

# **THE HISTORY OF HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1994-2006.**

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A Mini-Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of  
Magister Artium in the Department of History, University of the Western Cape.



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07 NOVEMBER, 2008

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that *The History of History in South African Secondary Schools, 1994-2006*, is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

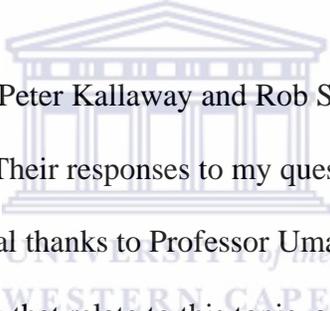
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Tabe Fidelis Ebot



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am honoured to extend my thanks to all the people who assisted me in the course of writing this thesis. I will for always be grateful to them for their assistance. First and foremost, I will like to extend my gratitude to my supervisor, Professor Teresa Barnes for staying on with the supervision of this thesis, even though she left for the United States about five months before the submission of this thesis. Her informed insight on this topic, made it interesting and challenging working with her. I am equally thankful to Dr. June Bam for accepting to respond to my questions on email despite her busy schedule in London at the time when I needed her help.



I am also grateful to Professors Peter Kallaway and Rob Sieborger for giving me the opportunity to interview them. Their responses to my questions, helped to give direction and content to this thesis. Special thanks to Professor Uma Mesthrie for letting me use some of her personal documents that relate to this topic, and also for accepting to assist in the absence of my supervisor.

Finally, my profound gratitude also goes to the ten secondary school teachers whom I interviewed. I will remain grateful to them for their contributions to the successful completion of this thesis.

## ABSTRACT

The decline in the status of history in South African Secondary Schools was a matter of national concern from 1997 onwards. In 1997, three years after the formal end of the apartheid system, democratic South Africa introduced its first new curriculum for secondary schools, which was called Curriculum 2005 (C2005). Surprisingly, the discipline of History that had for a very long time been an important subject in its own right was conspicuously absent in the new curriculum.

This MA thesis investigates the decision to marginalize History in C2005 at a time when there were expectations of the importance of the discipline in a democratic South Africa. It argues that the marginalization of the discipline in C2005 was not solely based on pedagogical reasons, but that it might have been influenced by political agendas. My research provides support for this view with evidence of the procedures inside the relevant government education policy committees. In addition, it explores the debates and processes that led to the reinstatement of the discipline in the Revised National Curriculum Statement for schools that was approved in April 2002 by the South African Cabinet.

Finally, it has examines the character of the new history syllabus of the revised curriculum of democratic South Africa. It argues that the new History curriculum for schools is more inclusive of the different aspects of South African history than either the history curriculum in C2005 and the history curricula under apartheid had been.

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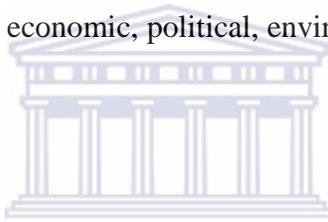


C2005	Curriculum 2005
FET	Further Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
ICHD	Interim Committee of Heads of Education Departments
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee
NETF	National Education and Training Forum
SACHED	South African Committee for Higher Education
SAHP	South African History Project
SAHS	South African Historical Society
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation



## INTRODUCTION

In 1997, three years after the end of apartheid, the new democratic South Africa introduced its first new curriculum for secondary schools, which was called Curriculum 2005 (C2005). Surprisingly, the discipline of history, which had for a very long time been an important subject in its own right in the curricula, was conspicuously not visible in the new curriculum. It had been amalgamated into selected themes or topics in a new area of study called the Human and Social Sciences Learning Area.<sup>1</sup> This learning area had as its focus the study of the relationships between people and their environment in terms of space and time that have social, economic, political, environmental as well as spiritual dimensions.<sup>2</sup>



In relation to the focus of study of this learning area, themes were to be selected from the different disciplines of history, geography, religion and civics without any mention of the names of these above disciplines. It was argued that the purpose of clustering the disciplines in this way was to encourage a more integrated approach to learning.<sup>3</sup>

This thesis investigates the decision that was taken to marginalize the teaching of history in C2005, at a time when there was great expectation about the importance of the discipline of history in education in a democratic South Africa. It presents an in-depth study of the fate of the discipline of history in South African secondary schools. An

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<sup>1</sup> South African Department of Education: Report of the Technical Committee to Assist the Department of Education in the development of Standards ( March 1997 ), 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. , 17.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

important objective is to supplement the existing secondary sources and analyses with interviews about the fight to ‘save history’ and history curricula conducted with participants in the process who were prominent educators based in Cape Town. These educators are both university and schools-based. This thesis emphasizes the importance of the discipline in nation building, and finally, reviews the content of history textbooks that have been produced as a result of these processes from 1999 to 2006.

There were very reasonable grounds for the expectation that there would be a new progressive history after 1994.<sup>4</sup> In 1992, for instance, three historical conferences were held in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, to debate a new history curriculum for South Africa.<sup>5</sup> There was widespread consensus among participants at the conferences on the importance of the teaching of history, and many proposals were made for the content of a new syllabus or curriculum document for South Africa.<sup>6</sup>

It may be argued that the decision to integrate history with other disciplines in C2005 was simply a guise to prevent the past from being reviewed and reinterpreted. Rob Sieborger has argued that what happened to the study of history in South Africa is a clear indication that South Africa was in denial about its past. This, he suggests, could be the reason why history disappeared below the surface in C2005.<sup>7</sup> In my opinion, this suggestion actually hits the nail on the head! It seemed to be easier to forget about a past that was characterized as biased than to deal with it. Therefore, it would appear that the decision to

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<sup>4</sup> Rob Sieborger, ‘History and the Emerging Nation: The South African Experience’. *International Journal of Historical Learning, Teaching and Research*, (1, 1,2000),1.

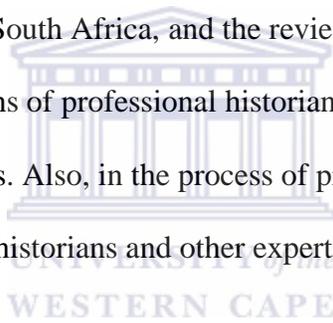
<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

adopt an integrated approach to education, especially with regard to history in post-apartheid South Africa, was not solely made on pedagogical grounds. It might have been influenced by political influences, given the fact that the curriculum was designed mostly by bureaucrats, the majority of whom had worked in the previous political dispensation and had been responsible for designing the old curricula under apartheid that were criticized as being biased against the majority of the South African population.<sup>8</sup>

This thesis provides support for this view with evidence of the procedures followed inside the committees that were charged with the responsibilities of designing a curriculum for post-apartheid South Africa, and the review of the curriculum. My evidence shows that the opinions of professional historians were ignored in 1994 in the rush to achieve short-term goals. Also, in the process of producing a fully-fledged curriculum, it was evident that historians and other experts were left out in the cold.<sup>9</sup>



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There is a wealth of primary and secondary material available on this topic. Regarding secondary sources, the crisis of history in South Africa was the subject of several conferences and committees. The crisis resulting from the implementation of C2005 led the Ministry of Education of South Africa to create the History/Archaeology Panel in 2000, and the South African History Project (SAHP) in 2001. The SAHP made several recommendations on how to improve the value of history teaching in schools. The reports of such commissions are available at the Center for the Study of Higher Education in the

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<sup>8</sup> J. Bam, 'The hidden hand in school history', Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the South African Historical Society, The University of the Western Cape, July 11-14, 1999,5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

University of the Western Cape, at the African Studies Library, and the South African Government Publications Library of the University of Cape Town. There are several collections and journal articles that relate to the topic.<sup>10</sup> In terms of primary sources, many of the participants in the history committees were easily available for interviewing, as they are academics in the Universities of Western Cape, Cape Town and Stellenbosch. Most especially, I communicated with the former Chief Executive Officer of the South African History Project by email, and interviewed former members of the History and Archaeology Panel who are resident in Cape Town. In addition, I also interviewed ten school history teachers in about eight secondary schools in Mitchell's Plain, Hhayelitsha, Grassy Park and Athlone, all in Cape Town between April and August 2008. Six of the teachers whom I interviewed were women and four were men.

Mr. Cassiem Savahl of Fairmount High School was recommended by Professor Aslam Fatar of the Department of Education of the University of the Western Cape. He holds an Honours Degree in history and taught history for 26 years between 1979 and 2005. Professor A. Fatar also directed me to Glendale High School in Mitchell's Plain, where I interviewed Messers Abe Delpont and Rudolph Lewis. Both have been teaching history since 1982 and 1979 respectively. My supervisor recommended Mrs. F. Bell, while the rest of the other teachers were contacted personally. I met them through random visits to some schools found in the areas mentioned above. In such schools, I met the principals and requested to speak with social science teachers. Through this means, I made appointments with the teachers whom were interviewed.

Mrs. Sandra Saur-Jacobs of Fairmount High School has an Honours Degree in history and has been teaching history since 1990. Mrs. Xoliswa Ngwenya who moved from Bellville South Secondary School to Fairmount High School, has a Bachelors Degree in History and has been teaching since 2001. Mrs. Theresa Shand of Lenteguer High School has been teaching history since 1984. Mr. M. B. Hess of Chris Hani Arts and Culture High School has been in the job since 1992. Mrs. Zwane Daphne of the same School has

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<sup>10</sup> Such articles include 'The hidden hand in school history by June Bam (1999), ' History and the emerging nation' by Rob Sieborger ( 2000), 'History has to play its part' by Teresa Barnes (2007), 'History then and now' by Colin Bundy (1989), 'Reaping the Whirlwind' by Leslie Witz and Caroline Hamilton (1991).

also been there since 1993. Mrs. Margaret Morta of Beacon Hill High School has a Bachelors Degree in both history and geography and has been teaching both subjects since 2002. Thus, oral history with experienced history teachers was an important part of my research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

It was widely believed in South Africa that with the coming to power of a democratic government, the study of history would be given great impetus, as was the case with neighbouring Zimbabwe after colonial rule. Between 1990 and 2000, history was made a compulsory subject in schools in Zimbabwe.<sup>11</sup> Though the status of history shifted from being a compulsory subject to an optional subject in 2001, in just a year later that is in 2002 it was made compulsory again with special emphasis on its relevance to Zimbabwe.<sup>12</sup>

In South Africa, in contrast, academic history flourished in the late apartheid period, especially in the field of social history, and it was widely expected that this energy and drive would be translated into a national fascination with historical subjects in South Africa and indeed, around the world.<sup>13</sup> Instead, the immediate post-apartheid government policy on education de-emphasized the study of history not only in secondary schools, but also at the tertiary level.<sup>14</sup> C2005, which was introduced in 1997, laid a new emphasis on outcomes-based education in schools.<sup>15</sup> This highly centralized and formal approach to education was meant to ensure that learners would gain specific skills, knowledge and

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<sup>11</sup> Barnes, 'History has to play its part: Construction of race in high school historiography and reconciliation in Zimbabwe, 1980-2002'. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33, 3 ( September 2007), 22.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> C. Burns, 'A useable past: The search for history in cords'. In Hans E. Stolten (ed) *History making and Present Day Politics: The meaning of collective memory in South Africa* (Stockholm: Elanders Gotab AB, 2007), 352.

<sup>14</sup> South African Department of Education. Report of The History/Archeology Panel to the Minister of Education, 2001, 4.

