

Black Historians, Historiography, and History Education in the Era of #RhodesMustFall

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Abstract

Black historians have played a role in South African historiography and their role has been woefully neglected. This paper attempts to reappraise the work and effort of black scholars whose works have contributed to South African historiography in the context of history education in the high school curriculum. Much of their work has not filtered into the CAPS curriculum and the history education curriculum. Through the works of Black historians, we can gain a decolonial reading and understanding from the local context and understand that there is a historical scholarly tradition which goes back to the 1920s. This paper links Black historians' work to historiography, history education and the #RhodesMustFall movement. The #FeesMustFall movement and the generation involved called for a decolonised curriculum, and this paper, attempts to contribute to that discourse. Through looking at the works of scholars such as Molema, Fuze, Jabavu, Magubane, Mohlamme and Keto, the paper seeks to link these authors' work to the high school history curriculum. These Black writers and historians were chosen because many of them were pioneers in writing about South African history and society, and their work is important as part of South African history and historiography. The literature review focuses on works surrounding curriculum transformation, and a decolonised curriculum centred on the #RhodesMustFall movement. This paper uses a narrative review framework as part of its methodology and data analysis. The works of these scholars were chosen because they

are book-based, and because they were mostly printed for publication, which makes them accessible to some extent. This paper engages with the work and contributions of Black historians and makes several findings: (1) Representation matters in scholarship; (2) Part of decolonising history is changing the racialised discourse of historiography; (3) Black historians have made contributions to studies on colonialism, ethnicity, education, world wars and African-centred paradigms of history, and (4) The work of Black historians must be recentred in the high school history curriculum for the benefit of future generations.

Keywords: Historiography; Black Historians; History CAPS Curriculum; Decolonisation; Rhodes Must Fall; Africanisation

Introduction

Black historians have contributed to historiography in South Africa. The prevailing narrative and discourse often marginalised, erased and committed epistemic injustices against Black historians in the 1900s. The historiography of South African history has always emphasised a Eurocentric agenda and marginalises an African-centred approach (Keto, 1989). Despite attempts to marginalise them, African historians emerged in different time periods during the segregationist and apartheid eras, and contributed significantly to the historiography of South Africa. Tragically, their work does not appear in course curricula, citation lists or literature reviews. Historiography in South Africa often marginalised and excluded the work of Black historians from seminal works and edited volumes.

Much of the work on South African historiography has always been a bifurcation between English and Afrikaner historiography (Grundlingh, 1993). African historians were mostly footnoted, and their work was mostly not part of literature, or of historiographical reviews (Saunders, 2018). This claim bears testament to major historiographical works such as the Oxford History of South Africa, published in the 1970s, and the Cambridge History of South Africa, which was published in the 2010s (Ross et al., 2011; Wilson & Thompson, 1971). The Oxford History went against the liberal approach of the 1950s. The Cambridge History was a Marxist approach that promoted radical history in the 1980s and 1990s. These celebrated works often said that there was no black historian to include in these studies. However, Black scholars who could have contributed were present in the 1970s and 1980s (Saunders, 2018; Sparks, 2013; Visser, 2004). The excuse often seemed like an excuse for gatekeeping and racial exclusivity in South African historiography.

The major historians whose work has been written about and studied are part of these two traditions, which have often reproduced and replicated themselves in subsequent

generations (Dlamini et al., 2024). Black historians in South Africa were often not part of the institutional class of historiography. They were often exiled from history departments, or were overseas, and their works became marginalised and lost to current generations (Saunders, 1988; Smith, 1988). Institutionalisation is vital, because historians working in history departments tend to influence and hold power over historiography and the teaching of history for current and future generations. Often, one tends to find academic historians writing textbooks for the tertiary and basic education levels. Although history departments were established in the early 1900s at most South African universities, Black South Africans did not feature in the syllabi or as employment prospects, at historically white institutions, until 1994 (Grundlingh, 2006). The historically Black institutions did have Black historians on their staff, however, they were often marginalised and not given a conducive space to conduct historical research (More, 2018). The historically Black institutions were often teaching-intensive universities and had censorship measures in place. They were also often satellites of the Afrikaans-speaking institutions, which had a mandate to guard their academic development from anything that could challenge the apartheid government (Strydom, 2019). Some of these issues must be historicised, to show that the struggle for a decolonised curriculum are historical in their nature.

