

## Report of the History/Archaeology Panel to the Minister of Education

Ministry of Education  
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### INTRODUCTION

The recent Report of the Working Group on Value in Education, chaired by Professor Wilmot James, titled Values, Education and Democracy, called for the establishment of a panel of historians and

archaeologists to advise the minister of education on how best to strengthen the teaching of history in South African schools.

The History and Archaeology Panel of the Values in Education Initiative, was established by the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, and launched on 12 September 2000. Its terms of reference were to undertake a critical analysis of:

- ¥ the quality of the teaching of history and evolution in schools
- ¥ the state of teacher training
- ¥ the quality of support materials (such as textbooks)

The Panel was further required to make recommendations on:

- ¥ the strengthening of the substance and scope of the history curriculum
- ¥ the strengthening of teacher training
- ¥ the improvement of support materials.

The panel was required to submit its report by 30th November, 2000. The panel held a preliminary meeting on the day it was launched followed by three substantial meetings on 26th September, 17th October, 2000 and 15th November, 2000.

The Panel Members were:

Professor Njabulo S. Ndebele (Chair), Vice Chancellor, University of Cape Town.

Dr. Andre Odendaal, historian, author, and Director of the Robben Island Museum

Dr. Uma Mesthrie, Senior Lecturer, Department of History, University of the Western Cape

Dr. Pallo Jordan, Member of Parliament

Professor Bill Nasson, Professor of History and Head of the Historical Studies Department of the University of Cape Town

Ms Mandy Esterhuyzen, Department of Archaeology, University of the Witwatersrand, where she holds the only Educational Archaeologist post in the country

Professor Charles van Onselen, historian and Research Professor in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria

Dr. Luli Callinicos, Department of History, University of the Witwatersrand

Dr. Eddie Maloka, Executive of the Africa Institute of South Africa

Mr Thabo Bashe, Deputy Principal, Zola Secondary School, Khayelitsha

Prof Peter Kallaway, Department of Education, University of the Western Cape

The members of the panel were appointed by the Minister of Education in their individual capacities.

The panel discussed extensively its membership and was of the strong view that since that panel was largely made up of historians at the level of higher education, the participation of teachers of history on the panel was essential. In addition, the panel found it necessary to invite other expert input, particularly in close proximity in the Western Cape, who had extensive research expertise on the areas covered by the terms of reference. These additional participants contributed substantially to the deliberations of the panel. They were:

Associate Professor Rob Siebörger, Department of Education, University of Cape Town, Ms June Bam, Academic Development Programme, University of Stellenbosch, Professor Martin Leggasick, Department of History, University of the Western Cape.

This additional participation, though, represented a limited form of consultation. It was not possible within the time frame available to do significantly more in this connection, despite the ardent wish of the panel to consult as widely possible. However, in commissioning research, some further consultation took place with other researchers around the country. The panel received submissions from Professor Albert Grundlingh, new head of History, University of Stellenbosch, Professor Jeff Guy, Dept of History, University of Natal, Mr Dave Hiscock, teacher, Ms Cynthia Kros, Dept of History, University of the Witwatersrand, Mr Philip Monareng, teacher, Ms Sibongile Simelani, teacher and members of the Khayelitsha Teachers Network.

However, the panel was aware that its report would serve as a key input at the forthcoming national conference on Values, Education and Democracy to be held on 21-22 February, 2001. The Minister of Education might decide on any other additional forms of consultation, as he may deem necessary.

A special comment needs to be made on the issue of the teaching of evolution in the schools. After extensive discussion, it emerged that while the panel agreed on the need for evolution to be taught, it remained divided on whether the topic should be taught within history or within the relevant scientific disciplines. More work needed to be done to settle this issue. The panel agreed that a separate report on the issue will be submitted.

The History and Archaeology Panel wishes to record its deep appreciation to the many individuals and groups who gave so freely of their knowledge, expertise and time to assist in its deliberations.

We wish to thank the Minister of Education for the opportunity he presented to us to make a contribution to a discussion we believe to be one of the key issues in nation building.

Professor Njabulo S Ndebele  
Chair: History / Archaeology Panel

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The overarching argument of the Report of the History and Archaeology Panel is the need to promote the importance of the study of the disciplines of History and of Archaeology within school education. The formal study of these crucial areas of knowledge both nurtures a spirit of critical inquiry, and assists in the formation of a conscious historical consciousness, which has an essential role to play in building the dignity of human values within an informed awareness of the legacy and meaning of the past. The Report stresses that promoting a strong study of the past is a particular educational imperative in a country like South Africa, which is itself consciously remaking its current history. In conditions of flux, historical study of a probing kind is a vital aid against amnesia, and a warning against any triumphalism of the present. An argument of equal centrality to the Report is that history studies are experiencing a deep-seated and systemic crisis at various teaching and learning levels. In the view of the Panel, unless clear steps are taken to address this malaise, our schooling system will fail to play a full part in ensuring that present and future generations of our citizens have the necessary knowledge and skills to contribute to sustaining an open, equitable and tolerant common society.

The Report outlines the nature of History and Archaeology as disciplines of study, emphasising the value of historical and archaeological understanding to society, and illustrating the range of enriching functions which are served by a proper study of the past.

Secondly, The Report provides an assessment of the mixed quality of teaching in schools, focusing on teacher skill and capacity and on the recent marginalisation of the status of history in learning.

Thirdly, we explore the broad area of curriculum matters. The Report concludes that aside from problems with the nature of history content and the ways in which it is taught and assessed, the severe erosion of history as a distinctive discipline and the marginal role accorded to archaeology results in these learning areas being deprived of the space and scholarly stature to play their full role in challenging the racial and other mythologies which remain part of our society.

Fourthly, we look at deficiencies in teacher training and the manner in which the present stresses and capacity shortages within education militate against the growth of improved teaching methods in schools. At the same time, the cause of better teaching is linked clearly to the provision of improved history materials, including textbooks, and here, too, the picture is decidedly patchy.

Our recommendations for improvement fall into two layers. One is broad, where we motivate for ways in which kinds of critical and valuable historical knowledge can be used to enhance learning experience, for textbooks and other support materials to advance the notion of history as debate and contested judgement rather than as prescription, and for better identification of the potential of historical learning in advancing multilingualism and other forms of skill acquisition. The other is a distinct cluster of strategic recommendations. These

propose the establishment of a National History Commission to investigate ways of strengthening history teaching, the expansion of history teacher training capacity and ways of improving its quality for both trainee and serving teachers, and strengthening the role of History Subject Advisers. Finally, and by no means least, we propose that the place and identity of history in our schools would be restored and strengthened by ensuring that at both lower and higher curriculum levels, it is taught in more defined ways and allocated appropriate curriculum time in keeping with its value to our educational present and future.

The History and Archaeology Panel wishes to record its deep appreciation to the many individuals and groups who gave so freely of their knowledge, expertise and time to assist its deliberations.