<sup>15</sup> L. Chisholm, 'The state of curriculum reform in South Africa: The issue of Curriculum 2005' In J. Daniel, A. Habib and R. Southall *State of the Nation: South Africa 2003-2004* ( Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2003), 268.

values that would enable them and their families to succeed in life.<sup>16</sup> With outcomes-based education, each learning area was supposed to inform its learners about the importance of exploring education and career opportunities; but specific content was not prescribed.<sup>17</sup> Under C2005, the disciplines of history, geography and civics were mixed together in a cluster called the Human and Social Sciences.<sup>18</sup>

The downgrading of the discipline of history after 1994 gradually attracted concern from historians, with the perception that history was being suppressed. Thus, in 1997 the South African History Society (SAHS) met and examined the teaching of history in South African schools and found that the discipline was discredited. It was no longer a core-learning subject in schools, and there were problems with the curriculum and teacher training. Its recommendations were to strengthen the substance and scope of the curriculum and teacher training, and encouraged the production of new materials for the teaching of history.<sup>19</sup> It is significant that in response to these arguments, a series of national conversations sponsored by the Ministry of Education ensued: the Working Group on Values in Education and Democracy which met in 2000, the History and Archaeological Panel that was set up also in 2000, and the South African History Project that was established in 2001. The aim of these bodies came to be the strengthening of the position and quality of history teaching in South African schools and also to enhance the substance and scope of the history curriculum.<sup>20</sup>

In these fora, South African historians argued for the continued relevance of history. Dr. June Bam, who came to head the South African History Project, argued that the teaching of history is central to the promotion of human values and morality, for it studies, records

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<sup>16</sup> Report of the History /Archaeology Panel, 2001, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. , 11-12.

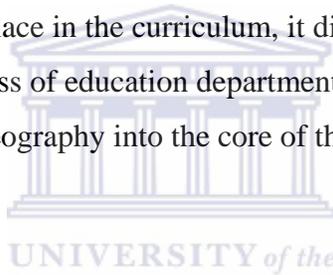
<sup>18</sup> Ibid. , 47.

<sup>19</sup> M. Legassick 'Reflections on Practicing Applied History in South Africa, 1994-2002: From Skeletons to Schools. In Hans Erik Stolten(ed) *History making and Present-Day Politics: The meaning if Collective Memory in South Africa* (Stockholm: Elander Gotab AB, 2007), 13.

<sup>20</sup> Bam,'The South African History Project', 167-168; M. Legassick, 'Reflections on practicing Applied History in South Africa, 1994-2002 (2002), 13; Y. Seleti, 'Changing the Landscape of History Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Prospects and Challenges, 2000-2004 (2004), 6.

and diffuses knowledge of human failures and achievements over time.<sup>21</sup> As such, the study of history should be encouraged not discouraged, and efforts should be made to ensure that the end of apartheid did not mean the end of history.<sup>22</sup> She suggested that in order to increase interest in history, the history curriculum and Teacher Training should be improved and support materials made available to schools.<sup>23</sup>

Linda Chisholm's work (2003) offered a thorough critique of C2005. She argued that it emphasized 'everyday' as against school knowledge in the school context, and that it saw teachers as facilitators of learning rather than as people with specialized knowledge, and textbooks as a hindrance to, rather than a support for learning.<sup>24</sup> In her view, C2005 had a skewed vision of curriculum structure and design. Although it recommended the allocation of more time for language and mathematics and advocated that Arts and Culture should have a formal place in the curriculum, it did not recognize curriculum development as the core business of education departments. This was demonstrated by its amalgamation of history and geography into the core of the Human and Social Sciences learning area.<sup>25</sup>



Chisholm then (2004) wrote about the debate and issues around the history curriculum in the course of the revision of the curriculum between 2000 and 2002. She widened the debate by arguing that though South Africa's history under apartheid was the history of the Whites and people's education had framed oppositional discourses of the 1980s, history was paradoxically not at the first wave of curriculum reform in the immediate aftermath of 1994.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> June Bam, 'The South African History Project' in S. Jeppie, *Towards New Histories for South Africa* (Cape Town: Juta Gariep, 2004)169.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> June Bam, 'The South African History Project', 167.

<sup>24</sup> Chisholm, 'The state of curriculum reform in South Africa, 276.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. , 277.

<sup>26</sup> L. Chisholm, 'The history Curriculum in the Revised Nation Curriculum Statement: An Introduction'. In S. Jeppie, *Towards New Histories for South Africa* ( Cape Town: Juta Gariep, 2004), 178.

Martin Legassick advanced that in 1997, the South African History Society examined the teaching of history in South African schools.<sup>27</sup> It found out that history was discredited and was no longer a core-learning subject in schools. It recommended that the substance and scope of the curriculum and teacher training should be strengthened, and that new materials for teaching history should be provided.<sup>28</sup>

Also in 2004, Yonah Seleti attempted to assess what had happened to history education since the creation of the Ministerial Committee on History of 2001. With Bam, Legassick and others, he argued that C2005 marginalized history as its disciplinary uniqueness was dissolved into the integrated human and social sciences learning area, creating a perception that history was redundant. This in turn caused history enrolments to drop and the training of history teachers to become redundant. The Ministerial Committee on History was set up to revive interest in History in South Africa, especially in schools. It advanced that professional historians should play an active role in the quest for a better history education in South Africa.<sup>29</sup>

Albert Grundlingh has argued that in the 1970s and 80s, the social importance of history in South Africa was overwhelming, but it declined in the 1990s. He attributed this decline to market forces. He argued that the discourses of the market and macro-economic policy did not tie in well with the language of the historians and the general search for truth in their work.<sup>30</sup> Grundlingh's point about the effect of market forces on the discipline of history relates to the outcome-based education principles of C2005, which did not consider history as a marketable subject.

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<sup>27</sup> Legassick, 'Reflections on Practicing Applied history', 4.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. , 13.

<sup>29</sup> Y. Seleti, 'Changing the Landscape of History Education IN Post apartheid South Africa: Prospects and Challenges 2000-2004' ( unpublished paper 2004), 6.

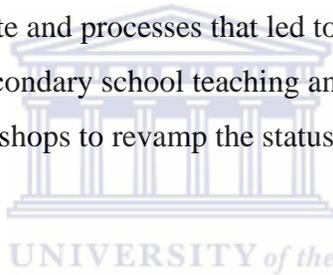
<sup>30</sup> A. Grundlingh, 'Some Trends in South African Academic History: Changing Context and Challenges'. In S. Jeppie, *Towards New Histories for South Africa* ( Cape Town: Juta Gariep,2004), 198-199.

## CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter One will examine the assessments of the state of school history in the late apartheid period and the importance accorded to the study of history in South Africa after apartheid. These will be contrasted with the position of the discipline in another country that experienced a change from colonial rule, neighbouring Zimbabwe.

Chapter two investigates the rationale to merge history with other disciplines into the Human and Social sciences learning area. It also investigates the teaching of the content of this learning area, in an attempt to assess the situation of the discipline within the integration context.

Chapter three engages the debate and processes that led to the re-instatement of history as an independent discipline in secondary school teaching and learning. The contributions of historical committees and workshops to revamp the status of the discipline are highlighted and discussed.



Chapter four examines the state of the discipline in the light of its re-incarnation as a discipline in its own right. It will pay particular attention to what is being studied in new textbooks material, and the relevance of historical study to the new democratic dispensation.

Chapter five summarizes the findings of the research and attempts to characterize the form which has been taken by schools history in democratic South Africa.

## CHAPTER ONE

### HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS BEFORE 1997.

The study of history in secondary schools in South Africa goes back to the early part of the twentieth century when history was taught on a large scale in both primary and secondary government schools.<sup>31</sup> Legislation had made the study of history a compulsory subject at primary and at the junior secondary school level, and the textbooks that were used had a government stamp of approval.<sup>32</sup> At this time, of course, schooling was only compulsory for white children. With the strong influence that the settler writings had in the teaching of history in schools, South African history from the early twentieth century through the 1980s was dominated by the story of the triumph of the white settlers over 'barbarous' blacks and powerful assertions of Afrikaner nationalism.<sup>33</sup>

L. Witz and C. Hamilton have stated that the study of history in schools in South Africa intensified from 1948 onwards with the victory of the National Party in the elections of that year. The government of the National Party accorded a special place to the study of Afrikaner nationalist historiography in schools.<sup>34</sup> The history syllabus emphasized that whites were superior, blacks inferior and that South Africa rightfully belonged to the Afrikaners.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> L. Witz, 'Beyond van Riebeeck'. In S. Nuttal and C. Ann Michael, *Senses of Culture: South African Culture Studies* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, Southern Africa, 2000), 322.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. , 323.

<sup>33</sup> L. Witz and C. Hamilton, 'Reaping the Whirlwind: The Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa and Changing Popular Perceptions of History'. In *South African Historical Journal* 24 ( 1991), 186.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

In a similar manner, Owen van den Berg described the South African history core syllabus as reflecting a White perspective in general and an Afrikaner nationalist perspective in particular.<sup>36</sup> There seem to be a general consensus to the fact that the history that was taught in schools was very biased against the majority of the South African population. Thus according to Van den Berg and Buckland, ‘The history that is taught to the African, Indian and Coloured denies his existence, as the history is a heroic tale of the rise of the Afrikaner; the heroism of the black resistance to their conquest is hardly charted.’<sup>37</sup>

The secondary school teachers that I interviewed for my research also expressed the view that the history that they taught their students before 1994 was actually biased against themselves and the students.<sup>38</sup> Some went further to say that though the syllabus was biased, they made sure that they did not stick to it and taught issues that were outside the syllabus. Mr. Cassiem Savahl for example, a teacher at Fairmount High School from 1979 to 2008, said he taught alternative versions of history to the students and it was much more exciting doing something different from the prescribed syllabus.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> O. van den Berg, ‘History Syllabus Revision: An odyssey into Curriculum Development-South African Style’. In M. Lawrence, *South African Education Policy: Analysis and Critique. The Processing of the Kenton Conference 6-9 November 1981* ( Cape Town: Faculty of Education, University of Cape Town), 82.

<sup>37</sup> O. van den Berg and P. Buckland, *History as a Subject in South African Schools*, University of Cape town, (1982), 23.

<sup>38</sup> Interviews with Mr. C. Savahl 1979-2008 in April and Mrs. S. Saur- Jacobs 1990-2008 in May 2008, both from Fairmount High School in Grassy Park; Messer’s A. Delport 1982-2008, and R. Lewis 1979-2008, both on May 15, 2008 at Glendale High School in Mitchell’s plain.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Mr. Cassiem Savahl, a former history teacher at Fairmount High School in Grassy Park in Cape Town, 1979 –2008, Cape Town, April 2008. See also Sue Krige, et. al. *Teachers Transform History* (Johannesburg: Heinemann and Wits History Workshop, 1997).

Colin Bundy has classified the study of History in South African schools into three main trajectories, though the first and second tend to focus on a white perspective. He advanced the view that the first version of South African history could be characterized as a white supremacist history or 'history by denial'; this goes back to the settler histories of the early nineteenth century, which for a very long time was entrenched in school textbooks.<sup>40</sup> The second interpretation of South African history was apartheid history or history by segregation. The third category is anti-apartheid or 'history by assertion'<sup>41</sup>.

It should be noted that some alternative history was introduced in some schools set up by the African National Congress (ANC) in the mid 1950s. Members of the Unity Movement set up similar schools in Cape Town in the 1950s and 1960s. But these were outlawed by draconian censorship and security laws that were imposed by the government.<sup>42</sup> In the 1970s and especially after the 1976 schools' uprising, the history of black South Africans in their own right was investigated through the influence of the black consciousness movement.<sup>43</sup> The black consciousness movement called on blacks to re-write their own history focusing on the dignity and self-respect of heroes that formed the core of their resistance to the white invaders.<sup>44</sup> The alternative versions of the past that were produced during this period relied heavily on oral histories, and the culture and experience of ordinary people for the development of a view from below.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> C. Bundy, 'History Then and Now' *Mentor*, 71, 3 (1989), 2.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> O. Van den Berg, *History Syllabus Revision*, 82.

<sup>43</sup> L. Witz, and C. Hamilton, *Reaping the Whirl wind*, 188.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 189.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

In the 1980s, limited political changes saw the inclusion of some aspects of coloured and Indian histories. But between 1985 and 1986 widespread protest by black students involved over 900 schools and nearly 40% of black students nationwide took part in classroom stay-aways. The main demands of the students were to be given equal access to resources and education, and the elimination of racism from textbooks, in teaching and in the organization of educators.<sup>46</sup>

‘History by assertion’ is sometimes called ‘people’s history’. It sets out to recapture the past of ordinary people and to give voice to those usually mute in historiography.<sup>47</sup>

People’s history was produced under the umbrella of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC), which was established in 1985 to replace the boycott strategy adopted by students in the 1980s. Its aim was to correct the distortions and myths, which pervaded apartheid history, and to enable people to develop a critical understanding of the past through analysis and collective input.<sup>48</sup> The text that emerged in this context was the NECC’s ‘history pack’. It was produced to serve as a grassroots exercise in history production. It focused on the method of historians and on the development of critical skills by students.<sup>49</sup> Like the alternative histories produced in the 1960s and 1970s, the ‘history pack’ produced by NECC, could not be widely distributed because of the state of emergency imposed in 1986, which coincided with a hard crack-down on the NECC.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. , 190.