The #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall generation called for a decolonised education curriculum, and part of decolonisation is ensuring that Indigenous scholars and their work become part of the curriculum (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). This paper wrestles with the need for historical representation; since there is a colonial genealogy of knowledge, it calls for a decolonial genealogy of knowledge by excavating important and pioneering works by the Black scholars who were working from the margins and mostly without institutional backing and support. This decolonial genealogy of knowledge production is historical and rooted in African knowledge agency, which centres on Indigenous and scholarship.

Literature review

A proliferation of literature and historiography is starting to change the history landscape by looking at work done by Black South African scholars in the 1800s and 1900s. The work *Whose History Counts?* by June Bam et al. (2018) is an attempt to wrestle with historiography and bring to light an African-centred perspective on the production of history in the Eastern Cape region of South Africa. The work of the South African Democracy Education Trust brought to light liberation histories from African scholars, and took a deliberate stand of promoting and publishing the work of Black South African historians, and using a decolonisation method in South African history (Ndlovu, 2006).

The work of scholars such as Bongani Nyoka and Tendai Sithole on Mafeje and More, respectively, speaks to a new wave of scholarship that examines the scholarship of scholars and not merely treats them as biographical subjects (Nyoka, 2020; Sithole, 2022). Mafeje is perhaps more widely known for the Mafeje affair at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 1968 than for his body of scholarship, and Nyoka sought to introduce his work thought to a new generation (Hendricks, 2008; Ntsebeza, 2014).¹ An edited volume by Simpson (2023) looks at the latest wave of historiography in the post-apartheid era and the different emerging specialities. The work of historians, such as Dlamini's (2009) *Native Nostalgia*, also contributes to the alternative historiographies that are much sought after in the era of #RhodesMustFall, as decolonisation and decoloniality must grapple with complex apartheid histories that are not just Black and white but see people acting out of their official racial identity.

The literature on #FeesMustFall often frames and privileges student struggles in universities over wider community struggles, such as those of workers, academics, and other community members. It rarely speaks to ideas, curricula, and the intellectual traditions that movements such as #RhodesMustFall are indebted to (Booyesen, 2016; Nomvete & Mashayamombe, 2019; Xaba, 2017). As one traces the struggles of students and the #MustFall generation, it is essential to understand that these movements have a historical precedence in both the activist and intellectual forms. This paper traces the intellectual and historical activism that preceded the #MustFall generation and addresses a broader engagement with the historiography of Indigenous scholars. It argues that #MustFall intellectual activism cannot rely solely on overseas traditions, neglecting scholarly and intellectual traditions that, in their own right, possess rich discourses on decolonising and Africanising the curriculum (Mkhize, 2021).

Methodology

The methodology used in this paper is a qualitative framework. A narrative review is used to critically analyse written material. These are analysed by looking at their content matter regarding South African history and how it has been written. The paper uses a literature review format to compare multiple historiographical works. The argument is made about their other contributions to South African historiography and its subfields. The analysis also groups the different historiographies into the South African Further Education and

¹ The Mafeje Affair was a controversy at UCT in 1968, when the university was blocked by the apartheid government from hiring Archie Mafeje as a lecturer at UCT anthropology. It surfaced again in the 1990s when UCT failed again to offer Mafeje a Professorial post and later apologised after his death.

Training (FET) history curriculum using thematic and chronological frameworks, as history topics often go with chronology and thematic content. It uses their work to suggest how there can be a more inclusive curriculum at the basic education level. These works are mostly relevant to the South African history in the 1800s and the 1900s. The challenge with integrating these works into the curriculum is with their marginalisation and availability to historians and curriculum specialists.

Presentation of the data

The academic works of Black historians have an important role in debates surrounding decolonisation and Africanisation of the history curriculum, and the teaching of history in history education departments and secondary schools. This section details the work of historians by grouping them into different generations, starting in the 1920s and then proceeding into the 1940s and 1950s, and then into the 1960s and 1980s. These historians are privileged, as they have written books and, thereby, contributed to South African historiography. Although this paper highlights the work of different historians, it acknowledges the limitations of not going beyond the full scope of the humanities. It mostly focuses on work with a historical and historiographical edge to it, and a link to the history FET Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document, which outlines how the high school history curriculum should be taught.