## Background

The 2000 Ministry of Education Report of the Working Group on Values in Education, *Values, Education and Democracy*, has accorded key importance to the value of teaching history and the creative nurturing of historical consciousness, concluding that 'the teaching of history is central to the promotion of all human values, including that of tolerance. History is one of the many memory systems that shape our values and morality, for it studies, records and diffuses knowledge of human failure and achievement over the millennia'. In this receptive perspective, 'good history put to good use', including 'the history of human evolution', has a particularly fortifying role in the growth of our human culture. For, 'when taught by imaginative teachers', the richness of history has a larger capacity 'than any other discipline', to 'promote reconciliation and reciprocal respect of a meaningful kind, because it encourages a knowledge of the other, the unknown and the different'.

Moreover, while there can be no doubt that 'human beings have the remarkable capacity to repeat the mistakes of the past', the value of history lies in its provision of a crucially important 'memory base'. This serves as a powerful aid to understanding as 'it is the combination of memory and democratic politics that minimise the risk of repeating past mistakes'. It is history in this modern sense that Raymond Williams had in mind when he emphasised that, 'in different hands', it teaches or shows us most kinds of knowable past and almost every kind of imaginable future.

At the core of these large propositions lies a most sensitive question. If this vigorous affirmation of the vital role of history in our public life is not to represent a thwarted aspiration, it follows that we need to address the issue of the teaching of history in South African schools, and to begin to identify the kind of historical learning that we should try to ensure is being promoted in classrooms. It is, therefore, in the searching and thoughtful context set by the Values in Education Initiative that the History and Archaeology Panel has framed this Report.

In terms of content, the Panel wishes to record at the outset that this document offers no examination of, nor recommendation on, the specific teaching of human evolution within the historical and human biological disciplines, despite the

question of evolution forming part of its initial brief. While agreeing fully that a thorough understanding of the science of human evolution is important in undermining the genetic myths which underlie racial prejudice, members of the Panel could not resolve sharply differing views on the most appropriate location for teaching evolution at schooling level. The unresolved issue was whether this should fall within the history and archaeology frame, or be placed more advantageously in the science area. In our view, this question merits further investigation and evolution should remain on the agenda for further educational inquiry.

## The Need for History and Archaeology

### Introduction

It is instructive to recall that only some twenty years ago, it had still to be argued by dissenting historians of South Africa that the 1838 Boer trekker victory in the battle of Blood River was neither a miracle nor an earthly enactment of the Will of God. The lengthy persistence of that old assumption reflected the nature of a white supremacist historiography, in its Afrikaner nationalist form of Christian National Education. In turn, it reflected the nature of the history taught in many, but by no means all, schools. In that respect, the authors of this Report wish to pay tribute to the small band of innovative and determined teachers of history, black and white, who taught against the apartheid history syllabus for many years. By now, we have of course moved forward a little, and the argument against a Christian National Education version of history has been settled. Whatever concerns we have about the lingering resonance of dominant grand narratives of history as the story of white civilisation, these visions have had their day. There is no way forward for any nation, least of all ours, down the paths of discredited historical nostalgia or self-deluding reminiscence about the historical perspectives of the apartheid era.

If this assessment is reasonable, then it also suggests a direction which history might have been expected to take in the new educational situation. Many observers anticipated that with a majority government and a democratic order, there would be a new flowering of history in schools. We imagined that the intense interest of young people in history, something which was manifested so strongly in the 1980s, would flow over into the changed environment and that the humane influence of history education would lay claim to a secure and distinctive place in the learning system. We expected the active encouragement of a new history in schools and elsewhere, reflecting for the first time as general practice the varied contributions of all South Africans to the making and shaping of our society, and contributing to the formation of democratic values and a common citizenship.

Yet, the cumulative effect of relevant government policy, whether consciously or unconsciously, has been to de-emphasise history not merely in schooling but also in tertiary sectors. The recent introduction of Curriculum 2005 has brought positive features in the combating of outmoded methods of rote-learning, and in its encouraging of outcomes-based education. But it has also brought serious costs and constraints. History and a limited level of Archaeology are dissolved in disciplinary terms and inserted into a general Human and Social Sciences learning area. Given this dilution, many experienced history teachers have, inevitably, been made redundant. Some schools have even come to regard history as a subject for less able learners or those with a low IQ. It is no great surprise that both at schools and in many universities, students have been deserting the study of history.

What makes this situation not just dismal but alarming is the demonstrable need for a strengthened history. History is important not only in itself, but also because a knowledge of the past is crucial to an understanding of the present. Unless one

knows something of the past, then one has no informed criteria by which to assess and to judge the present. In other words, contemporary problems and complexities, like the workings of race, class and gender, have to be seen within the context of their development in time. This explanatory use of the past within the context of the present is one of the ways in which the study of history can be made exciting and relevant, an approach taken by many South African historians during the struggle against apartheid, when some of the best South African history was written. It is a considerable irony that we are having to address a crisis in history, when the pressing importance of history continues to be demonstrated daily in South Africa. For we live in a society in which contemporary issues are continually understood and judged within the powerful context of a past which has bequeathed a violent legacy of conquest, colonialism and apartheid.

It is in this spirit that we have to recognise the fact that everyone has a form of historical consciousness. This historical consciousness is not crafted on a blank slate by teachers in schools, or by professional historians in universities. It is created in and by the family, the community, churches, the media and other areas of communication, interacting with individual experience. In this, the value of the formal study of history is that it aims to develop this latent consciousness into a conscious consciousness. To be sure, if the present situation is one in which the formal study of history continues to be either ignored or neglected, there is a real danger of robbing future generations of a sense of how they have come to be what they are. For the significance of such study to be properly understood, we need, first, to appreciate the educative nature of history as well as archaeology, and to recognise where they stand in a reciprocal relationship to each other.

#### The Nature of History and Archaeology

While history has had a variety of meanings and uses across human time, today it can be said that in an established general sense it means an organised knowledge of the past, a defining feature which it shares with archaeology. In this regard, while it has a different character as a discipline, archaeology is also recognisable as a form of history. History is a distinctive and well-established academic discipline with its own methods and discourses. Its field of study is potentially limitless, in that it encompasses the totality of past human experience. Among scholars who study history there can be differences and even controversy between some who regard it as an account of an actual past, and others who view it as an entirely imagined or constructed past.