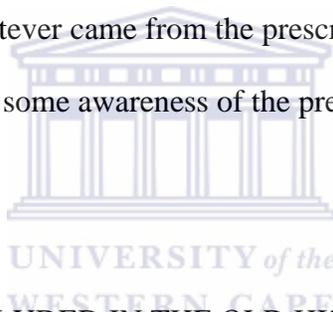
<sup>47</sup> C. Bundy ‘History then and now’, 3.

<sup>48</sup> L. Witz and C. Hamilton, Reaping the Whirl wind, 190-191.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. , 191.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. , 191.

According to G. Cuthbertson and A. Grundlingh, the versions of the past mainly either denied blacks a place in history except as external irritants, or allocated them their own history which exaggerated African agency, initiative and identity in order to construct a black history.<sup>51</sup> Cuthbertson and Grundlingh posited that the study of history under apartheid was not static as there were innovations from time to time.<sup>52</sup> Apart from including limited elements from the histories of coloureds, blacks and Indians in school history syllabus, the curriculum that was produced in 1992, though receiving widespread criticism at the time, did show gains.<sup>53</sup> Apart from the fact that teachers were given more freedom to interpret the content as they wished, which is different from previously when they were expected to take whatever came from the prescribed textbooks as undisputed facts, more African history and some awareness of the pre-colonial past were included in the 1992 syllabus.<sup>54</sup>



#### WHICH HISTORY WAS INCLUDED IN THE OLD HISTORY SYLLABUS?

History has always been a compulsory subject in primary and junior secondary school levels in South Africa. It is only at the senior secondary level that is, Grades 10-12, that the subject has had an optional status. Before 1997, the content was divided into general history and South African history. The general history syllabus was heavily Euro-centric and covered topics such as the unification of Italy, the United Nations, the Cold War, the

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<sup>51</sup> G. Cuthbertson and A. Grundlingh, 'Some problematic issues in the restructuring of history education in South African schools', *In South African Historical Journal* 26 (1992), 157.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>53</sup> R. Sieborger and E. Viglieno, 'The status-quo in curriculum development in history in South Africa'. In *History Matters: debates about a new history curriculum for South Africa* (Cape Town: Heinemann Centaur Publishes, 1993), 8.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

First and Second World Wars, Nationalism in the Middle East, and one third world country.<sup>55</sup> There was very little on the history of Africa.

Sections of the syllabus dealing with South African history covered overwhelmingly the history made by whites. Whether black or white or any of South Africa's other 'population groups', pupils and students had to study the arrival of Van Riebeeck, the British occupation of the Cape, the Great Trek and the Voortrekker settlement of the 'empty interior' of the land, Sir George Grey, Carnarvon, Cecil Rhodes, Paul Kruger, the Anglo-Boer War, to name just a few topics.<sup>56</sup> Though the history of blacks was not totally omitted, it was presented in a manner that projected them as one of the problems that the whites faced in their exploits on the land. For instance, it was taught that 'the Burghers' faced many difficulties and one of those difficulties was the fact that 'the Hottentots' were supposedly fond of stealing their produce.<sup>57</sup>

Since history was considered by the National Party as 'next to the mother tongue', and the best channel for cultivating love for one's own, the government made sure that the schools only use those textbooks that had been approved by the educational authorities. Inspectors frequently visited schools to make sure that they were teaching the syllabus, as was prescribed.<sup>58</sup>

## THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORY IN THE OLD REGIME

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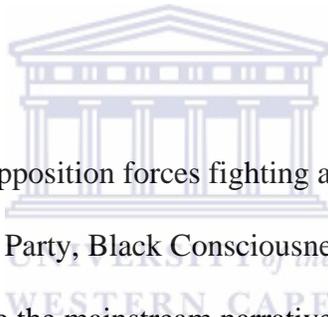
<sup>55</sup> M. Walker, 'History and History teaching in Apartheid South Africa' *Radical History Review*, 46, 7, 1990, 303.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. , 305.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. , 303-304.

The fact that history was made compulsory in both primary and junior secondary school levels indicates that it was considered important by the old government. The government then used the discipline to direct the mind set and understanding of the students in the manner that it wanted them to see and believe in themselves. Therefore, the subject became a tool of government manipulation. For instance, in order to legitimize the concept of separate development, the state introduced the study of black heroic figures in a bid to convince black students that separate development was what their leaders stood for. For example, Shaka, instead of Verwoerd, was made to be the original creator of the homelands.<sup>59</sup>



History was also important to opposition forces fighting against apartheid. The African National Congress, Communist Party, Black Consciousness Movement, all produced alternative histories to challenge the mainstream narrative which was spread by the National Party. There was an enormous appetite for history in South Africa, which saw the involvement of academics, teachers, as well as trade unions in the production of accessible, popular or alternative history. The NECC history commission, the South African Committee for Higher Education (SACHED), produced booklets that were read by schoolteachers and working class readers.<sup>60</sup> The weekly newspaper New Nation carried a series of articles on South African history that sustained high standard of scholarship and in accessible language.<sup>61</sup> Trade union-oriented groups, like the Labour History Group, the International Labour Research and Information Group and community

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<sup>59</sup> C. Bundy, *History then and Now*, 3.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

organizations like the United Women's Organisation were all involved in the production of popular history.<sup>62</sup>

The Reader's Digest Illustrated History of South Africa sold a total print order of 120,000 copies by the end of 1989.<sup>63</sup> It was in response to the popular demand for alternative history to that propagated by the Nationalist Government that the Reader's Digest in 1988 produced a book titled The Illustrated History of South Africa: The Real Story (first edition). It sold over 85000 copies within six months of publication and Reader's Digest struggled to keep up with the demand for the book<sup>64</sup>. The second edition was produced in 1989.<sup>65</sup>

History as a subject also became popular in the secondary and tertiary levels especially in the 1970s and 1980s because of the political agitations of students demanding better and equal education.<sup>66</sup> History was considered to be a powerful training ground for future generation of bureaucrats and careerists.<sup>67</sup> With these developments in mind, Cuthbertson and Grundlingh predicted that history would become more relevant to many pupils and students if it began to peel away the prevailing myths of South African history.<sup>68</sup>

#### THE POST-APARTHEID HISTORY SYLLABUS, 1994-1997

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<sup>62</sup> Witz and Hamilton, 'Reaping the Whirlwind', 192

<sup>63</sup> Bundy, 'History then and now' 4.

<sup>64</sup> Witz and Hamilton, 'Reaping the whirlwind', 185.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Cuthbertson and Grundlingh. Some problematical issues in restructuring history, 156-157.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. , 157.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

After the democratic elections in South Africa in April 1994, and the installation of a new government, the new Minister of Education inherited a system of education that was ‘unpopular’ to use Seleti’s terminology. The situation was particularly difficult with regard to the history syllabus that was described as heavily biased against the majority of South Africa’s population.<sup>69</sup> As a consequence, the old syllabus had to be changed, but it was considered that the period between April 1994 and the start of the new school year in January 1995 was not long enough to produce a new curriculum for South Africa.<sup>70</sup> As a result, the Ministry of Education then decided to produce an interim curriculum, which would be replaced as soon as a new National Curriculum was in place.

The task of drawing up an interim curriculum was delegated to the National Education and Training Forum (NETF), a body that had been created in 1993.<sup>71</sup> The NETF set up curriculum Technical Sub-Committees to deal with different disciplines in the curriculum, with the history sub-committee under the Social and Human Science field committee.<sup>72</sup> The history sub-committee, which met in September 1994, solicited public submissions and received over one hundred responses from a wide range of interested groups that included schools, universities, and education departments.<sup>73</sup>

Unfortunately, most of those submissions were not considered, as it was believed that they fell outside the brief of the Minister, which called for short-term curriculum change,

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<sup>69</sup> Y. Seleti, from history to Human and Social Sciences: The New curriculum and the end of history for the General Education and Training level. Education Policy Unit Working Paper, No. 14, University of Natal, Durban, July 1997, 8.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 9.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>73</sup> J. Bam, ‘the ‘hidden hand’ in school history’ Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the South African Historical Society July 11-14 1999,4.

and not on long-term curriculum issues. But this was the focus of most of the submissions.<sup>74</sup> The interim committee of Heads of Education Departments ( ICHED), which was made up of the departmental officials of the old apartheid structures, insisted that it was going to respect the Minister's brief, which did not imply cuts in the length of the syllabus, or the production of new textbooks.<sup>75</sup> According to Bam, the interim syllabus for history was a list of topics for the various standards that was made up of the old core syllabi, with some new and negotiated content added to them<sup>76</sup>

An 'additive' model was adopted. For example, under the topic 'people who served mankind', race and gender were added. On the subject of the establishment of the Union of South Africa, it was recommended that a role for blacks be included. On the mining industry in South Africa, the contribution of blacks to the success of the mining industry was added. On the South African War, reference was to be made about the contribution of all the people that were involved, and Khoi Khoi views were to be added to the section that dealt with the arrival of European settlers.<sup>77</sup>

The limited change in the interim syllabus for history might have given some hope that with the production of a new democratic and full fledge curriculum, the new history syllabus would be a more democratic and more inclusive syllabus. Surprisingly, when the first democratic and fully- fledged curriculum known as C2005, came out in 1997,

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> L. Witz, 'Beyond Van Riebeeck', 331.

history as a discipline was not visible in the curriculum. It was combined with geography to form the new human and social sciences learning area.

Another challenge for the discipline in schools after 1994 was the fact that it had to struggle against financial and structural constraints. State policy makers and the business sector began to complain about the over-production of BA graduates and began to call on the tertiary institutions to place greater emphasis on the sciences.<sup>78</sup> Also, state subsidies for science students were increased and those for humanities were reduced. Students, aware of the tight job market did not want to study history. As a result, the number of students offering history in Grade 12 has declined, and this negatively affected history enrolments at many South African universities.<sup>79</sup> Despite the declining trend, the University of the Western Cape (UWC), University of South Africa (UNISA) experienced enormous increase in history enrolments.<sup>80</sup> This may have been due to a sustained interest in history in black schools since there were constant complaints about waning interest in school history among white children.<sup>81</sup>

Despite the declining number of students offering history in tertiary and secondary levels, the fact that the subject was very important during the apartheid era, both as a tool which empowered those who were in power and those who resisted their indoctrination by the ruling party, it was widely expected that the subject would receive a great deal of interest after the fall of apartheid. This interest could have been informed by the need to get all

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<sup>78</sup> P. Maylam, 'Tensions within the Practice of History'. *South African Historical Journal* 33 ( November 1995), 4.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. , 5

<sup>80</sup> Cuthbertson and Grundling, *Some Problematic Issues in Reconstructing History*, 156.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

the interested parties involved in deciding the way ahead for the discipline that had served them so well. Unfortunately, history was not a priority in the curriculum discussions after apartheid.

This is the concern of this thesis, to understand why history was not taken up seriously in post-apartheid South Africa in the same way as it was embraced in other post-colonial African dispensations such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique, where the study of history was encouraged.<sup>82</sup>

#### HISTORY TEACHING IN SCHOOLS IN POST COLONIAL ZIMBABWE:

According to A. Proctor, Zimbabwe was the first former colony to introduce popular history into its curricula. In Zimbabwe, unlike South Africa, there was the urge to correct the colonial euro-centric imbalance in order to build a new Zimbabwean national identity.<sup>83</sup> Proctor also suggests that Zimbabwe was able to produce a progressive curriculum because teachers, academics, students and community groups cooperated to develop an alternative curriculum and resource materials, which the bureaucrats and the economically powerful could not ignore.<sup>84</sup> As a result, Zimbabwe was able to produce fairly comprehensive history syllabuses for secondary schools.<sup>85</sup> Terence Ranger also saw the immense importance that was accorded in the study of history in Zimbabwe. He argued that, while history was in difficulty in South Africa, because it was not seen to be

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<sup>82</sup> A. Proctor, 'Towards a new history curriculum: Some observations on the South African and the Zimbabwean experiences'. *Perspectives in Education* 12, 1 (1990), 8.