In the 1920s, an ambitious group of African pioneering historians.² These historians were largely self-taught and often, did not have professional history training. Their historiographies were usually based on their experiences, exposure and worldview from their cultural background and interaction with mission education. Magma Fuze and Silas Molema write about the black past, but often in their expansive works, one finds them at home when writing about their own ethnic communities, such as the AmaZulu and Barolong (Fuze, 2022 & Molema, 1920). In South Africa they hold an authority of experience compared to when they speak about other cultures, and so modulate the work with their own bias without doing further research within the other communities or ethnic groups. The authors' works are important as they reveal that history could be written by anyone and is not solely the preserve of professional and academic historians.

² I avoid using the term amateur historian, because in a setting like colonial and segregationist South Africa, the term is loaded with negative connotations and notions of erasure and marginalisation about whose work counts as historical work.

Historians of the 1920s wrote books about the Black experience in the past, and often recorded information that would not have been captured elsewhere for usage and interpretation in the modern day. Solomon Plaatjie's books on the South African War captured the historical experiences of Black people and their participation in the war (Plaatjie, 1999). Plaatjie's Boer War diary is an important part of the historiography of the South African War of 1899-1902 and puts to rest the idea that the war was a white man's war. This break-out allows one to write more widely about the South African war of 1899-1902. The diary also gives a voice to those whose experiences would have been neglected in telling the story of the war. In addition, Plaatjie wrote a book on the experiences of Black people during the promulgation of the Native Land Act of 1913. In his book, *Native Life in South Africa*, Plaatjie recounts the colonial story as it directly affected Black families and their material reality (Remington et al., 2016). This book contributes to the historiography by allowing one to understand the deleterious effects of the notorious 1913 Land Act from the perspective of Black people.

Magama Fuze is another historian of the 1920s, who wrote about the Black past and Zulu history. His work "*Abantu abamnyama lapho bavela khona*" (The Black people and whence they came) was an essential contribution to the black experience in the 1920s (Fuze et al., 2022). Fuze interviewed Black people who had lived in the 1800s and had seen different eras of the Zulu Kingdom. Fuze's work is important in helping one to understand the Zulu kingdom during the precolonial and colonial eras (Mokoena, 2005b). The book provides rich source material on the historical events of *Shaka ka Senzangakhona*, *Dingane ka Senzangakhona*, *Mpande ka Senzangakhona*, *Cetshwayo ka Mpande*, *Dinizulu ka Cetshwayo*, and *Bambatha ka Mancinza*. Fuze wrote his work in Isizulu, a decolonial act of writing in the early 1900s, when the English language held sway and exercised supremacy over Indigenous languages (Mokoena, 2005a).

There are many debates and controversies surrounding the work of Magama Fuze. One controversy is that the book speaks more to AmaZulu history than Black history in general. The use of oral traditions shows the importance of Fuze's work and how oral traditions are key in unlocking alternative histories of the precolonial and colonial period. One can argue that through language, Fuze was able to access the cultural consciousness of the Nguni people of KwaZulu-Natal (Hamilton, 2019). Another key debate is the fact that Fuze was also reading the work of other historians such as AT Bryan, who wrote *Olden Times in Natal and Zululand*. The controversy is down to the fact that Fuze does not reference other scholars or engage with their work, which brings into question the merits of scholarship

in the work of Fuze (Mokoena, 2011). Magma Fuze is one of the historians whose work deserves to be read, critiqued and used as part of the Africanisation and decolonisation of the curriculum at universities and basic education levels.

Dr Silas Modiri Molema was a historian in the 1920s who worked alongside Sol Plaatje. Dr Molema was born in Mafikeng and trained to become a doctor in the 1920s in Scotland, at the University of Glasgow (Mayosi, 2015). Molema was part of an early generation of mission-educated African intelligentsia, who studied at overseas institutions and went on to lead organisations such as the South African Native National Congress, including Presidents Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, Dr A.B. Xuma and Dr James Moroka. Dr Molema wrote a book called *The Bantu Past and Present* (Molema, 1920). Molema's book on the black past was important, as it showed how different communities experienced the precolonial and colonial period. It is a book of its times and is influenced by the time's racial terminology and colonial influence (Morelli, 2024; Starfield, 2007). It is important to engage meaningfully with the historical value of the book and avoid an uncritical reproduction of the colonial language and frameworks. There is a need for such books to have a study guide that accompanies them, to sensitise and create awareness around the colonial consciousness that they carry as products of their historical times. Study guides must be written for these texts to make the reader aware of some of their unconscious biases and colonial ideologies.