History shares with literature, art, history of art, and other laboratories of the spirit and the mind, a preoccupation with exploring the many wonders and contradictions of the human condition. In common with archaeology, history turns on the movement of time and space, which provides us with a sense of unfolding process, teaches us about the workings of cause and effect and, quite simply, enlightens us about the past. While history may naturally be written in this way or that way, the essential concerns of good history focus upon:



¥ a representation of the past through clear narrative, explanation and analysis

¥ a careful and systematic study of important processes such as power or economic interest over time, with a strong emphasis on change and continuity, and on how and why change occurs in human societies

¥ a critical evaluation of sources and evidence on the past

¥ a recognition of the importance of cultivating empathy with varying experiences of the past

¥ a fostering of vibrant and healthy critical debate between differing perspectives,

¥ interpretations and representations of the past

¥ a recognition of the study of the past as a continuing process with definite implications for the future, requiring exploration of, and debate over how, the historical past relates to the present and the future

Parallel with these attributes are the complementary qualities and investigative procedures which archaeology brings to the historical enterprise. These are of particular importance in the South African context because of the immense depth of pre-colonial time, and the fact that known history in the region extends back to our earliest ancestral relatives, the early hominids of some three million years ago. In the reconstruction and interpretation of the past, the purpose of archaeology is:

¥ the interpretation of past human societies from the study of the things or artifacts which people left behind, drawing on material evidence which can include not only objects dug out of the ground but also lifted from under water or gathered from above ground. In its search to recover lost information about humans in the past, archaeology may also use the staple material of history, written evidence and oral records

¥ the examining of the past before the emergence of written documentation or surviving oral histories. Archeological excavation is generally the only means through which to understand fully the histories of the earliest early human societies

¥ the illumination of the common ancestry of humanity, through providing an understanding of both the very early and more recent roots of the cultures of indigenous peoples which persisted over thousands of years, such as southern African hunter-gatherers and Australian Aboriginals

¥ the supplementing of available written or oral records through the provision of archeological remains, in time periods where written documents may provide only a partial picture. Since material artifacts equally do not provide

a complete record of life in the past, historical and archeological findings can, where possible, supplement one another

¥ the furnishing of information about ordinary life in the past, in areas of social experience often missed by conventional historical documentation, such as daily living at work and in the home

We believe that teachers, students, educational administrators and parents all need to become acquainted with the disciplinary value of history and of archaeology, and with the indispensable importance of historical and archeological understanding to themselves and to society. Within society, the study of these knowledge areas fosters not only a spirit of inquiry, but also helps to build the dignity of human values.

### The Values and Value of Historical Learning

A study of the past can serve a range of important and enriching social, political, cultural and environmental functions. Its general potential is particularly pronounced in our own society, which is consciously undergoing change - in historical terms, we are living in a country which is presently attempting to remake itself in time. In these conditions, the study of history is especially urgent as it helps to prevent amnesia, checks triumphalism, opposes the manipulative or instrumental use of the past, and provides an educational buffer against a "dumbing down" of our citizens. Accordingly, the study of history:

¥ encourages civic responsibility and critical thinking, which are key values in a democratic society. The study of how to analyse sources and evidence and the study of differing interpretations and divergent opinion and voices, is a central means of imparting the ability to think in a rigorous manner and to think critically about society. The probing examination of self-congratulatory conventional wisdoms encourages wider critical thinking and creates an informed citizenry which is able to demand respect from those in power. This view should not be taken as an endorsement of sterile and unimaginative "civics" classes and equally arid classroom studies of the constitution, which students invariably find stultifying. Instead, this is an area in which historical study can provide the educational tools to think deeply about such vital civic issues as the legitimacy of the claims which a nation-state may make on the loyalties of its citizens, or who decides on what should constitute a national interest.

¥ instead of defining "values education" or "human rights education" or "peace education" as the communication of a prescriptive set of worthy homilies about what is good or bad or positive and negative, history contextualises these weighty issues and assists constructive debate over them in an informed manner, through the discipline of carefully weighing and evaluating evidence and reading a range of viewpoints.

¥ fosters the invaluable mental powers of discriminating judgement. Mature judgement is an essential quality which we rightly expect of all our professionals, and demand of all our dealings in daily life with bureaucrats, politicians, managers, shop stewards, taxi drivers, or teachers. It is informed judgement

which discerns the crucial difference between fact and conjecture, and as such is a necessary attribute for our collective survival and effective agency.

¥ is important in the construction of identity. Historical perspective fosters a proper understanding of the growth of multiple and overlapping human identities. In the twenty-first century, citizens need to be prepared for the relationship of global citizenship just as much as for national citizenship, as well as to have some immersion in more localised identities. This means that we all need to learn our 'own' history and also to learn histories outside our 'own', drawing on both established and new sources. Through the openness encouraged by the study of a comprehensive history, global identity can be seen as not necessarily contradictory with the identity of, for instance, Khoisanness, or Rastafarianness, or gayness. It is historical study above all which enables us to understand the construction over time of social boundaries, and at the same time to comprehend their fluidity and permeability.

¥ enables us to listen to formerly subjugated voices and to redress the invisibility of the formerly marginalised. In our country it is self-evident that oral history, both formal and informal, is of great importance in recovering suppressed or neglected voices. Furthermore, in South Africa, the role of oral history is not simply that of 'filling in the gaps', by making up for the inadequacies of the written record. The potency of its message is that it implies a total reassessment of history, given that our written archive is colonially- and white-dominated, both in its content and in the method of its compilers. As a corrective, the study of oral history enriches us by introducing new methodological approaches to the recapturing of the past, while also promoting the study of indigenous languages which is essential for the re-writing of a more inclusive South African history for coming generations.

¥ encourages us to examine in concrete terms, through rich examples of narratives of real-life situations, the challenging nature of 'truth'. As already noted, there is a continuing debate in history between the view that all history is a purely subjective, relativistic product of present.

¥ consciousness, and that history can present an objective account of a known past. Understanding the contest between ideas of relativism and the idea of truth is necessary to the educational maturation of every human being, and is ably promoted through a study of historical method. Through it, we can appreciate the nature of collective human endeavour and the value of mutual critical appraisal. We can also gain an insight into the contingency of social and other patterns of life, the workings of nuance and the persistence of incomplete answers, the coexistence of continuity and change, and the reality that, in trying to make sense of the past, we have to engage with a multiplicity of voices with varying versions of the same history.

¥ provides a critically important perspective on the pathways to economic development and economic growth. Given the weight accorded to this in our present vocabulary of national policy, an understanding of the insights provided by economic history is essential for understanding the longer-term development of humanity through varying and successive economic and social systems.

Placing good economic analysis within the framework of history enables learners to understand that an economic system or an economic transition is not a product of nature but the outcome of human endeavour, with the costs and benefits which always accompany that. And as history has a central concern with the dependency of societies upon value systems, a study of the productive sphere encourages examination of the relationship between economic life and values.

¥ is a vital ingredient in promoting democratic values. In this context, part of the value of history is the substantive role it can play in fostering sensitive values of anti-racism, non-sexism, and a general respect for human rights. In addition, good history teaching is important in promoting the values of tolerance, an attribute underlined specifically by the Working Group on Values, Education and Democracy. History along with archaeology, offers a key learning area for understanding the roots, nature and manifestations of different cultures, identities and trajectories in the making of common societies in our modern age. In tracing the past, we are able to explore how we resemble and how we differ from other people over time and space, encouraging a mutual respect for, and grasp of, our diverse past.

¥ is a significant instrument for desegregating society. The study of history enables people to reflect on their existing and inherited historical consciousness, to examine it and, not least, to deconstruct it and observe its possible limits. Examination of the past is especially important in deconstructing past beliefs, not least discredited apartheid ideas about the fixities of 'race' and 'ethnicity'. Through this, it can lead to the questioning of human stereotypes, of others and equally of ourselves. Simultaneously, through the cultivation of historical empathy, it can lead to greater understanding of why these beliefs and images existed and often continue to exist. Through imparting a sense of shared humanity, historical learning can be an important lubricant of human realisation, by combating the past sense of inferiority inculcated in many black people by white supremacist historical writings. The lessons of archaeology are also a key contribution here. Through provision of evidence that we all have a common ancestor, and that skin colour is simply an adaptation to the environment, the notion of 'whiteness' being some kind of norm can be stripped away.