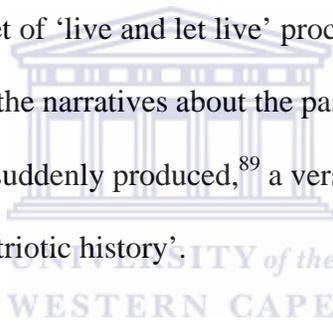
<sup>83</sup> A. Proctor, 'Towards a new history curriculum' 78.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. , 78.

important, by contrast, in Zimbabwe history was enormously important and was greatly encouraged.<sup>86</sup>

Teresa Barnes has identified three periods in the development of the high school history syllabus in Zimbabwe from 1980-2004. She advanced that in the first ten years of independence, the syllabus used was the same as the pre-1980 syllabus. She further stated that the first new syllabus was introduced in 1991, and was termed the nationalist syllabus.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, the previous Euro-centric narrative was replaced with a nationalist narrative. Furthermore, she argued that the reconciliation Robert Mugabe had promised became in practice, a passive set of 'live and let live' procedures rather than an active review and re-interpretation of the narratives about the past<sup>88</sup>. In 2002, a radical version of the nationalist syllabus was suddenly produced,<sup>89</sup> a version of the national history that Terence Ranger has termed 'patriotic history'.



In August 2002, the Zimbabwean government set up militia camps in which war veterans were going to teach patriotic history to students, student teachers and to the youths.<sup>90</sup> The government believed that the teachers and parents had failed to pass on the spirit of the revolution struggle. Therefore, compulsory youth training for all school leavers would

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<sup>86</sup> T. Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe'. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30, 2 ( June 2004), 217.

<sup>87</sup> T. Barnes, 'History has to play its part: Construction of race in high school historiography and reconciliation in Zimbabwe, 1980-2002'. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 33, 3 ( September 2007), 3.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> T. Ranger, *Nationalist Historiography*, 219.

instill unbiased history of Zimbabwe.<sup>91</sup> In Zimbabwe, history was a huge national concern after Independence. This was not to be the case in South Africa.



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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE FALL IN THE STATUS OF HISTORY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS:

This chapter investigates the decision that was taken to integrate history and geography and other disciplines into the Human and Social Sciences Learning Area, a philosophy of learning that was criticized by many. As early as 1997 Y. Seleti, argued that the trend of combining Environmental Studies, History, Geography and Civics into a single learning area provided South Africa a superficial pedagogy – a mish-mash.<sup>92</sup> Johan Bergh reiterated C. van Onselen’s description that history at the school level had been replaced by a fruit salad of social studies, which militated against a critical understanding of the tortuous paths that South Africa chose to reach the present.<sup>93</sup> Even more damning, the report of the History and Archaeology Panel argued that the combination of history and archaeology into the Human and Social Sciences was an attempt to rob future generations of South Africans of the possibility of understanding the path that the nation had taken to reach the present.<sup>94</sup>

The clustering of history, geography and other disciplines into the Human and Social Sciences Learning Area did not happen overnight. The concept had been discussed in certain contexts before being implemented. Some academics, for instance R. Sieborger and P. Kallaway said that the concept was not entirely new. According to Kallaway,

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<sup>92</sup> Y. Seleti, *From History to Human and Social Sciences: The New Curriculum Framework and the End of History for the General Education and Training Level*. Education Policy Unit Working Paper No. 14 July 1997, EPU University of Natal, Durban, 57.

<sup>93</sup> J. Bergh, ‘The future of the South African Historical Society’. In *South African Historical Journal* 37, November 1997, 161.

<sup>94</sup> South African Department of Education, *Report of the History/Archaeology Panel to the Minister of Education*, 2001, 5.

when he was in school in the 1950s, the concept of social studies was practiced, but the difference was that history and geography were never mixed together as a single entity.<sup>95</sup> In a response to my question about the reason why history was almost left out in C2005, June Bam said that the policy makers at the time shared the opinion that history was not a relevant school subject, and that South Africa should go the ‘technical’ route that focused on the hard sciences rather than the softer skills of historical understanding, social analysis and interpretation.<sup>96</sup>

Y. Seleti has argued that a political rather than a pedagogical justification was the rationale for the introduction of the integrated social studies.<sup>97</sup> He criticized the argument that the new learning area was created in order to encourage the teaching of skills. To him, the teaching of skills for a competitive world market did not justify the replacement of the teaching of independent subjects.<sup>98</sup> This argument is important in the sense that when one looks at the revised national curriculum in which history is visible, the major rationale for the study of history is that it would promote the development of skills. Therefore, one could in the same light as Seleti has argued, suggest that there might have been other reasons which forced the policy makers at the time to adopt the integration of the human and social sciences than they have revealed. It might not have been conspiratorial given the trajectory of reconciliation, which was high on the agenda of the new democratic government.

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with Professor Peter Kallaway, a retired history educator at UWC, on May 20, 2008.

<sup>96</sup> Email from June Bam, Former Chief Executive Officer of the South African History Project, and former Chairperson of the Human and Social Sciences Review Committee of C2005, to Fidelis E. Tabe, 11 June 2008.

<sup>97</sup> Y. Seleti, *From History to Human and Social Sciences*, 55.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

The arguments that were advanced to support the replacement of independent subjects (history, geography) with integrated social studies included the argument that the boundaries between subjects are artificial and merely reflect the self-interest and self-indulgent of academics in the universities.<sup>99</sup> The second argument relates to the fact that limited space in the curriculum for more than one form of social sciences made countries to opt for integrated social studies.<sup>100</sup> It was equally maintained that integration was a sensible approach to studies that made use of staff more efficiently than through a plethora of single subjects. Furthermore, it was argued that an integrated approach to learning would open up opportunities for creative curriculum development and efficient management of resources.<sup>101</sup>



On the other hand, the defenders of independent subjects criticized the idea of integrated studies by arguing that integrated studies tended to devalue the critical social sciences into ‘bits and bobs’ of highly selected information that is designed to produce docile subjects with sketchy knowledge of their community and nation, rather than active citizens with real understanding.<sup>102</sup> A similar criticism was that the outcomes for the integrated human and social sciences ran counter to the need for the holistic development of the individual, not only in the classroom, but in a work situation as well. Integrated

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

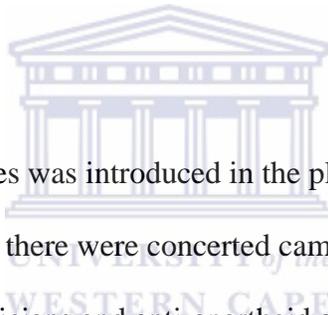
<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid , 56.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid , 57.

studies would inevitably produce people with highly specialized knowledge that are useful for their jobs but not easily transferable to other situations.<sup>103</sup>

Integrated studies were experimented with in South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Kenya in the 1960s. But the experiments in these countries encountered enormous problems.<sup>104</sup> In Botswana for instance, the project attracted widespread teacher and parent hostility, and in Zimbabwe, lobbies of both teachers and parents organized against integrated social studies and succeeded in preventing its implementation.<sup>105</sup> These experiences suggested that integrated studies in South Africa were not going to attract overwhelming support.



In effect, when integrated studies was introduced in the place of geography and history in South Africa in 1997, there were concerted campaigns amongst South African teachers, academics, some politicians and anti-apartheid activists, as it was certainly not in line with the Peoples Education and Peoples History agenda of the anti-apartheid and anti-colonial struggle.<sup>106</sup>

## THE INTEGRATED HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNING AREA

The completion of the interim curriculum for schools after the 1994 elections, paved the way for the development of the first post-apartheid national curriculum for South Africa,

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 58.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Email from June Bam to Fidelis E. Tabe, 11 June, 2008.

which came to be known as C2005. The national curriculum statement emphasized a commitment to outcomes based education as well as to efficient market-driven curricula.<sup>107</sup> Outcome-based curriculum prescribes that there must be an intended result towards any efforts at teaching and learning rather than to merely study subjects. It requires teachers and learners to focus on the desired end product of the learning process.<sup>108</sup>

According to S. S. Polakow-Suransky, the commitment to a market-driven curriculum in South Africa was influenced on the one hand by a high rate of unemployment, which stood at thirty percent, and the high demand for marketable skills on the other.<sup>109</sup>

Polakow-Suransky argued that in the integrated human and social sciences, history was collapsed into a broader category of social sciences, in which, it was diluted by geography and stripped of its traditional content-driven approach.<sup>110</sup> Polakow-Suransky further argued that the curriculum for the human and social sciences called for the mastery of geographic basics and only a few names and dates for history, without any critical analysis of South Africa's multi-layered historical narratives and about the root of the apartheid social order.<sup>111</sup>

Referring to the human and social sciences, June Bam argued that history had to fight for a place in a space that was more defined by peace studies and environmental education

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<sup>107</sup> S.S. Polakow-Suransky 'Historical Amnesia' In K. Mutua, C. Szymanski Sunai, *Research on Education in Africa, Caribbean and the Middle East: An Historic Overview* (Charlotte: Information Age Publishing Inc., 2004), 83.

<sup>108</sup> Y. Seleti, *From History to Human and Social Sciences*, 32.

<sup>109</sup> Polakow-Suransky, "Historical Amnesia", 83.

<sup>110</sup> S. S. Polakow-Suransky, 'Historical Amnesia', 83.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

rather than the historiographical tradition of the People's Education Movement that entailed historical questions such as those of land ownership and conflict.<sup>112</sup> She also argued that the process of curriculum making in South Africa was characterized by tensions around the question of the relevance and purpose of knowledge.<sup>113</sup> According to Bam, integrated studies in South Africa was designed in a manner that was to suppress historical consciousness in schools, and cautioned the South African government not to marginalize history in its effort to create a curriculum designed to prepare students for the global economy.<sup>114</sup>

The content of this learning area comprised the following disciplines, put together as a single entity: history, geography, democratic education, environmental studies, World Ethical and Belief systems, Utility and Social Services.<sup>115</sup> This arrangement was to be applicable from Grades R- 9 which has always been the compulsory phase for education in South Africa. From Grades 7-9, it was envisaged that the learners would be prepared for life either in the world of work or at institutions for further learning and for adult life in general.<sup>116</sup>

For the further Education Training level (FET) or Grades 10-12, which was not compulsory, it was envisaged that there would be specialization in independent subjects.

The focus areas could be called in their traditional names such as history, geography,

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<sup>112</sup> J. Bam, 'Negotiating history, truth and reconciliation and globalisation: An analysis of the suppression of historical consciousness in South African school a case study'

<http://motspluriels.artsuwa.edu.au/MP1300jb.html> Accessed on July 14 2008, 4.

<sup>113</sup> J. Bam, 'Negotiating history, truth and reconciliation and globalisation', 4

<sup>114</sup> J. Bam cited in S. S. Polakow-Suransky, 'Historical Amnesia', 83.

<sup>115</sup> Y. Seleti, From History to Human and Social Sciences, 38.