Dr Molema also wrote books on two Batswana Dikgosi (Chiefs), Montshiwa and Moroka. These were some of the earliest attempts at writing biography by Black historians. His books on Moroka and Montshiwa show how the institution of chieftaincy faced difficulties in the precolonial and colonial periods. Montshiwa was a chief of the Barolong Boora Tshidi community in Mahikeng, and his rule extended into Botswana, where the territory was cut into different regions with the creation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate and British Bechuanaland in 1895 (Molema, 1966). Moroka was chief of the *Barolong boo Seleka* (Seleka Barolong people) from 1833-1884 (Molema, 1987). Chief Moroka oversaw the migration of the *Barolong Boo Seleka* from Mahikeng to Thaba Nchu in the Free State and worked with the Orange Free State government in the 1850s. These books by Molema are an invaluable part of South African historiography and show us that African historians were producing work in the 1900s.

Davison Jabavu was a professor of African studies at the University of Fort Hare in the 1940s. He wrote important books such as *The Life of Jon Tengo Jabavu*, his father, who was an eminent educationist and founding editor of one of the earliest Black newspapers, *Imvo*

Zabantsundu (Jabavu, 1922). The book becomes an important part of historical biography when looking at the lives of *Amakholwa*³ elites, who lived in the 1800s and early 1900s. It became an important source document, as it was written in 1922. Jabavu was part of an educated generation of Africans who attended universities and occupied professorial positions at the University of Fort Hare (Higgs, 1997; Wotshela, 2017). In the 1940s and 1950s, there was a group of historians who emerged at the University of Fort Hare. Zack Keodirelang Matthews is one of the representatives of this group. Matthews was a professor of African studies at Fort Hare. He collected oral and archival histories of the Barolong (Matthews & Wilson, 1981) and wrote on African history. Matthews was also politically active in the African National Congress and was part of the group that wrote the Freedom Charter. Matthews and Jabavu were part of the first cohort of institutionalised African scholars and professors who published on different subject matters.

Professor Bernard Makhosezwe Magubane was part of South African historiography and scholarship who went into exile due to the hostile conditions of apartheid and Bantu Education in the 1950s. In 1959, the Extension of Open Universities Act was passed, which saw Black people restricted from entering universities, and the creation of ethnic universities to enforce racial segregation. These hostile acts saw the liberal English universities: University of Cape Town, University of the Witwatersrand, University of Natal, and Rhodes University closing their doors to black students, who could only be admitted with permission from the Minister of Education (Magubane, 2010; Murray, 2022). The deterioration of schooling for Africans meant that many promising Black academics were forced to go into exile to further their studies and assume faculty roles in African, American and British universities.

Professor Bernard Magubane was a historian who wrote a seminal text on British Imperialism and the Union of South Africa. By training, Magubane was a sociologist, however, he understood the importance of history and historiography in his work. Magubane was highly respected in African studies scholarship for his critically acclaimed article “*A critical look at indices used in the study of social change in colonial Africa*” (Magubane, 1971). Magubane looked at how African societies were often studied in a colonial manner as unchanging and static societies that did not have agency or complexity in their social interactions. The work of Magubane drew debates on a global scale about how African communities were studied.

³ Amakholwa were Christian converts and believers who became a community all over the country and exercised political influence and started organisations in African communities.

The making of a racist state: British Imperialism in the Union of South Africa by Magubane is a key historiographical text. This text by Magubane critiqued British colonialism in South Africa (Magubane, 1996). It also emphasised the centrality of race and class in creating the Union of South Africa. Magubane was concerned with the silenced voices of Black South Africans in South African historiography. Magubane wrote about the dispossession of Black people and the role of South African historiography in the colonial and apartheid era. For Magubane, it is important to understand how British ideologies helped to create and shape the racist Union of South Africa. Magubane shows that segregation and apartheid was as much a creation of British Imperialism as the role Afrikaner nationalism played.