¥ is deliberately about the crucial role of memory in society. In a country like South Africa which has a fractured national memory, the development of common historical memories of such fundamental processes as migration or poverty or political change can play an integrative role in our culture and polity. Attending to the complex legacy of memory can also help to foster shared understanding of one of the deepest imaginative functions of history, which is to show that through the historical medium of time, in the movement of continuity, change and conflict, or action and reaction, no one can avoid confronting the costs and pain which history brings to the surface.

¥ is a sound vocational preparation for a wide range of jobs and careers. Historical study trains future teachers of history, public historians, archeological fieldworkers, public historians, custodians of heritage and memorialisation,

archivists, museum curators and museum workers, librarians, journalists, tourism professionals and the like. Indeed, at this level of professional development, the strong study of history in schools is the essential bedrock for producing new generations of black and also female historians to supplant the current white and largely male domination of the South African historical profession. Beyond this, the skills acquired through the study of history are of value in a wide range of work environments, including those which call for analysing and seeking solutions to many present-day problems. Training in historical study teaches one to analyse evidence, to organise ideas and to construct coherent arguments. The skills acquired enable one to assess issues in the light of considerable, and often conflicting, amounts of data and to present complex sources of information accurately, on paper or orally. By providing a breadth of vision which goes beyond narrow specialisations, historical study nurtures effective communication, which is an essential life and professional skill in the contemporary world. History qualifications, therefore, can lead to future careers in management and administration, marketing, public relations and the media. And because of their skills development capacity, it is no accident that in many advanced industrial countries, history qualifications are highly valued.

#### The Present Situation in School education

##### Critical Analysis of the Quality of History and Archaeology Teaching in Schools

Our overall assessment of the quality of teaching in schools is based on two fundamental and commonsense assumptions. One is rote learning is bad teaching - in this context, it means the idea that history is a set of agreed facts that have to be committed to memory and reproduced to meet a set formula. The other is that good teaching has some affinity with the work that historians actually do. That is, it sets out to investigate and discover a spectrum of voices, verifies argument, stimulates debate, and communicates ideas. It engages such skills as extrapolation, judgement, comparison, empathy and synthesis. These fertile ideas, derived from the British Schools Councils source-based critical method, have found their way into some South African urban schools in present-day Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape through such vectors as the University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop over the past two decades, and have had a positive impact on teaching practice courses at colleges of education. Their features are the basis of the pioneering National Education Crisis Committee Peoples' History book, *What is History* (1987), and have informed more up-to-date textbooks published in recent times. Through the creative influence of progressive history educators, investigative approaches also informed the old Joint Matriculation Board and even the Natal and Indian examination systems during the apartheid epoch.

However, innovative approaches are less prevalent in South African schools than are persistent methods of rote learning, something confirmed by many experienced and practising history teachers. Given lean resources, the mechanical acquisition of history cannot but have some present viability, but history teaching today needs to go beyond memory skills which can handle 'when, what, or who' questions. It is not memory-based repetition that needs to be credited, but rather the skill of knowing and deploying the key facts in order to craft overall historical understanding.

This Report has drawn on a range of important studies of schools history across varying grades and age-levels, taught under the 1985 History Syllabus or the Revised Core High School Syllabus of 1996. History as a component of the Human and Social Sciences area under Curriculum 2005 has been introduced in Grade 7 in 2000, and is set to be introduced in Grade 8 in 2001, but the authors of this document have no studies in hand of how this is working. Research here would be advisable. From these history surveys, it is clear that there is some very good teaching taking place, based on an established and rich tradition of innovation and critical inquiry. This resonates not only in some former white schools, but also in a number of township schools situated in Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape.

Such teaching draws on a creative learning tradition developed under apartheid, in which able dissenting teachers often jettisoned apartheid history textbooks and drew on alternative kinds of historiography, and oral history sources. In the present era, many teachers in this mould are reported to have ducked the 1996 Syllabus in Grades 10 - 11 in favour of crafting their own curricula, and developing stimulating resources on such historical areas as human rights culture. At the same time, inherited divisions in skill and capacity within education continue to have an adverse effect upon much history teaching. There is notably poor quality teaching taking place in many schools nationally, in both urban and rural sectors. In the Northern Province and also in many schools in Gauteng, it is reliably reported that teachers are continuing to work from apartheid era textbooks, invariably with barely a glimmer of consciousness that there is anything flawed about such materials.

What aggravates this situation is a diminishing of the place of history in learning. Our studies indicate that amongst many educational administrators, there is a general and pervasive discrediting of the value of history as a subject. In contrast to educational practice in a neighbouring state like Zimbabwe, history is no longer seen as a core schooling subject. A large part of what lies behind this is the perception, based on a very narrow definition of vocational education, that history has no obvious relevance to the needs and pressures of the contemporary world. While students surveyed would generally acknowledge that history is interesting or even important, they would not perceive any connection between the history learned in schools and the significance of current affairs programmes, contemporary political events or even news of the economy. Only a small minority of more advanced learners indicated in a case study that they study history because it has meaning, or is relevant to life. There is also an influential perception amongst parents who are largely, but not exclusively white, that studying history is not relevant for securing the future careers of children, unlike commerce or mathematics. This has had a particularly gendered impact, narrowing the learning paths of male students, many of whom have developed an aversion to studying important periods of South African history.

History teaching has also suffered from the corrosive effects of rationalisation and teacher redeployment policies when, after 1997, the new Post Provisioning Norms began to be applied. When hard decisions have to be made under the

imperative of economic austerity, mathematics and the sciences are given protective priority and humanities subjects like history are elbowed aside. In addition, and possibly unintentionally, the absorption of history into the Human and Social Sciences grid by Curriculum 2005 is commonly perceived as confirming the marginality or even irrelevance of the discipline.

While archaeology as a discipline has not yet been recognised by education authorities as an integral learning component of the Human and Social Sciences, research has shown its material potential to make classroom history more tangible, while the relative 'looseness' of Curriculum 2005 has provided space for it to begin to make an innovative intervention in the quality of history at schools. In some areas of the country, the response from pupils and teachers to the teaching and materials provided by public and educational archaeology projects has been encouraging.

#### Curriculum Content

Judged broadly, the present history curriculum does not effectively help to explain the formation of the present. In South African history, under the revised core syllabus of 1996, there has naturally been a broadening of the overarching narrative to move beyond 'white' history. Thus, attention is paid to a record of the liberation struggle and of the role of leading political and cultural figures in the making of a post-apartheid country. Yet, while adapting to the needs of a democratic order, the syllabus retains an essentially traditional approach to history teaching. Many teachers report that the method of providing a chronological list of suggested empirical content to the point of tedium, reduces history to a recital of facts and dates from textbooks which pupils then regurgitate without really understanding the context of events.