<sup>116</sup> Report of the Technical Committee to Assist the Department of Education in the Development of standards, 5.

though still within the general rubric of Human and Social Sciences.<sup>117</sup> Here, the learners would be prepared for various opportunities such as to study further in higher education institutions, vocational institutions, careers, as well as to become self-employed.<sup>118</sup>

The learning area committee for the Human and Social Sciences did identify three broad themes to be studied. The unifying themes were the concepts of time and space, relationship and change.<sup>119</sup> The first focus of study was to deal with human and social processes and organization. It was intended that this focus would develop the learner's understanding of the origin and organization of their society and how they interact within it as individuals and communities. In addition, it would equip learners with the knowledge of different forms of society both contemporary and historical, as well as the major social systems, which underpin them. Central to the study of this focus was the idea that it would enable an understanding of the global interconnection and social change. Finally, it was stated that this focus would lay the foundation of knowledge and the skills for lifelong learning and access to career opportunities.<sup>120</sup>

The second area of focus was on the 'Environment, Resources and development', which would provide learners with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge, skill, understanding and the attitudes needed to become environmentally competent citizens who would contribute to ensure the equitable and sustainable use of resources. Students would study the inter-relationships between people and the environment, natural

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<sup>117</sup> Y. Seleti, *From History to Human and Social sciences*, 44.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

environment and systems, development and technology, and the use and management of resources.<sup>121</sup>

The third focus was on ‘participatory citizenship and civic education’. It was envisioned that this would contribute to the development of responsible citizens who would participate in a culturally diverse and democratic society within an interdependent world. It would contribute to the development of a critical understanding of, and participation in the socio-political environment within the globe, the continent and the national contexts.<sup>122</sup>

These themes were to be studied in relation to certain principles or outcomes that were designed along with the themes. C2005 required that each learning area had specific outcomes that ensured that teaching and learning were geared towards achieving set goals that were laid down as guiding principles to give direction on what was expected from the learning experience. There were nine outcomes for the human and social sciences. Teaching and learning were expected to achieve the following;

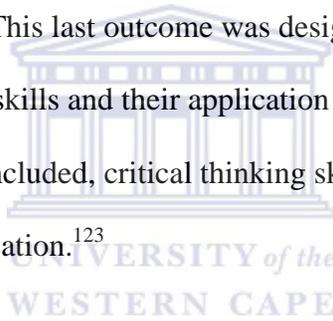
1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of how South African society had changed and developed.
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the patterns of social development
3. Participate actively in promoting a just, democratic and equitable society.

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 45.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

4. Make sound judgment about the development, utilization and management of resources.
5. Critically understand the role of technology in social development
6. Demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationships between society and the natural environment
7. Address social and environmental issues in order to promote development and social justice.
8. Analyze forms and processes of organization
9. Demonstrate the ability to use a range of skills and techniques in the human and social science context. This last outcome was designed to provide a framework for the development of skills and their application in all the other outcomes. The skills to be developed included, critical thinking skills, information processing, and effective communication.<sup>123</sup>



## TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES WITH CURRICULUM 2005

The teachers, whom I interviewed, all said that despite the official curricular language, in the Human and Social Sciences Learning Area, history and geography were actually taught independently from each other. They said that in schools that had the means to employ teachers, one teacher would teach history and the other would teach geography. The situation was different in poor schools that could not afford to employ extra teachers, where one teacher would teach both history and geography.

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<sup>123</sup> Report of the Technical Committee to Assist the Development of Standards, 48-85.

In some schools, there were four periods a week for the human and social sciences, of which, two periods were used for history and the other two for geography and each subject was taught by a teacher who was qualified to teach that particular subject.<sup>124</sup>

There were also those schools, which did not have sufficient staff and that were forced to depend on a single teacher to teach both subjects. Even though one teacher taught both subjects, they were taught as separate subjects. With a teacher who has a background in geography and was allowed to teach history, and vice versa, the consequence might be that the subject that is being taught by someone who is not a specialist in the field, might not be taught to the best possible standard. The result might be poor quality teaching that might lead to lack of interest on the part of the learners towards that particular subject.

Mrs. F. Bell of Alexander Sinton High School in Athlone in Cape Town said that both history and geography were taught separately in her school. The only integration between the subjects was when she would bring her marks for history assessment and combined it with the marks that the geography teacher had for geography assessment to make up the total for the human and social sciences.<sup>125</sup>

Mrs. X. Ngwenya said that at Belleville South Secondary School in Cape Town where she started teaching as a history teacher between 2001 and 2005, different teachers taught history and geography. When she moved over to Fairmount High School in Grassy Park, still in Cape Town, between 2006 and 2007, she was asked to teach both subjects for

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<sup>124</sup> Interviews with Mrs. F. Bell of Alexander Sinton High School, Mr. M. B. Hess of Chris Hani Arts and Culture High School, Mrs. M. Morta of Beacon Hill High School.

<sup>125</sup> Interview with Mrs. F. Bell, a history teacher at Alexander Sinton High School in Athlone, Cape Town, on July 01, 2008.

grades 8 and 9 though she has only a history qualification ( BA History ).<sup>126</sup> She also said that she felt very uncomfortable having to teach a subject (Geography), in which she had little training.<sup>127</sup> She then decided to take her frustration to the principal, who then made provisions for a geography teacher to take over the teaching of geography.<sup>128</sup>

Mrs. Margaret Morta was the only teacher who taught human and social sciences (history and geography) for grades 8 and 9 at Beacon Hill High school in Mitchell's Plain in Cape Town. Still she said that though she was the only teacher, both subjects were taught independently from each other. Human and Social Sciences had four weekly periods of which, two were devoted to history, and the other two to geography.<sup>129</sup> She said that it was possible for her to teach both subjects because she had majored in both subjects at the university, which made it easier for her.<sup>130</sup> To her, if both subjects were to be combined to form a single subject, it would have been easier to teach. As two separate subjects, she felt it was difficult because there was too much work.<sup>131</sup>

Mr. M. B. Hess of Chris Hani Arts and Culture High School in Khayelitsha also confirmed the fact that both history and geography were taught separately despite both being in the integrated Human and Social Sciences. He also said that people who had

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<sup>126</sup> Interview with Mrs. X Ngwenya, a history teacher at Fairmount High school in Grassy Park , Cape Town, 2001-2008, on July 24, 2008.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

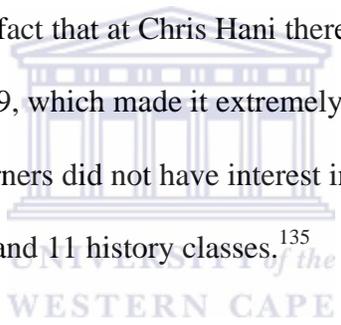
<sup>129</sup> Interview with Mrs. M. Morta, a geography and history teacher at Beacon Hill High School in Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town, 2002-2008, on July 24, 2008.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

specialized in both disciplines had always taught both subjects.<sup>132</sup> In the course of our discussion, Mr. Hess told me that the management of Chris Hani High School had decided in 2007 to phase out history in the social sciences at the FET level because the school was a focus institution for arts and culture, which automatically put history out of the equation.<sup>133</sup>

Mrs. Zwane Daphne also from Chris Hani High School confirmed the fact that since the school's focus was arts and culture, there was no place for the study of history.<sup>134</sup> However, she went further to suggest that there might have been other reasons to phase-out history. She mentioned the fact that at Chris Hani there was only one teacher to teach fourteen units for grades 8 and 9, which made it extremely difficult to teach separate subjects. Secondly, that the learners did not have interest in the subject coupled with a high failure rate for Grades 10 and 11 history classes.<sup>135</sup>



Mrs. Theresa Shand, a history teacher at Lenteguer High School in Mitchell's Plain made some important points about how learners could be encouraged to have interest in the study of history. She said that the way the teacher teaches the subject is what matters in motivating students to like or dislike the subject.<sup>136</sup> The second point is about the teacher's knowledge of the subject matter that he/she is dealing with. She said that learning would be boring and uninteresting when a teacher fails to prepare the topic that

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<sup>132</sup> Interview with Mr. M. B. Hess, a history teacher at Chris Hani Arts and Culture High School in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, 1992-2008, on August 12, 2008.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Interview with Mrs. Daphne Zwane, Head of the Department of Arts and Culture at Chris Hani Arts and Culture High School in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, on August 12, 2008.

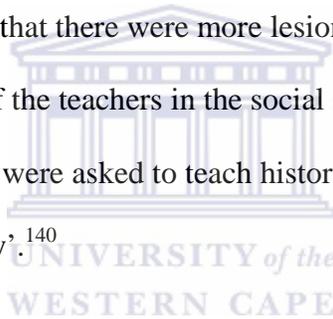
<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Interview with Mrs. T. Shand, a history teacher at Lenteguer High School in Mitchell's Plain, Cape Town, on August 14, 2008.

he/she is going to teach before hand and then he/she tends to read directly form the textbook in the classroom. Teaching in this way might turn to be counter-productive.<sup>137</sup>

Finally, the teacher's openness towards the inputs from students is also important in getting the learners involved in the teaching and learning process and this keeps them motivated.<sup>138</sup>

Mr. Cassiem Savahl, a former history teacher at Fairmount High School in Grassy Park in Cape Town also expressed his fears with regards to the fate of history within the social sciences. He said that the discipline of history has been impoverished in integrated studies.<sup>139</sup> To him, it appeared that there were more lessons being taught in geography than in history, and that most of the teachers in the social sciences were people with a background in geography, who were asked to teach history because the Principal believed that 'anyone could teach history'.<sup>140</sup>



Therefore, it would appear that the importance or the decision by students from Grades 8 and 9 to take up history at the FET level would in many ways depend on the teaching methodologies of those teachers who taught history in the human and social sciences.

According to Mrs. X. Ngwenya of Fairmount High School who taught both history and geography in Grade 9, though being a history teacher, said that most of the students who passed to Grade 10, chose to do history.<sup>141</sup> On the contrary, Mrs. M. Morta who also taught both subjects in Grade 9 at Beacon Hill High School, and who preferred

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Interview with Cassiem Savahl on April 04, 2008.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Interview with Mrs. X. Ngwenya.

geography to history, said that the majority of her Grade 9 students went on to choose geography in Grade 10.<sup>142</sup>



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<sup>142</sup> Interview with Mrs. M. Morta.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE REINCARNATION OF HISTORY

There was great expectation in South Africa that after apartheid, the study of history would be encouraged in order to redress the past wrongs in the interpretation of history and to restore the history of the oppressed. This expectation was highlighted by the many conferences that were held in the late 1980s and the early 1990s on the role of history in a democratic South Africa. History educators and academics were convinced that what they had debated at the conferences about the future of the study of history would put the subject in a strong position when it came to curriculum reform. Little did they know that their efforts would go unnoticed. A good example of the expectation for history was that expressed by Professor Peter Kallaway, when he stated that ‘the challenges for the formulation of history education policy for a new South Africa are considerable. Yet the considerable legacy of alternative history in schools means that the subject is in a stronger position than many others to meet the challenges of the future’.<sup>143</sup>

Unfortunately, the study of history was accorded very limited space in the human and social sciences of C2005, as discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter explores the pressure exerted by history educators and historians to have the subject reinstated as an independent subject in its own right in both secondary and primary schools in South Africa.

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<sup>143</sup> P. Kallaway, ‘History Education in a democratic South Africa’ *Teaching History* 78, (January 1995), 16.

It is important to note that even before C2005 became a policy document in 1997, a delegation of history educators mandated by the conference on 'The future of the past' in July 1996 went to Pretoria in December the same year to express their concern on the marginalisation of history in the curriculum to the Director General of Education.<sup>144</sup> Some of the questions the delegation posed to the Director General of Education included among others, 'Why was history denied in the curriculum? What were the political and educational reasons to marginalize history? Is the critical study of history in schools not the most essential and significant vehicle for citizenship education in the new South Africa?'<sup>145</sup>

In response to these concerns, the Director General of Education made it clear to the delegation that the curriculum represented the mandate of the People's Education of the 1980s, and that the delegation had no right to challenge the people's mandate.<sup>146</sup>

According to June Bam, the delegation return disillusioned and never managed to get together again, either out of despair or being left toothless after the reprimand from the Director General of Education.<sup>147</sup> It is evidence from that intervention that the delegation was hoping that something could be done to improve the position of history in the curriculum before it became policy. Unfortunately, their intervention did not yield any fruit and in the following year (1997), the curriculum became a policy document under the title Curriculum 2005, with the conspicuous marginalisation of history.

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<sup>144</sup> J. Bam, 'The hidden hand in school history' Unpublished Paper presented at the Biennial Conference of the South African Historical Society, July 11-14, 1999, 2-3.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid, 5.