In Chapter 4 of the book *British Imperialism*, Magubane deals with Rhodes as a symbol of empire. In this book dealing with British Imperialism, Magubane critiques Cecil Rhodes as a historical actor and a major symbol of British Imperialism in colonial South Africa. From 1870-1910, the name Cecil John Rhodes was synonymous with British colonisation in Southern Africa. Magubane stated the following about Rhodes:

Anyone who visits Cape Town cannot avoid hearing his name and seeing the relics of his connection with the area. The Rhodes Monument in front of the University of Cape Town is an extravaganza of egoism and vanity, celebrating his imperial ambitions and created in accord with the terms of his last will. It is so situated as to command an imperial view of Africa from Cape Town to Cairo. A plaque informs the visitor that Rhodes' soul is Africa's soul. The monument of Rhodes riding a horse is larger than life size, flanked by two lions, and induces a feeling that one is standing before a man who thought his imperial work would last a thousand years. An imperious gesture of a god-like figure urges young white men into Africa's hinterland. The memorial is symptomatic of the cult of empire which, in Rhodes's age, had taken its hold over the British people and imposed its vice-like grip over large parts of South and central Africa. (Magubane, 1996: 99).

Magubane writes this critique of Cecil John Rhodes in the expansion of the British Empire in Southern and Central Africa, and how he merged racial capitalism in his imperialist designs. This critique of Rhodes happened decades before the #RhodesMustFall movement and shows how the fight against the Rhodes statue was an intergenerational struggle mired in the consciousness against cultural imperialism. Magubane speaks about the silence of South African historiography when it comes to Rhodes, who had lofty imperial ambitions, reduced the political rights of Africans and wanted to see South Africa as a dominion in the British Empire (Magubane, 1996). Magubane's work challenges South African historiography to see imperialism as a historical process that had actors such

as Rhodes, Kipling, Froude and Trollope, men who played an important role in different spheres of empire building in settler colonial South Africa.

Professor Clement Tshehloane Keto is a South African-born historian who was based in the United States from the 1970s until the 1990s. Keto was part of the legendary Afrocentric circle at Temple University and a professor of African and African American studies. Afrocentricity is a theory of social change led by Molefi Kete Asante, who felt that African people worldwide had to study and analyse their situation from an African-centred perspective (Asante, 2007). Keto is known for his work on the African-centred perspective of history (Keto, 2001). Keto's African-centred perspective is very inclusive and is not a racialised decolonisation. Keto insists that an African-centred perspective of history does not seek to marginalise other cultures and racial groupings (Keto, 2001). Keto's work is important, as it allows one to have conceptual and theoretical frameworks that can be used to decolonise and indigenise South African history.

Professor Mohlamme is another historian whose work has been marginalised in South African historiography. Mohlamme is noted for his contribution to the discourse on the South African War of 1899-1902 and helping to expand the war from just being a debate between the British and the Boers (Mohlamme, 1985; Mohlamme, 1995). In his doctoral thesis, Mohlamme looks at the South African War from a Black perspective. The South African War historiography is quite extensive, and often the voices and contributions of Black scholars were marginalised. Mohlamme looks at the role of African communities such as the *Bakgatla ba Kgafela* (Bakgatla people of Kgafela), the *Bapedi ba Maroteng* (Pedi people) of Sekhukhune, and the *Barolong Boora Tshidi* (Barolong people of Ratshidi) of Mahikeng. These communities took up arms against the local *Boers* (Afrikaners), and inflicted heavy losses on their rivals. The South African War was not simply a white man's war, and Mohlamme's pioneering scholarship simply proves that. Mohlamme has also produced other notable works that contribute to South African historiography. The forced removals of the Bakubung people of Ledig is a contribution to land and agrarian studies focusing on forced removals (Mohlamme, 1989). Mohlamme looks at the struggles faced by the Bakubung community at Ledig near the Sun City resort in Rustenburg, who were moved from Molotstad in the Ventersdorp district, which was a fertile agricultural landscape.

These historians have played a part in South African history in one way or another. There are tendencies and perceptions in South African historiography at various moments in time to exclude different generations of Black scholars. The fact that the work of Black

scholars is not part of curricula means that generations of students go through humanities and social science curricula without learning from a diverse set of historians and writers.