Secondly, the curriculum is seriously disjointed, with the history of South Africa presented as a separate, decontextualised chronological entity to both the African past and that of the rest of the world. To cite merely one example, where South African conflict over land and resources (c.1800 - 1902) is tackled, this phase of capitalist evolution is not placed in the context of global struggles for, and over, land. There are attempts, in varying school standard levels, to position South Africa within a world history, but this is ultimately limited to the two World Wars, with the Union's part in the 1939 - 45 war effort not listed as an examinable topic. Much the same kind of picture may be deduced of other significant historical phases. While detailed study is required of the development of apartheid policy and resistance to 1976, there is nothing by way of curricular content or guidelines to spur on the study of South Africa in the 1976 - 1994 period.

At the same time, the crowded and content-driven Senior Certificate phase of history and system of assessment creates syllabus pressures on time which not only curtails the freedom in classrooms to delve more deeply into the richness of history. It also negates source-based historical skills acquired in earlier grades, and provides little incentive to stretched teachers to expend energy in an already tightly-packed school year on engaging with content not prescribed for 'examination purposes'. And at the level of demand, the bifurcated content

structure means that students need not be examined on the 1948 - 1976 era, permitting conservative teachers the latitude to stick to the 1910 - 1924 period, and thereby to avoid confronting the challenges posed by proper teaching of the apartheid decades.

Turning away from South African national history, our finding is that general history is still taught in a fairly narrow and conventional way. Here, for example, the interim syllabus for grades 10 - 12 remains overwhelmingly Eurocentric in conception. Africa is mostly inert, and treated within the context of European impact through colonisation. Moreover, the study of Africa comprises only a small portion of the 'General History' curriculum for this learning phase, and is only officially prescribed for study in grade 12, and that as international relations terrain for the 1945 - 1994 period. In other words, through world power involvement in Africa, European realities remain the major point of reference and historical meaning for the continent's history. Decolonisation, independence movements and the post - 1970s development of modern Africa are not processes for student examination.

The situation of more early history is no better. In the interim syllabus, 'Prehistory' is crudely tacked on to 'history' as a tail, and although there exists a large body of expert information about archaeology and archeological methodology, archaeology is only seen in these terms as a 'type of evidence' or 'source'. In view of the fact that South Africa houses some of the world's leading archeological laboratories, it is most unfortunate that so many people in education seem not to understand that archaeology is not 'evidence', but a discipline of study in its own right, with the capacity to draw learners into an engagement with the historic landscape around them.

#### Assessment

The difficulties here are large and complex. The fact that students have to write Senior Certificate examinations in English naturally handicaps many whose first language is not English. These students are penalised for not being able to articulate themselves with sufficient clarity and sophistication in the writing of history examinations. At the same time, some English first language speakers can find their examination writing being assessed by markers for whom English is not their first language. Devising a way out of this linguistic hole will be a long haul, but a start should be made by ensuring that questions are so devised as to be fair and accessible to the full range of students being assessed. In addition, the nature of the history essay requires a slate of competent and experienced markers. Clearly, new assessment procedures which are appropriate to all South Africans are needed.

#### Curriculum 2005

Although we lack any study of its operation, for an investigative task of this kind we need, at least provisionally, to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of Curriculum 2005 in relation to history education. Generally, the positive aspect of Curriculum 2005 is that it shifts assessment quite radically, focusing on what a learner should get out of his or her education. However, it also has weaknesses. In terms of method, the conceptual demands that it makes are, in our view,



arguably not realistic, given the state of South Africa's educational system. Ostensibly, Curriculum 2005 has the merit of giving a considerable sum of 'democratic' power to teachers so that they can innovate and experiment, thereby meeting the deferred aspirations of 'people's education' in regard to the devolution of power to the classroom. But it has undertaken this in the context of a perilous abdication of responsibility for what was to be taught.

The absence of guidance on content is keenly felt, particularly in an environment where many schools lack libraries, photocopiers and even paper, and where teachers are inadequately trained or certainly have no experience of research or new materials development. Inevitably, such schooling conditions are liable simply to disempower many teachers, rendering them so insecure or frustrated that they become educationally paralysed, marooned between traditional 'content' teaching and a more modern 'skills' approach. Research shows that even in the favourable environment of countries like Britain, the United States and New Zealand, a well-educated and well-motivated teacher corps has found it difficult to cope with the lofty requirements of outcomes-based education.

This acquires special significance in the case of history because the subject does not fit neatly into the conception of knowledge which underpins our recent curriculum reform. It is not easy to pre-define the 'outcomes' of a school history lesson or history course much beyond the coverage and assured handling of content, while at the same time it is widely recognised that the effective learning of history is related to the acquisition of a far broader and often subtle grid of intellectual skills, linked to an understanding of content and the flux of historiographical interpretation.

At the level of content, the obvious danger at present is that history is accorded insufficient space and scholarly authority to challenge many of the old racial ideas which were the ideological ramparts of apartheid. This reservation extends to the serious neglect of teaching of the origins of very early societies and the significant place of Africa in that development, except for vague nudgings in the direction of the early precolonial past and change over time, and the binding 'interrelationships between South Africa and the rest of the world'. To make good such deficiency, Curriculum 2005 needs to be more explicit about the importance of teaching about the contribution of Africa to world civilisation. This would also require, as already noted, an enhanced understanding in Curriculum 2005 of archaeology as a disciplinary approach to historical understanding, and not as a 'source' used by historians when interpreting the past.

#### Quality of Teacher Training

In arguing the case for improved teacher training, the obvious starting point is the fact that the basic problem with teacher education at present begins with the prior educational preparation of teachers. Many individuals who begin teacher training tend to have been taught in a questionable way at school, in both method and content. And there is a natural tendency, however unconscious, to mimic one's own classroom learning experience in conducting one's own teaching. Here, an ideal aim of teacher training should be to push student teachers to 'unlearn' almost everything that they have already learned, in order to prepare

them to assimilate improved pedagogical methods. Generally, however, there is little to suggest that as a rule this is happening.

The second problem associated with this blockage is the underlying persistence of the legacy of teacher training from the old apartheid history system. At the level of method, teachers are taught to teach a fixed historical narrative based on agreed facts. As to content, there are substantial areas of South African history, quite apart from African and world history, with which many teachers are wholly unfamiliar. Most teachers are not being trained in new pedagogical methods in their pre-service training, nor are they being taught to understand themselves as creative bearers of historical knowledge, with the potential to shape historical imagination. Not taught the crucial skill of question-formulation and critical interrogation, those who have themselves been disadvantaged in their educational experience find it especially hard to challenge the weight of customary practice, in which the absorption of great chunks of content is rewarded.

Furthermore, teachers who have been trained in highly partial apartheid history are often left feeling shaky about their own knowledge, and are reluctant to discard old historical themes to embrace new material, to produce their own sources or to criticise textbook dogmas. This, in turn, leads to an uncritical reliance upon or even 'fetishising' of the available history textbook, even when that text may be inadequate, ideologically distorted, or even incomprehensible. A related point could be made of the teacher relationship to curriculum documentation. No matter how advanced or sophisticated a curriculum document may be, it remains a dormant document without improved professional training in becoming an enlivened history educator. It is because these teaching difficulties are composed of both human and material factors that these unresolved matters are of such significance and their resolution so important.