After the failure with the Director General of Education in 1996 in Pretoria, Dr. June Bam decided to engage the chairperson of the Human and Social Sciences learning area in the early part of 1997. She wanted to know about the operation of the committee in charged with producing the range statement and outcomes for the human and social sciences, and also about the roles being played by white Afrikaner males, who were members of the apartheid curriculum era in the new dispensation.<sup>148</sup> As a consequence, she was invited to join the committee of the Human and Social Sciences to assist in the formulation of outcomes, assessment criteria and range statements for the learning area.<sup>149</sup>

While in the committee, Dr. Bam said that she was made to understand by the chairperson that they were not there to talk in the 'old language' such as history. What the committee needed was 'forward looking' people who would support the new curriculum that was in place.<sup>150</sup> She mentioned the fact that while they were busy at work, there were warnings and whispers in private such as 'do not rock the boat'.<sup>151</sup> In such a space that one could describe as being unfriendly or hostile towards history, Dr. Bam argued that history had to fight in spaces between concrete walls and in dark passages in order to carve a place for itself within the Human and Social Sciences.<sup>152</sup>

She said that there was a lot of in-fighting within the committee. For instance, there were fights over specific 'Outcome One', history outcome, which stated that learners would be

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<sup>148</sup> J. Bam, 'the hidden hand in school history', 5.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

expected to acquire a critical understanding of how South African society had changed and developed. History educationists also had to fight hard to have specific Outcome Nine included, as they believed that it would optimize opportunities for the teaching of historical skills.<sup>153</sup> Outcome Nine stated that learners would be able to develop in the course of their study a range of historical skills such as the ability to think critically, process information and to communicate effectively.

The next major intervention on behalf of improving the status of the study of history in schools came from the South African Historical Society. In 1997, the society mandated a working group chaired by Professor Martin Legassick of the University of the Western Cape, to review and comment on C2005 as it affected the study of history. The report was very critical of C2005 framework. It stated that history should be studied within a context of the past, both in order to place it within a chronological frame and to provide an understanding of the specific interaction of people and forces of change at a particular time. But the design of the specific outcomes, assessment criteria, and the range statements made it difficult for history to be taught and learned consistently.<sup>154</sup> It also stated that not enough consideration was taken of the fact that history is a discipline that entertains conflicting interpretations. Finally, it argued that the representation of the issue of identity in the curriculum was disturbing because South African communities were still being presented as fixed and historically unchanging.<sup>155</sup>

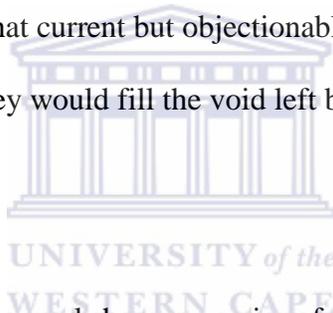
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<sup>153</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>154</sup> M. Legassick, 'Statement by the South African Historical Society on the Implications of Curriculum 2005 for history teaching in the schools' *Kleio xxx*, 1998, 9.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

Consequently, members of the South African Historical Society asked to meet the Minister of Education Professor S. Bengu to express their concern about the fate of history in C2005. The meeting was held on the first of June 1998 at number 120 Plein Street in Cape Town.<sup>156</sup> At the meeting, members of the Historical Society voiced the Society's support for the new approach to learning that was introduced by C2005 and outcome based learning methodology, but argued that the manner in which the human and social sciences was organized was not conducive for the critical study of history.<sup>157</sup> They argued further that if history was not taught in a coherent manner, then it might become about scattered incidents of the past without any correlation, or that the past might not be studied at all, or that current but objectionable narratives would become accepted in practice because they would fill the void left by the removal of the 'old history'.<sup>158</sup>



The Society recommended that a workshop or a series of workshops be organized between professional historians and educators of South Africa and officials of the Department of Education in charge of curriculum development, in which the place of history in the school curriculum would be re-evaluated, and a revised curricular outcome could be developed.<sup>159</sup> After the briefing by the society, the SAHS delegation was surprised when the Minister said that he had no idea that history was no longer a significant part of the curriculum.<sup>160</sup> The Minister then made a promise that he was going

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<sup>156</sup> This information was taken from a press statement on the implications of C2005 for history teaching in the schools that was issued by the South African Historical Society on Monday June 1, 1998. From the Personal file of Professor T. Barnes, accessed on July 2, 2008.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> J. Bam, 'The hidden hand in school history', 8.

to see into the matter. Unfortunately, no action was taken at the time.<sup>161</sup> But the SAHS did not give up fighting to have the history curriculum revised, as it went on knocking on the doors of power to have the situation changed.

The next opportunity came when Professor Kader Asmal was appointed Minister of Education in 1999. He was welcomed with a series of letters from the SAHS in which they expressed the concern of the society on the marginalisation of the study of history in C2005. Professor Arnold Temu, who was the president of the society, wrote one of such letters, reiterating that the SAHS had been working to promote the study of history in South Africa, but the society regretted that the subject was downgraded as a discipline in C2005. He further stated that the society would like that one of its members be appointed to the National Standards Board for the Human and Social Sciences.<sup>162</sup> He repeated the promise that had been made by the former Minister, which had not materialized, and concluded that the SAHS would be honoured to participate in any effort that the Minister would undertake to further develop the social science curriculum in South African schools.<sup>163</sup>

On the 28 of July 1999, Dr. T. Barnes, Assistant Secretary of the SAHS, phoned in when Minister Asmal was guest on the Tim Modise radio show. Dr. Barnes took the opportunity to express the concern of the SAHS about the place of history as a subject in

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> This was taken from a copy of the congratulatory letter, from Professor A. Temu to Professor Asmal, on his appointment as Minister of Education. In professor T. Barnes personal file, accessed on July 4, 2008.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

C2005.<sup>164</sup> The Minister on his part requested that specific examples of how C2005 was lacking with regard to the teaching of history should be sent to him in writing. Therefore, on the 6 of August 1999, just a few days after the radio show. T. Barnes addressed a letter to the Minister, which discussed the 1997 Statement on C2005 that was made by the SAHS about its implications to the study of history.<sup>165</sup>

These efforts were examples of pressures for a fully and more comprehensive curriculum for South Africa, which began according to Linda Chisholm to build up towards the end of the 1990s.<sup>166</sup> Most came from the SAHS and from history educators. One of the first things that the new Minister did was to establish a ‘working group on values in education’, which was chaired by Professor Wilmot James in February 2000.<sup>167</sup>

The report of the Working Group came out in May, in which it was stated that ‘there are at least three key elements to an educational philosophy’.<sup>168</sup> It stated that the first key element is to develop the intellectual abilities and critical faculties among all children and young adults in schools. It expanded further by stating that a democratic society would flourish when its citizens are informed by a grasp of their history and current affairs.<sup>169</sup>

The report importantly, supported the call to strengthen the study of history in schools.

The Minister responded to the report by setting up the History and Archaeology Panel to

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> L. Chisholm, ‘History in the Revised National Curriculum Statement’ In S. Jeppie, *Towards new Histories For South Africa: On the place of the past in our present* ( Cape Town: Juta Gariep, 2004), 179.

<sup>167</sup> Department of Education of South Africa, Report of the Working Group on Values in Education: Values, Education and Democracy, 2000,2.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

investigate into the teaching of history in schools. The Minister then sent out letters requesting historians and archaeologists to work on the panel.

Letters were sent out in September 2000.<sup>170</sup> The invitation read as follows;

You might have seen the report of the Working Group on Values in Education, which was chaired by Professor Wilmot James, titled, 'Values, Education and Democracy'. One of the Report's recommendations is for the establishment of a panel of historians and archaeologists who would advise me on how best to strengthen the teaching of history (including evolution) in South African schools'. The report will also constitute the basis for the development of a national Curriculum Statement on history (humanities) and evolution (humanities and biology), in line with the recommendations of the Curriculum 2005 Review report. I am sure that you will agree that this is a matter that is of utmost importance in the education of our children, and the development of our nation. I therefore write to invite you to serve on the panel...<sup>171</sup>

The History/Archaeology Panel was made up of sixteen members most of whom were historians at the level of higher education. It met four times; the first time was on the 12 of September when it was launched. Three substantial meetings on 26 September, 17

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<sup>170</sup> This information was taken from the letter of invitation that was sent by the Minister of education, requesting her to participate on the History and Archaeology Panel. Prof. Uma Mesthrie's personal file, accessed on 26 July 2008.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

October and 15 November 2000, followed.<sup>172</sup> The report of the panel stated that though C2005 had shifted assessment positively, it had certain weaknesses that needed attention.<sup>173</sup> It highlighted the fact that C2005 gave more powers to teachers to decide on what to teach and how to teach what they chose, but it was concerned that the powers that was given to the teachers was at the expense of the responsibility for what was to be taught.<sup>174</sup> This implied that the absence of guidance on the content of what was to be taught, might lead some teachers to choose inappropriate content.

The report argued that the obvious danger at the time was that history was accorded insufficient space and scholarly authority to challenge many of the old racial ideas that were the ideological ramparts of apartheid.<sup>175</sup> It stressed that a strong study of the past was an educational imperative for South Africa, which was consciously remaking its past history.<sup>176</sup> The report called for the establishment of a National Commission to investigate ways of strengthening history teaching in schools. Finally, the report proposed that the place and identity of history in schools should be restored and strengthened by ensuring that at both lower and higher curriculum levels, it was taught in more defined ways and allocated appropriate curriculum time.<sup>177</sup> The report proposed among other things, the creation of an influential history commission. The Minister's response was the launch of the South African History Project (SAHP) in August 2001.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> South African Department of Education, Report of the History/ Archaeology Panel to the Minister of Education, 2001, 1-2.

<sup>173</sup> South African Department of Education, Report of the History/archaeology Panel, 10.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 3.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> June Bam, 'The South African History Project' in S. Jeppie, *Towards New Histories for South Africa* (Cape Town: Juta Gariep, 2004),186.

It is important to note that a combination of factors contributed to force the revision of C2005. I have highlighted the contribution of history educators in their effort to revise the history curriculum of C2005, the recommendations of the Working Group on Values in Education and the History/Archaeology Panel in calling for improvements to the curriculum. Other issues that were also very significant in calling for the review of the C2005 included the realization by the Ministerial Review Committee of C2005 that various curricula under C2005 did not do much to improve on South Africa's poor learner achievement. It was also increasingly clear in various government departments that the implementation of C2005 was not going as planned.<sup>179</sup>

According to R. Sieborger, a review of the implementation of C2005 in Grades 1-3 raised fears that it would be counter-productive. This led to the appointment of a ministerial review committee in February 2000.<sup>180</sup> The committee's report was critical of many aspects of C2005, for instance, the training of teachers, the learning support materials and the shallow understanding of many teachers of the operation of the curriculum.<sup>181</sup> The committee recommended that the learning areas should be rationalized and that Human and Social Sciences should be revised to become Social Sciences with two separate standing subjects: history and geography.<sup>182</sup> The South African Cabinet adopted the report of the committee, which reviewed C2005, and which gave a lifeline to history with

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<sup>179</sup> L. Chisholm, 'The state of curriculum reform in South Africa: The issue of Curriculum 2005' In J. Daniel, A. Habib and R. Southall, *State of the Nation: South Africa 2003-2004* (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2003), 274.

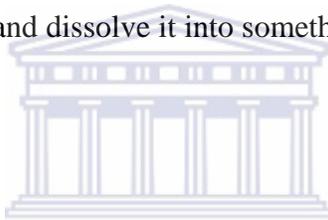
<sup>180</sup> R. Sieborger, 'History and the Emerging Nation: The South African Experience' 4.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

very few amendments.<sup>183</sup> Once again, history was given a place of its own in the curriculum. However, this was not as simple as it sounds.

L. Chisholm, who was the chairperson of the Review Committee of C2005, has highlighted the debates that arose around the status of the discipline of history in the curriculum in South Africa. There were several issues of conflict in the committee, primarily around the issues of integration and content. To Chisholm, these conflicts cast important light on the struggle to deal with the still-painful past.<sup>184</sup> She argued that the struggles encountered to reinstate history could possibly be interpreted to mean that it was easier to suppress the past and dissolve it into something new, than to confront it and deal with it.<sup>185</sup>



On the issue of integration of the learning areas, L. Chisholm stated that the original framers of C2005 stood their ground in defense of integrating history in C2005. They argued that the concept of integration was well established in the academy and in educational philosophy, which emphasized the interdisciplinarity of knowledge. History should thus not have a separate status, especially in the junior years of school.<sup>186</sup> Further it was argued that history was taboo because it involved content and was sympathetic to apartheid. Therefore teaching history would mean reinstating apartheid, which should actually be negated by integration.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> L. Chisholm, 'The state of curriculum reform in South Africa', 182.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

The counter argument stated that instead of seeing the study of history as reinstating apartheid, it would on the contrary play a critical role in challenging many of the old racial ideas, which were the ideological ramparts of apartheid.<sup>188</sup> Finally, the issues were put to rest when it was resolved that both history and geography would be autonomous subjects within the social sciences learning area. But, that was not the end of the struggle, as the revised national curriculum statement had to be made available for public comment in 2001.