Discussion and analysis

2025 marks ten years of the #FeesMustFall movement. The movement had its roots and genesis in the actions of students at UCT led by Chumani Manxwele, who threw faeces at the statue of Cecil John Rhodes in 2015 (Dlakavu et al., 2017; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Nyamnjoh, 2022). This catapulted into a global movement and saw a movement challenging coloniality in different parts of the world (Chigudu, 2020; Kwoba et al., 2018). One of the central demands of the #RhodesMustFall movement was a decolonised curriculum. The idea behind a decolonised curriculum was to ensure that the education curriculum reflects the demographic reality of the country, and ensure that apartheid educational legacies do not thrive and find a conducive environment.

The South African secondary school history curriculum (Grade 10-12) is a curriculum that has many topics that are mainly Eurocentric (Godsell, 2021). The call to decolonise and Africanise the curriculum is not only a task for universities, but it must also filter down to basic education. This is not to say that the curriculum does not offer African history or South African history, however, the way the curriculum is presented in textbooks, and the ways in which certain narratives are privileged over others, highlight the need to further decolonise and Africanise the curriculum (Maluleka, 2021). Topics such as the World in the 1600s in the Grade 10 curriculum must be geared towards showing how Africans interrelate with those communities, and not just learning about the communities without rooting the historiography in an African context and interaction. The FET Grade 10 history curriculum in CAPS sets the 1600s as the time frame and implies that the point of contact between Africans and Europeans was where history began and was not just a phase of African history (Department of Basic Education, 2011).

The recent calls for making history a compulsory subject is an important discourse that is part of curriculum reform and changing curriculum contents to give an African-centred perspective. The work of the History Ministerial Task Team is important insofar that it speaks to the decolonisation and Africanisation of the history curriculum in the CAPS curriculum (Department of Basic Education, 2018). The emphasis on oral history, African Indigenous Knowledge Systems, archaeology, and liberation routes means that history will valorise African knowledges and foster relations between South Africans and other African communities (Maluleka & Ledwaba, 2023). Another important point to emphasise is that

the curriculum will engage global history from an African-centred perspective, highlighting Africans' contributions to global events and histories.

The work of Magma Fuze links to the South African history school curriculum. The author's work on the AmaZulu Kingdom relates to the Grade 10 curriculum (Fuze et al., 2022). The sections dealing with different parts of the AmaZulu Kingdom are found in transformations in Africa after 1750. The work of Magma Fuze helps infuse African oral traditions and Indigenous Knowledge about the AmaZulu Kingdom, which will enrich the curriculum and historiography offered at the basic education level (Fuze et al., 2022). The work will also enrich debates about the rise and fall of the AmaZulu Kingdom and help one move away from a Shaka-centric narrative of the AmaZulu Kingdom, which has a rich and diverse history from the 1700s to the 1900s.

The works of Dr Silas Molema link to the South African Grade 10 history curriculum, with his work on Montshiwa and Moroka. The Grade 10 history curriculum topic "*Political changes from 1750 to 1820*" focuses on the Southern Batswana chiefdoms such as Barolong, Batlhaping and Batlharo in the Mafikeng, Vryburg, Taung and Kuruman regions (Department of Basic Education, 2011: 16).⁴ Molema's books speak to those kingdoms' expansion and how they occupied their current areas (Molema, 1920). The work of Molema is relevant to the decolonisation agenda, as it allows one to have critical sources of the precolonial period. The books by Molema must be used when designing curriculum on Southern Batswana chiefdoms, as Molema writes about two important *Dikgosi* (chiefs)—Moroka of Thaba 'Nchu 1820-1884 and Montshiwa 1830-1896—who led different Barolong communities through the intra Batswana wars in the early 1800s, the *Difaqane* (forced dispersal) wars in the 1820s, the age of colonial invasion and the destruction of African kingdoms and chiefdoms from the 1860s onwards (Molema, 1966; Molema, 1987).

The work of Davidson Jabavu is important as part of understanding the processes of colonialism in Southern Africa. The biography that Davidson Jabavu wrote about the life of John Tengo Jabavu, fits into different history curricula such as colonial expansion after 1750, the South African War, and the Union of South Africa in 1910. Many of these topics fit the life of John Tengo Jabavu and how Africans who became part of the Amakhohla elite came to resist colonialism and used education to uplift black communities (Jabavu, 1922). Some of the earliest leaders of the South African Native National Congress are part of this

⁴ The term Batswana means people who are associated with the identity of being a Motswana by ethnicity and cultural lineage. Although the term Batswana today is mainly used for citizenship in Botswana it has a broader meaning in terms of cultural identity across different Batswana communities in Southern Africa who might not use it to denote citizenship but rather ethnicity.