Clearly, the educational environment and its pressures on teachers in schools is not conducive to good teaching methods. On one hand, there is the chronic shortage of libraries, textbooks, photocopiers, and other essential resources, sometimes even including paper. On another, many teachers in earlier grades are uncertain of what to do with the space they have under the new curriculum, generally because they have not been adequately trained in how to use such space. Higher up, from grade 11 in particular, there is a consuming focus on Senior Certificate needs, which obliges a reversion to rote learning, even for those motivated educators who are grappling with the challenge of implementing new history methods.

Thirdly, following formal teacher training, teachers do not receive adequate subject backup and support from school management and the Departments of Education. This is manifested in key areas, such as the lack of ability of Subject Advisers to provide assistance in teaching methods, as opposed to administrative skills. Insufficient time is being allocated to in-service training to equip teachers to be able to implement the new outcomes-based approach effectively. Teachers in 2000 - 2001 are also having to adjust to abrupt changes

in grade-related curriculum policy, on the basis of quite perfunctory bouts of training and preparation time. Perversely, while education commentators in the past have often argued that the rigidity and heavy content demand of the schools Senior Certificate examination inhibits meaningful curriculum development, currently it is perhaps more an inadequate grasp of historical knowledge by many educators which impedes the transformation of the examination.

Lastly, teachers who are teaching the apartheid period and the history of other painful and sensitive national subjects are often not adequately prepared to deal with the challenge of their learners' responses, and lack the necessary grounding to foster debate and judicious reflection because of their own limited grasp of the topic at hand.

#### Quality of Support Materials

One of the more idiosyncratic features of teaching at present is that teachers are using both new textbooks as well as old apartheid era works, mostly because education departments plead that they are unable to afford the replacement cost of new books. In one sample school, teachers can even be found to be using both kinds of material. Now, there is an argument in some quarters that this allows good teachers to reinterpret apartheid era textbook approaches, so as to undertake a critique of historical myths, but this sophisticated direction can hardly be taken for granted as representing a nationwide phenomenon. There is, therefore, good reason to be concerned about the troubled state of the textbook area, for these are not problems which can be tidied away. For example, educators report the emergence of textbooks which present themselves as new on the sneaky basis of pasting a picture of Nelson Mandela on the cover, but which continue to uphold old myths. Thus, according to Grade 12 Dynamic History (1998), "The Homelands were expected to be attractive so that blacks would identify and return to them, but unfortunately the converse happened".

There is an additional crop of learning impediments which will need to be addressed. These include the danger of intellectual amorphousness in which, under existing Human and Social Sciences terrain, inter-disciplinary texts risk losing the particularities of their specific disciplines and replacing these strengths with very little of substance in the General Education and Training Band. As for the positive ends and purposes which the textbook can serve, hard questions of price and the unavoidably rigid structure of the teaching book also limits its role. In view of this, there is a sound sense that material produced by teachers and some Subject Advisers, as well as non-governmental educational organisations, has been playing a notable role in the provision of more accessible material.

Yet, here again, very many schools lack copying facilities to make effective use of this learning route. In like vein, given the "multi-media" information explosion and its impact upon the cultural habits of young people, there is strong interest in the potential provision of teaching and learning materials on the Internet. At the same time, this enthusiasm has to be tempered by a sense of realism, with some informed educators pointing out that too great a reliance on the Internet

could only exacerbate the consequences of the resource differentiation between privileged and poorly-endowed schools.

As the textbook remains at the centre of the history learning encounter, in conclusion let us briefly consider the balance between positive and negative features of a spread of texts currently in use. A provisional survey of both primary and high school texts, conducted by the Khayelitsha History Teachers' Network outside Cape Town, reveals a mixed picture. A sample of good features displayed by newer books includes such points as:

a comparison of the past to the present; some attention to oral tradition; incorporation of archaeology; recognition that knowledge is not fixed; probing of issues of racism and questions of conflict and tension; teaching of ancient civilisation: the origin of people and the unfolding interconnectedness of humanity; a clear sense of chronology; presentation of challenging learning activities to both teacher and student.

Equally, this may look like small comfort when set beside more discomfiting features of both old and newer textbooks. Some stark pointers are:

universally male-dominated narratives; narrowness of vision and a failure to grasp the breadth of history to open up meaningful broader themes; treatment of South African history in an isolated fashion, without linkages to the rest of Africa and the rest of the wider world; excessive emphasis on discrimination against black people, with black societies not portrayed as making history, but largely as weak victims of history made by powerful whites; insufficient attention to more contemporary historical issues; neglect of the importance of rural experiences and those of workers; little coverage of South African black nationalist and other leadership created by the excluded majority population; in attempting to be effective Outcomes-Based Education books, the privileging of learner 'activity' material in some text, at the cost of providing the necessary buttressing of key historical facts; activities prescribed in books frequently underestimating the limited resources available to many learners and communities; next to no proper coverage of historical geography thereby doing nothing to provide understanding of the major importance of mapping skills.

Clearly, neither the cause of better teacher training nor that of improved history materials provision can wait upon the other: if we are to get to grips with the deep systemic difficulties of history teaching, it is only logical that they go forward together. Our thinking on movement in this direction consists of a thrust of general recommendations, within which we submit several strategic proposals.

## Recommendations

### Strengthening the Substance and Scope of the Curriculum

#### Method

Plainly, it is neither possible nor desirable to teach 'all of history' in any curriculum. Accordingly, the aim must be to ensure that whatever the content, it is taught well, to teach the method of studying and analysing history so that the student acquires the ability to do it independently, at a level appropriate to his or

her age-range. Teachers and learners need to absorb the fundamental maxim that history through rote learning is inimical to mental development, and to the necessity of developing critical analysis.

For history to play an active, social role and to exert a positive culture presence in the education of our society, it cannot be permitted to become static - in the sense of becoming a set of agreed or nationally licensed interpretations of some or other number of selected events. The approach to understanding the past has to be informed by the notion of critical scholarship. The critical approach to history views the past from different perspectives which alter with the viewer and with time, seeing history as a continuous argument between the present and the past, based on new assessments, positions and source material. This, in turn, depends on the formation of history teachers who are confident, well-trained and well-informed, and who not only have access to teaching material to continuously develop skills, but are repositories of important factual historical knowledge. Such knowledge has to be communicated as a necessity in history study, and as an assurance against defining moments and matters in history becoming forgotten or falsified in memory.

The Department of Education should provide a greater margin of opportunity to history teachers to demonstrate their contribution to changed education by using their strengths to engage with the new situation. It is all too easily forgotten that a muscular tradition of enlightened, alternative history education emerged under and against the apartheid system, developing influential potential capacity for shaping new pedagogy. While we accept that Outcomes-Based Education has many commendable qualities, it can also encourage a technical approach to teaching in which organisation and measured dexterity is emphasised at the expense of necessary questions of history content.