According to Chisholm, a very loose curriculum framework, which was made available for public comment was in some places, characterized as a totalitarian imposition of an ungodly, and even a satanic invention of the evil people on an unsuspecting populace.<sup>189</sup> There were also personalized racial attacks on the Minister of Education in the media. Despite such attacks, the revised national curriculum statement, which was finally approved by the South African Cabinet in April 2002, did not backtrack on its intentions.<sup>190</sup>

It is important at this point to note that the chairperson of the Review Committee of C2005, and the head of the Human and social Sciences committee were both academic and professional historians. The presence of two historians in positions of power, most definitely might have given the discipline the much-needed support during the review process. This was very different than the situation with the Human and Social Science

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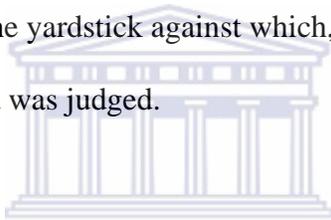
<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid, 185.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid, 186.

Committee of C2005 in 1996, in which the chairperson was a sociologist who had personally reprimanded June Bam for talking about history.

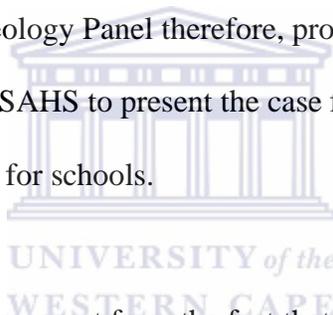
The reinstatement of history as a discipline in its own right at all levels of schooling in South Africa in the revised national curriculum can be attributed to a number of contributing factors. I think that the history conferences that were held in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban in 1992, where debates about the future role of history in a democratic South Africa, were discussed as the cornerstone for the success of history in the debates about the importance of history in education in post-apartheid South Africa. They could also be viewed as the yardstick against which, all that was presented as history in the post-apartheid era was judged.



The solid background for history that was created at the conferences, together with the hope and expectation of the relevance of history in re-writing history and righting the wrongs of apartheid gave historians and other members of the public who had a stake in the discipline the energy to continue to press to have history as a separate field of study in education in South Africa. The first major intervention to have history studied as a separate subject in schools came from the conference, 'The Future of the Past' that was held at the University of the Western Cape in July 1996. Having discussed the implications of C2005 to history at the conference, some members of the conference were delegated to meet the Director General of Education in Pretoria to express the concern of members at the conference about what they termed as the marginalisation of history in

the curriculum. Unfortunately, their encounter with the Director of Education did not yield any positive result as I mentioned earlier.

The case was then taken up by the SAHS, which incidentally harboured most of the historians and history educators who had taken part in the history conferences that were organized between 1992 and 1996. The contribution of the SAHS to the reinstatement of history in the curriculum has been highlighted above. It was also not surprising that the subsequent History and Archaeology Panel recommended that the study of history was an urgent necessity given the fact that most of the members of the panel belonged to the SAHS. The History and Archaeology Panel therefore, provided an opportunity and authority for historians and the SAHS to present the case for a more strengthened and independent history curriculum for schools.



What is also important to explore, apart from the fact that an historian chaired the overall process of the review of C2005, and the fact that the social science learning area was also headed by an historian, was the fact that the new Minister of Education in the person of Professor Kader Asmal was personally interested in having history as a separate subject in the curriculum. According to Chisholm, Kader Asmal had a keen interest in the fate of history teaching and the values that underline the education system, which was the reason he initiated the Working Group on Values in Education.<sup>191</sup>

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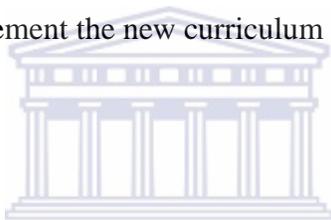
<sup>191</sup> L. Chisholm, 'The state of curriculum reform', 274.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE NEW FORM OF HISTORY

Following the restoration of history in the school curriculum in South Africa, in the revised National Curriculum Statement, which was approved by The South African Cabinet in April 2002, history was given a status of its own within the social sciences and was made compulsory from Grade R-9, and an optional status at the FET level.

This chapter examines the nature of the history that is being taught in schools since 2004. Plans were put in place to implement the new curriculum for Grade R-9, in 2004, and for the FET level in 2006.<sup>192</sup>



The knowledge focus for Grades R-1 centers on stories about the learner's own life and family, people of interest, social experience over time, telling about objects and personal belongings. For Grade Two, the learners also learn about the ways of life of people in the past, about the existence of a national government and president, and about national symbols such as the flag. In Grade Three, the focus is on past events in South Africa and the world, different places of historical significance in the learner's life, respect for children's rights, the existence of learner's own province and premier, and the national symbols, in addition to some topics from the earlier year of study.<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> L. Chisholm, 'The State of curriculum reform, 284.

<sup>193</sup> South African Department of Education, *The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R-9: Social Sciences*, 2002, 10.

The knowledge focus for Grade Four, is on the history of the local area or district, about leaders in all spheres of life, the history of transport and travel over time, the origins of major world religions reflected in South Africa, democracy and human rights in the school and the community.<sup>194</sup> The focus for Grade Five is on early civilizations, early African cities until 1600, and provincial histories. Grade Six history explores the organization of African societies, exploration and exploitation from the fourteenth century, history of medicine and democracy in South Africa.<sup>195</sup>

Grade Seven deals with human evolution, early trading systems, moving frontiers, systems of democracy.<sup>196</sup> In Grade Eight, focus is placed on changing worlds, the French Revolution and industrialization, resistance to British control, the experience of colonialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the Second World War.<sup>197</sup> Finally, Grade Nine deals with human rights issues during World War 11, apartheid in South Africa, the Cold war, the Holocaust, and xenophobia.<sup>198</sup>

In my opinion the curriculum is very inclusive as it begins with the history of the individual and progresses to include the family, the community, district, and continues to the country, the continent and the world, and lays emphasis on the inter-relationship of the different histories. Mr. Rudolph Lewis, a history teacher at Glendale High School in Mitchell's Plain in Cape Town, said that he is satisfied with the new curriculum in terms

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<sup>194</sup> The Revised National Curriculum Statement for Social Sciences, 38.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid, 39-40.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid, 60.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 62.

of its chronology as it starts with the study of slavery, to colonialism, to apartheid and the liberation struggle, and finally, about democracy in South Africa and beyond.<sup>199</sup>

On the other hand, Mr. Peggy Delpont, also a history teacher at Glendale High School, said that though he was impressed with the new history curriculum, he would have loved to have other topics included in the curriculum. He mentioned the fact that the contribution of white activists to the liberation struggle in South Africa has not been clearly highlighted, as well as the role of the people of the Northern Cape, especially the blacks in bringing about the freedom in South Africa.<sup>200</sup>



## NEW HISTORY TEXTBOOKS FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

From the interviews I had with some secondary school history teachers, it appears as if, they more or less use the same textbooks, especially the ones that had been produced for studies in the social sciences and history. Mr. M. B. Hess of Chris Hani Arts and Culture High School said that he uses a range of different textbook because there are no prescribed textbooks. The books he mentioned were, Viva History, Shuters History<sup>201</sup>, and History Making.<sup>202</sup> Mrs. Theresa Shand of Lenteguer High School also named Viva History, Shuters History, New Africa History that she uses for Grades 10 – 12 classes,

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<sup>199</sup> Interview with Mr. R. Lewis, a history teacher at Glendale high School in Mitchell's Plain, in Cape Town, 1979-2008, On May 15, 2008.

<sup>200</sup> Interview with Mr. P. Delpont, a history teacher at Glendale High School in Mitchell's Plain, in Cape Town, 1982-2008, On May 15, 2008.

<sup>201</sup> J. Bartels et al, *Shutters History Grade 11: Learners Book* ( Pietermaritzburg: Shutter and Shooter Publishers, 2006).

<sup>202</sup> Interview with Mr. M. B. Hess, a history teacher at Chris Hani Arts and Culture High School in Khayelitsha in Cape Town, 1992- 2008, on 12 August, 2008.

and Social Sciences by Sue Kromhout for the social sciences- grades 8 and 9.<sup>203</sup> She believes that the New Africa History book which has pictures, maps and which also provides much written information is a much better book to consult than most of the other books that provide too many pictures to the disadvantage of written material.<sup>204</sup>

Some other books that were mentioned by other teachers in addition to Viva and Shutters history textbooks, included, Looking into the Past<sup>205</sup> and In Search of the Social Sciences. Reading through some of these books, for instance, Looking into the Past: Sourced Based History for Grade 11, I found it interesting in that it covers a lot about the history of the world in general. In this book, the history of countries are placed within a global frame to show that South African history or the history of Africa are not isolated from the histories of other parts of the world. Despite using a world history approach to writing history, it also recognizes the subjectivity of certain histories, by paying attention to individual country histories for example Mali, the Congo Free State, Ghana, United States of America, Russia to name just a few. It covers the world between 1850 to the present and engages with issues on heritage and the changing role of women in the society.

Making History Grade 8<sup>206</sup> focuses on the South African society before the arrival of the Dutch and British to the Cape, the Dutch and British presence at the Cape, the Great Trek, Slave Trade, Colonialism, Revolutions and Renaissance. Making History Grade 10,

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<sup>203</sup> Interview with Mrs. T. Shand, a History teacher at Lenteguer High School in Mitchell's Plain in Cape Town, 1985 2008, on August 14, 2008.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> M. Friedman et al, *Looking into the Past: Source- based History For Grade 11* ( Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman, 2006).

<sup>206</sup> C. Dugmore et al, *Making History Grade 8* ( Johannesburg: Heinemann Publishers, 2001).

covers the history of the world from 1450 (America, Africa, Europe), to Europe's domination of the world, slavery, revolutions, colonization and heritage. It is important to note that all these books that have been produced as learners textbooks for the Social sciences, have been produced between 2001 and 2007 to cover the requirements of the curriculum. These textbooks attempt to respect the provisions of the curriculum, and in doing so, they tend to recover hidden voices and provide information about the world and South Africa within a global context.

The books focus on the development of historical skills in the students as they teach students to be able to read and understand historical sources and to use them to interpret and analyze historical information. They are highly skills based, which conforms with the outcomes based approach to learning. However, the fact that these books are so focused on skills development has made them weak in terms of the content information that they provide. I think that there are a lot of other books that were not solely produced to be used in the secondary school classroom, that are very good in content information that would serve as useful references to complement the learners textbooks.

Some of these books include among others, A New History for a new South Africa, by June Bam and Pippa Visser, published in 1996. Apart from having a rich source of information, it also highlights what should characterize a democratic approach to teaching history in the new South Africa. It emphasized the fact that history teaching needs to be fairly accurate and inclusive, should be able to unpack historical myths, restores silenced voices and overlooked minorities. The authors suggest that emphasis in

history should be shifted from focusing on the differences and conflicts between people to explore similarities of experience between people.<sup>207</sup>

History After Apartheid by Anne Coombes could be used to complement the secondary school learner's history books. Coombes explores the experiences of countries that encountered settler colonialism just like South Africa, as examples from where South Africa could seek inspiration in its attempt to remake itself.<sup>208</sup> She highlights possible avenues where she believes that South Africa has made progress in its attempts at nation building. She explores such national initiatives like the Apartheid Museum, the Hector Petersen Memorial Museum in Soweto, the Women's Gaol that is part of the Constitution Hill project as immensely impressive experiments in producing appropriate models of public memorials after Apartheid.<sup>209</sup> She argues that they represent a new phase in collaborative public history projects after Apartheid and are the results of greater consensus than the early attempts of reinventing national histories prior to and after the first democratic elections.<sup>210</sup>

A set of textbooks that R. Sieborger recommends as good reference books for schools, are the Turning Points in History books.<sup>211</sup> These books provide a lot of written materials on most of the topics in the revised curriculum for history. Every Step of the Way: The

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<sup>207</sup> J. Bam, P. Visser, *A New History For a New South Africa* ( Cape Town: Kagiso Publishers, 1996, 34-49.

