, as a result of historiographic trends abroad.

Another "pillar" that needs to be added is the local/regional history of a country. This preferably must not be seen as part of the national history section in a curriculum, because in the national section one should expect only a broad general/core national content that needs to be compulsory for each province in South Africa. One may expect that broad national trends, perhaps on a thematic basis, should be dealt with. It goes without saying that these national trends must as far as possible be addressed from a global multi-cultural view (international/national or regional/local). Other modern teaching approaches that too are overlooked or given the Cinderella treatment in the teaching of History in South Africa are the interdisciplinary approach and a more dynamic skills approach (perhaps the development of skills programmes for the senior primary and secondary phase of schooling respectively) towards development than appears to be the case at present.

The presentation of regional/local history can perhaps relieve the burden on the national curriculum pillar. This implies for example that the Battle of Blood River (1838) can be regarded as a local/regional event that "belongs" to the history of, and can be covered by, the Kwa Zulu-Natal Province. They can deal with the contents in any way they wish to in depth, for example by comparing the leaders, or by querying the quest for territory. As for other provinces in South Africa, like the North-West Province, they will only tangentially refer to this event to the extent that it affected the movements and emotions of the people in their area. The same applies to the so-called Mfecane and Difaqane movement that gained momentum a few years before the Battle of Blood River. The Western Cape regional History curriculum section, for example, does not then have to include an in-depth discussion of Chaka, the famous leader of the Zulu.

But History teaching contains so many dynamic methodological facets that can be taken into account, not to mention the variety of ways in which it can be adapted according to the structure of a broader national curriculum policy regarding Outcomes Based Education (OBE), that all South Africans must rather be exited than sceptical. Hopefully those involved will start to think and teach History (not anything else with a new name) and not get stuck in ideology in the history content of learning programmes in the OBE to be.<sup>48</sup>

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47. S. Lowry, "History syllabi for South Africa - a reappraisal ...," Paper read at the Joint History conference, Potchefstroom, 1996, p. 6.

48. Recent concerns in this regard were given by Pieter Kapp (Editor of *Yesterday and Today*) in *Historia* and by Rob Siebörger (Chairman of the South African Society for History Teaching) in the SASHT Newsletter. See P.H. Kapp, "Vernuwning of vervanging? Geskiedenis en die herskikkingsproses in die onderwys," *Historia* 42(1), May 1997, pp. 1-21; R. Siebörger, "Questions about the future of History in curriculum 2005," *SASHT/SAVGO Newsletter/Nuusbrief* 1, September 1997, pp. 2-7.