#### Essential knowledge

As the old white-dominated grand narratives have crumpled, any new avenue in history study can do no other than present multiple voices of the past. Conscious reconstruction of some new set of grand narratives can only widen the cracks of an already fractured historical memory in a divided society. At the same time, it will be necessary to guard against this becoming an open thoroughfare for the propagation of exclusivist, "multi-ethnic" history, in which sets of classroom learners each end up studying their "own" ethnic history. This not only runs the risk of collectivities of people elevating "their" history over that of others, but also dilutes the essence of Curriculum 2005, which upholds a critical understanding of the construction of identity and ethnicity.

Ideally, all students need to acquire historical understanding of all people in South Africa, as the basis on which to forge a sense of a shared human past. Equally, expressing opposition to the racial arrogance of separatist ethnic histories should in no way obstruct encouragement of the historical richness inherent in the regional experiences and stories which have a meaningful link to the overarching South African past. The content balance of any national curriculum should, where appropriate, provide for learners to understand, for instance, the regional past of indentured Indian labour in Natal or slavery in the

colonial Cape. Ideally, then, we favour a national curriculum framework with clear latitude for the contribution of positive regional or provincial materials.

In this context, we also believe that when done well, social history, oral history and historical biography are especially good at opening windows to the flux of individual experience and events in history, as are family and community histories. Strengthening of more innovative approaches to schools history should also lead educators to think more of ways of teaching the past beyond the categories of race. Understanding slices of our history through explanatory processes such as trade, or indenture, or urbanisation, or war can help learners to appreciate that the story of modern South Africa is not just the story of race, but of a complex chemistry of colour, class and gender.

In the light of our inquiry, it goes almost without saying that an archeological approach to teaching history is to be encouraged as a valuable means of introducing some of the fundamental skills of historical inquiry to relevant study areas, in making the material past more tangible, and in facilitating cross-curricula work through its scientific use of photographic, medical, and other technologies to answer such social sciences questions as how past societies organised economic production. From what can be pieced together from the sites of slave lodges or old sites of armed conflict, students can also experience creative ways of going about reclaiming historic pasts and identities. Moreover, allowing learners to encounter archeological evidence and sites can be a valuable and effective means of instilling a curiosity in, and identification with, the power of the past. Through drawing upon a spectrum of different types of evidence, from pre-colonial rock art to stone tools, archaeology is able to illustrate that parts of the past can be experienced through more than written texts, or the spoken tracings of oral tradition: understanding can rest upon a multiplicity of fragmentary clues. And through the application of appropriate learning strategies, the discipline of archaeology meshes well with the purposes of Outcomes-Based, integrated curricula.

The notion of globalisation is a major phenomenon of the turn of the twentieth-century and, given its imposing place in contemporary consciousness, needs to be reflected in the curriculum in a historical way. This means a treatment of global or world history as something distinct from the glib mantra of globalisation, as something which is not the same as European, Eurocentric or western civilisation, and as something rooted in several centuries of economic internationalisation through imperialism. While it is all well and good that students get to know the market commodity meaning of globalisation today, it is no less valuable that they come to know what it meant to South Africa in the period of the Dutch seaborne empire, when the future of this region was poised between East and West, and why its global destiny came to be linked to that of the Western Atlantic world.

In our view, the Social Science (History and Geography) and Languages, Literacy and Communication curriculum learning areas have many profitable opportunities for cross-fertilisation. Imaginative articulation of geography and history would enhance appreciation of the fundamental importance of time and

space to the movement of history. Alongside this, the enhanced use of major South African as well as international historical novels can help to show how historical knowledge can be imagined and articulated in language and symbols. Through the mining of Truth and Reconciliation Commission sources, the critical exploration of seams of historical consciousness such as radio, film, television and magazines, or by combing through apartheid history textbooks to assess the programmatic construction of knowledge or simple historical invention, good language teachers can raise basic scaffolding for the acquisition of historical understanding. Likewise, while the recent Chisholm Report on the new curriculum has recommended shedding the Economic and Management Sciences field at primary level, some of its components in the Social Science learning area can be drawn on to stiffen history teaching, for example, useful material on trade, markets and production.

Consideration should also be given to the incorporation of Heritage Studies as a particular form of knowledge production of public narratives for tourism, information technology, monuments, and popular culture, on the basis of itself being subject to rigorous methodological scrutiny. Of course, heritage Studies should in no way weaken nor replace basic history education, nor should it be seen as threatening to the core position of historical method.

#### Formulation of a History Curriculum

As a strategic proposal, we strongly endorse the important recommendations of the Chisholm report that History and Geography be taught as defined Social Sciences at the General Education and Training Phase, with the time allocation increased from 10% to 15% of the curriculum. Added to this is our view that at least 50% of the learning time should be allotted to History, which should be taught as a self-standing subject within its curriculum area. This reflects a firm consensus among teachers in our research sample. Equally obviously, the independent status of History at this level should certainly allow for some cross-disciplinary articulation of History/Geography/Archaeology, provided that these subject areas are not collapsed together as disciplines. Appropriate linkages would foster the growth of an integrated teaching methodology at the schooling level. It is also our view that the GET phase should promote a central narrative understanding of the history of South Africa and African and their changing position in world history, and that content be treated in accordance with increasing levels of complexity.

A second, linked strategic proposal is that History be taught as an independent disciplinary subject at Further Education and Training Level (Grades 10-12) and that a new curriculum be developed for this purpose, with a scope which includes the sphere of Adult Basic Education and Training. This new curriculum would need to be in place by January 2003 in order to be available to enrich those who will have done curriculum 2005 in Grade 7 in 2000. At Senior Certificate level, the content of this curriculum should include statutory study of post-1973 South African history, running into the post-apartheid era and the key issues of our current history, the ends and purposes of our post-1994 historical trajectory. A measure of the merit of a new higher curriculum should be that its content not be urban-biased but include rural or agrarian studies, to provide due attention to the

historical character of land questions. Lastly, any content list should be framed thematically rather than chronologically.

Crucially, there must be a coherent, incremental link between any Curriculum 2005 GET phase and the FET stage, so that earlier conceptual frameworks for understanding problematics like identity and ethnicity should not be drained away by Senior Certificate assessment systems which require deadening content exercises. Finally, we agree with the Chisholm Report recommendation that Grade 9, the point at which most pupils are likely to leave school, should provide directed knowledge, skills and values as 'exit outcomes', rather than broad 'social science' outcomes.

#### Skills promotion

History methodology should also incorporate the acquisition of related wider skills, such as the establishment of community archives and school archives, particularly in rural settlements where there are no such repositories.

We agree with the Chisholm Report recommendations on the importance of language development and the need to foster comprehensive reading and writing skills. It is desirable that the history curriculum advances multilingualism.

In the Outcomes arena there are creative teaching possibilities to boost the standing of history study in skills formation. Thus, to take Outcome 8 ('Analyse forms and processes of organisations') as an example, it can readily be demonstrated how the classic historical skills of comprehension, empathy, accuracy, judgement, and critical questioning can serve the purpose of good productive organisation, thereby helping to dispel commonplace misperceptions about the 'irrelevance of history skills'.