<sup>208</sup> A. Coombes, *History After Apartheid; Visual Culture and Public Memory In a Democratic South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2004), 6-7.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid, 11.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Interview with Professor R. Sieborger, on May 7, 2008.

Journey to Freedom in South Africa,<sup>212</sup> produced by the Ministry of Education of South Africa, also provides a post-apartheid narrative of the South African history. From the title of the book, one might have the impression that it is a nationalist project, but it does not speak much about the liberation of South Africa, but more about the history of South Africa as a whole, and uses the stories of ordinary people to tell the history of South Africa. One thing that the book does is that it does not rely on the stories of the 'Great Man' in order to tell the history of South Africa. It covers South African history from pre-historic times to the present.

Another interesting collection of books on the history of Africa, that can serve as good reference material for both teachers and students is the UNESCO General History of Africa, in eight volumes. They provide information on African history from pre-historical times through the end of the twentieth century.<sup>213</sup> They are a useful resource for research on the history of Africa. Unfortunately, not even one of the secondary school history teachers whom I interviewed said he or she had seen the books. This means that they do not use the books, despite the huge amount of donor money that was spent to produce and distribute them.<sup>214</sup>

It is important at this point to question why the schools (especially the ones I visited) do not have the books when the aim of securing the books was to make them available to all

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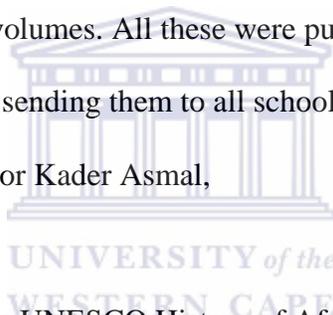
<sup>212</sup> The Ministry of Education of South Africa, *Every Step of the Way: The Journey to Freedom in South Africa* (Cape Town: Human Science Research Council, 2004).

<sup>213</sup> The eight volumes of the UNESCO General History of Africa are available in the library of the University of the Western Cape.

<sup>214</sup> Personal communication from Dr. T. Barnes, University of the Western Cape.

high schools in South Africa.<sup>215</sup> The Ministry of Education and the SAHP were convinced that acquiring the eight volumes of the UNESCO General History of Africa would facilitate the study of African history in schools in South Africa. To facilitate the use of the volumes, The SAHP published the Educator's Guide to the UNESCO General History of Africa for the FET Curriculum in 2004 to explain how to use the volumes.<sup>216</sup> In addition to the Educator's Guide, other learning materials- maps, charts and illustrations were produced to make the study of Africa history interesting.

The SAHP also published a collection of essays that dealt with developments in the 1990s to supplement the eight volumes. All these were put together by the Ministry of Education with the intention of sending them to all schools in South Africa. According to the Minister Education, Professor Kader Asmal,



The eight volumes of the UNESCO History of Africa, the Educator's Guide and the update volume have been put together by the SAHP to meet the needs of our history Curriculum Statement for the Further Education and Training ( FET). Accordingly, we provide these resources as a tangible sign of our commitment to revitalizing teaching and learning about history in our schools and in our society.<sup>217</sup>

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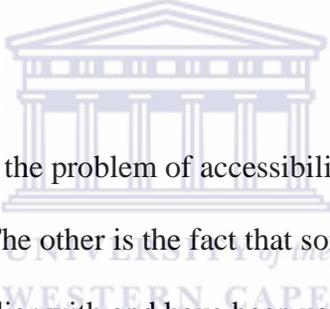
<sup>215</sup> K. Asmal, ' Forward' In J. Bam And C. Dyer, Educator's Guide to the UNESCO General History of Africa for the FET Curriculum ( Ministry of Education of South Africa, 2004), v.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid. , vi.

Why these books have not reached their intended destinations is hard to imagine given the enthusiasm on the part of the Ministry of Education of South Africa and the SAHP with regard to dispensing the books.

I think that the South African Department of Education needs to find ways of making school history teachers aware of the existence of books that will assist them in teaching the subject. An official in the Ministry of Education, Duncan Hindle, has provided some possible suggestions as to why books that are available and which, have broken with the hitherto dominant racialist narrative and are pursuing different agendas are not being used or known to teachers.



The first problem the he cites is the problem of accessibility.<sup>218</sup> Most teachers do not know that certain books exist. The other is the fact that some teachers tend to stick to certain books that they are familiar with and have been using for a long time, especially the ones they used at the teacher training institutions.<sup>219</sup> Therefore, whether there are new books or not, such teachers would be happy with those books that they are familiar with.

Hindle, then posited that it would be important for the Department of Education to provide a national list of approved books, which offer a wide enough choice for different schools and contexts.<sup>220</sup> The benefit of this process would be that teachers would know and would be able to access such books, and also the quality of such books would be

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<sup>218</sup> Duncan Hindle, 'Textbooks in the classroom: Challenges and possibilities. In S. Jeppie, *Towards New Histories for South Africa: On the Place of the Past in Our Present* ( Cape Town: Juta Gariep, 2004), 190.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid, 194.

assured.<sup>221</sup> This would be a transparent process that would in every respect differ from the previous dispensation when few books were prescribed for teachers to use without being allowed any choice of their own.



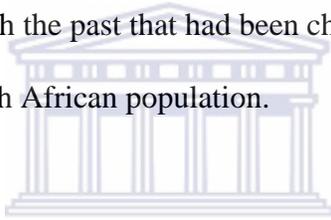
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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER FIVE

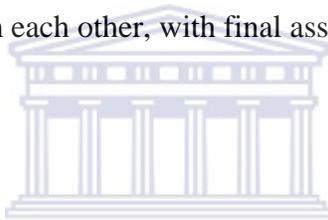
### CONCLUSION

This thesis has investigated why there was such a dramatic shift in the importance accorded to the discipline of history in secondary schools in C2005 as opposed to the 1980s and early 1990s when the discipline attracted a lot of attention and was considered to be very important. This thesis has argued that the decision to integrate History and Geography in the Human and Social Sciences Learning Area was an attempt to prevent a comprehensive engagement with the past that had been characterized as being biased against the majority of the South African population.



The reinstatement of history as a discipline in its own right in the revised National Curriculum Statement of April 2002, was made possible due to the untiring effort of the South African Historical Society, the personal interest that the new Minister of Education had for the importance of the study of history in schools and his appointment of professional historians to head the process of reviewing the Education Curriculum for South Africa. To reinstate the study of history in the curriculum was a matter of heated debate. At one point, the debate was centered on whether history should teach specific content or not. Another major point of debate was what should be taught about the historical period of apartheid. The inclusion of apartheid as a topic attracted opposition. The opposition to the study of apartheid could suggest that the decision to integrate history and geography might have been intended to put aside the study of sensitive issues.

This thesis has highlighted another, equally important issue. This relates to the gap between the process of policy formulation and the actual implementation of that policy. The decision that was taken at the level of national policy to integrate history and geography in a manner that would completely erase the identity of these subjects by turning them into a single learning area was one thing; the implementation of that policy was another. In my research to find out about the experiences of teachers who taught the human and social sciences, I found out that there was not a single moment in time at any given school that history and geography were taught as a single subject. Rather, they were taught independently from each other, with final assessment providing the only real moments of integration.



It may be important at this point to suggest that the implementation of the Human and Social Sciences concept might have been a bit hasty without proper consideration of the training of teachers and the provision of resources and support materials, which were needed to facilitate teaching in the new learning area. The failure to provide the necessary requirements for the new learning area was a problem that was easily picked up by bodies that were set up by the Ministry of Education to investigate C2005 from 2000 onwards (see Chapter Three). This failure left both subjects to be taught separately from each other, leaving their identities intact.

The fact that the subject of history was taught separately from geography was a good sign for the independence of the discipline. What was problematic, though, was the fact that

there was lesser content to teach, and teachers were given the power to choose what to teach. In which case, some teachers might avoid teaching issues that they found uncomfortable to deal with, which might lead to a situation where certain aspects of South African history would not be covered.<sup>222</sup> The other problem would relate to the textbooks that were being used in schools. For example, Duncan Hindle posits that in the immediate post-apartheid era, some authors of history textbooks simply updated the covers of the books that were used during apartheid, by adding the name of a black author and marketed them as history books for the post apartheid era.<sup>223</sup> Such books would certainly not be the ideal resources needed to challenge the previous racist and biased nationalist narrative of the South African past.

Professor R. Sieborger has outlined possible elements that should be part and parcel of a post-apartheid history textbook. He advanced that history textbooks should be able to stimulate and inspire students, as well as acknowledge their imaginative capacities, and the connection between the past and the present.<sup>224</sup> The second element that he raised is the fact that history textbooks should present different points of view and experiences of the people of the past. Above all, they should be appropriate to the students' capacities, learning abilities, and to the language competence of those who use them.<sup>225</sup>

The popular learners history textbooks that are being used by secondary school teachers and learners in the post-apartheid context that were mentioned in Chapter Four above,

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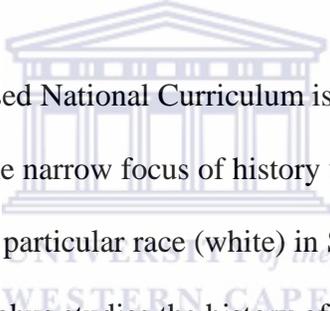
<sup>222</sup> M. Legassick, 'Statement by the SAHS on the implication of C2005, 8.

<sup>223</sup> D. Hindle, 'Textbooks in the Classroom', 194.

<sup>224</sup> R. Sieborger, *New History Textbooks for South Africa*. (Manzini: Macmillan Boleswa Publishers, 1994), 13.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid*, 15.

appear to be good books in terms of presenting an inclusive South African history, and by offering multiple perspectives on the South African past. The language in the books is simple and the books are designed towards the development of historical skills in the students. In fact, they are highly skills-oriented to the detriment of specific content material. But this should not be a problem because there are a lot of other books that provide extensive content material. I think that the skills approach is designed to allow teachers and students to work beyond those textbooks and to do extra research for themselves. Therefore, one can say here that the skills approach represents movement in the right direction, if the rote-learning approach of the past has to be eradicated.



The history syllabus of the revised National Curriculum is very inclusive of South African history as opposed to the narrow focus of history under apartheid that concentrated on the history of a particular race (white) in South Africa and on the history of Europe. The new history syllabus studies the history of all races in South Africa, African history and the history of other parts of the world. Though the syllabus fairly represents the history of South Africa, there were still some concerns from some teachers that there are certain aspects of South African history that they would like to have in the curriculum.

This thesis has reviewed “the history of history” in South African secondary schools. Regarding “the future of history,” I was impressed by the suggestion that was made by Mrs. F. Bell of Alexander Sinton High School when she suggested that it would be good for the discipline of history, if people from museums could go to schools and talk to

students about careers and work opportunities, in the same manner as banks and other financial institutions do. I agree with her that such a move would help to encourage students to study history. The reinstatement of the discipline in the curriculum is very important. What would make the situation even better would be the need to encourage students to study history at secondary school level as well as at the tertiary level, given the fact that state policy makers and the business sector in South Africa are in favour of placing greater emphasis on the study of the sciences with more subsidies for science students than for history students. Clearly, the discipline of history and its teaching and learning, and national policy, are closely related.



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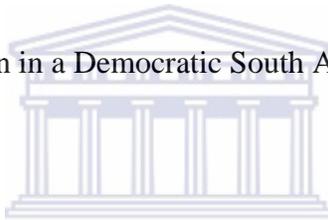
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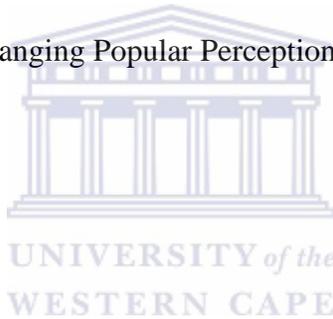
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