#### Strengthening Teacher Training

Two basic remedial measures are indispensable both to meaningful classroom curriculum implementation, and to dealing with the teaching and learning crises in history. In this sphere, one strategic proposal is the restoring of a disastrously diminished national history teacher training capacity, in which the country has lost some 65% of its provision over the past six years. This should involve both an expansion of places, and more effective pre- and in-service training of history teachers to provide them with the confidence of ability in method, experience and resources to become effective in the classroom.

#### Pre-service

Pre-service training should include study of a history period or theme in depth, to expose teachers to the treatment of history from a range of primary and other source materials and interpretative perspectives, providing them with the necessary experience of constructing history from something other than solely textbooks and notes.

University-trained school educators should be encouraged to follow a programme stream which includes both history and archaeology, and a set of



courses which provides a broad span of world, African and South African history, appropriate to school curriculum requirements and standards.

There is a case for investigating the introduction of a one-year historical literacy course to be available to prospective educators, particularly language teachers, who may not wish to major in history but who would nevertheless be interested in acquiring some history background.

#### In-service

Here, there is a pressing need for courses in history to train teachers in specific areas of historical knowledge which were skirted in schools, colleges and even some universities: although some periods of European history are well treated, there are massive areas of deficiency, ranging from much of South African history to African history, prehistory and early history, and world history. Filling in gaps should be accompanied by training in newer pedagogical methods. These should include grounding in the skills and concepts of history, imaginative teaching approaches through such things as historical drama, curriculum and materials development, and forms of assessment for OBE which should be linked more realistically to the capacity of teachers.

We also strongly advocate the development of a specialised In-Service training programme for history teaching to be offered by colleges of education and universities, guided by the principles of the discipline, and utilisation of the skills and proficiencies of Ôlead teachersÕ as recommended by the Chisholm Report. It should be feasible to base an enrichment programme of this kind on two-week courses, mounted three times a year, with teachers perhaps attending several courses during their professional career. In this, attention should be given to teacher incentives to draw educators into In-Service course training, and to the formation of provincially-based training coordination, to ensure that schooling cycles include the release of teachers for training purposes.

As History Subject Advisors are absolutely key personnel, a further strategic proposal is that major effort be put into providing them with special training to raise their proficiencies in the field. As part of this, it would be desirable to have Subject Advisers continuing active history teaching in schools for at least one weekly period, to strengthen communication with teachers and to contribute meaningfully to In-Service training, particularly of under-prepared teachers. We are also extremely concerned by the lack of History Subject Advisers in many rural and poor areas, making good In-Service training an imperative for poorer provinces, an aspect of the looming need to distribute more history resources to rural areas.

A no less evident need is that for provincial training of Senior Certificate examining panels in the construction of appropriate evaluative norms and standards for history at this level. A national training course, conducted by a combination of history educators and experienced academic historians, along with assessment experts, would have the potential to change both the rationale for, and the nature of, Grade 10-12 history learning, a forward step which could be accomplished at modest cost.

### Support materials improvement

Here, it is little more than a truism to assert that successful implementation of the curriculum rests upon effective support materials of high quality. If these are to be consumed with productive results, the history education recipe has to have the right ingredients. In our view, producers of texts and materials should take special account of the need to ensure that work reflects:

an awareness of the relation between the past and the present; treats knowledge-based argument as provisional or contested; has an emphasis on the importance of human agency rather than victimisation in history; attempts to locate ways in which learners' experiences be incorporated and turned to pedagogical purposes; is sufficiently flexible to allow the incorporation of knowledge drawn from other forms of historical representation, such as literature; and presents open-ended narratives which avoid simplistic dichotomies between villains and heroes, and the sense of a single or omnipotent historical conclusion.

Furthermore, the historical concept of 'place' needs to be explicitly incorporated into the full spread of learner and teacher support materials, and in this we keenly back the support the Chisholm Report recommendation. History students' grasp of mapping skills is exceptionally poor throughout the system, and the development of map reading through strong guiding material is an important means of making good such an acute learning deficiency.

In all of this, the place of the history textbook cannot but remain central to the cause of an improved history education. In this respect, textbook development needs to be in touch with recent academic historiographical development, and to adapt advancing knowledge for use in schools. Secondly, rather than provide flat, uniform narratives, all textbooks should try to incorporate a peppering of primary source voices and reveal how historians debate varying approaches, encouraging learners to make judgements based on evidence. Thirdly, to address the crucial consideration of language and other levels, it is highly desirable that all texts and related teaching material be submitted to pre-publication, pilot tests in schools before they are approved by education authorities, or by teachers.

Our fourth and final recommendation is a general point about the danger of book provision on the basis of monopoly, whether informal or authorised. In our view, different textbooks should be available to learners in schools as a basic rule, and there should be no countenancing of any monopoly of textbook production and distribution, either by over-mighty individual publishers or by state publishing interests. You may look where you will, but the nationalist historical record of governments trying to become history education publishers is not especially encouraging.

### Building Overall Capacity

The urgent enlargement of space for history will clearly require working out - through a myriad of complexities and deep problems - a longer term strategy to

address the picture painted by this Report, that of a serious history crisis which is affecting not only our schools, but also the health of the discipline in our colleges and universities. How effectively it will be addressed cannot but come to be seen as a cultural test of our present national priorities, and what place these will give to the civilising influence of history learning upon the democratic values we would want to see inscribed in our national life. To bolster capacity to improve a grim situation we currently stand much in need of some larger initiatives which run well beyond the high school classroom.

Accordingly, our final strategic proposal is for the establishment of a National History Commission, drawing on the assembled expertise of researchers in the fields of education, history, archaeology, heritage studies, anthropology and sociology. While a major purpose would be exploring ways of strengthening the teaching of history in schools, through the initiation of rolling projects similar to the 5-Year European Youth and History Project (1992-1997), we would like to see it given a broader and long-term brief to address the systemic crisis around history provision, as it impinges upon such key issues as the linkages between schools and tertiary institutions and beyond. It would be the work of such a Commission to assist in ensuring that in the critical field of education, we do not end up a country freed not only from apartheid, but also freed from history.

Lastly, we recommend the setting up of a National History Network, comprising school educators, librarians, literacy, media and heritage industry workers, historians, archaeologists, geographers, environmentalists and business people with humanities interests, with the task of auditing and coordinating scattered history resources in order to try to make them accessible to schools through a dedicated national network of community archives. There is renewed scope for the rich tradition of 'alternative' history in South Africa, both written and oral, to be properly preserved and turned to account in the present.

In summary form, our core strategic proposals are:

#### Curriculum

History and Geography be taught as defined Social Sciences at the GET phase, with an increase in curriculum time allotted to 15%, and that History be taught as a self-standing subject within its curriculum area, enjoying at least 50% of related learning time.

History be taught as an independent disciplinary subject at FET level, and that a new curriculum be devised for this purpose, to be operational by 2003.

#### Training

Rapid rebuilding of weakened history teacher training capacity and the expansion of trainee places and enhancement of training quality at both pre-service and in-service levels.

Raising the proficiencies and enlarging the role of History Subject Advisers.

Capacity

Establishing a National History Commission.

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