Amakholwa (Believers) community, who straddled the line between African and European culture (Mokoena, 2005a).

The work of Magubane is important in helping one understand how colonialism and apartheid functioned in South Africa. Magubane's (1996) work is an important part of the historiography, as it helps one analyse British colonialism's impact on the Union of South Africa. In the South African Grade 10 curriculum, there is specific focus on the South African War and the Union of South Africa (Magubane, 1996). Magubane's critical treatment of the role of the British empire is important, as it influenced and shaped the Union of South Africa after the South African War of 1899-1902. Magubane's work is also important when delving into the Grade 11 history curriculum, focusing on nationalism in South Africa and the origins of apartheid. Magubane gives critical treatment to the role of British cultural imperialism, and his work can be part of the debates about the origins of apartheid, British Imperialism, and segregation.

The work of Clement Keto is an important part of a historiography pertaining to an African-centred perspective. The work of Keto is mainly theoretical and can be of use with the debates about the methodologies of teaching history in an African-centred perspective. For Keto, The Africa-centred perspective of history rests on the premise that it is valid to posit Africa as a geographical and cultural starting base in the study of peoples of African descent (Keto, 2001). The centring of African people is important in history and using an Afrocentric approach will enrich the high school history curriculum and allow it to move away from a Eurocentric gaze to an Afrocentric gaze, which allows one to ask different questions, and using African source material as part of the curriculum (Keto, 2001).

The work of Mohlamme is important in helping one to decolonise the curriculum. The author's work relates to the Grade 10 curriculum on the South African War and the Union. The work of Mohlamme speaks to the experiences of Black South Africans in the South African War and the idea of writing of a wider war beyond the terms 'Anglo-Boer War' (Mohlamme, 1985). Using a diverse historiography allows one to grapple in detail with the participation of communities such as Barolong Boora Tshidi and Bakgatla ba Kgafela in the South African war, and Bahurutshe ba ga Moiloa who worked with the Boers. Mohlamme also touches on the role of Africans in the two World Wars (Mohlamme, 1995). Often when these topics are taught, the role of African soldiers is missing from the curriculum; the works of scholars such as Mohlamme cover these topics and bring the role of African soldiers in South Africa to the fore.

The recommendations for this paper are practical in nature and offer some solutions to the challenges of changing the historiography and history curriculum. The first step is to reprint books that are out of print and ensure that they are available for purchase. This could be a collaborative effort between government, libraries, university book publishers (press) and book companies, who can start a series of reprinting these historical books. Another recommendation is that these books must be part of the curriculum where in-service teacher training happens at the universities. Here, the operational logic is that trainee teachers will be familiar with the different texts and can translate them for a primary and high school audience. Another way these books can become more accessible to learners in schools is by creating study guides for the books under discussion, so that they can be contextualised and simplified for a younger audience. There is also a need to create a seminar series around these books to revive academic interest and publish review articles on them, so that a new generation of scholars can critically engage with the books. It would also be helpful for the Compulsory History Ministerial Task Team to familiarise themselves with such texts and integrate them into the new history curriculum that is an ongoing project.

Conclusion

This paper has looked at the contributions of Black scholars to South African history and historiography in the twentieth century. It also analyses how their works fit into the high school history curriculum. There is often a separation between high school history and university mainstream history. This is made worse by the fact that many universities in South Africa are moving away from a model of history students being part of the mainstream history subject in the humanities for three years, to having their own tailor-made programmes that often tend to align with the CAPS curriculum, and often miss out the historiography offered in the mainstream history course in favour of a balance between methodology and content.

This paper reappraises the work of African historians in South Africa whose voices have been silenced and whose work has not entered mainstream historiographical and history education debates. This work aligns with the #FeesMustFall movement by contributing to decolonisation and Africanisation through these works, which were often an engagement with oral histories, oral traditions, Indigenous Knowledge Systems and African ways of knowing. This paper strives to enlarge the debate surrounding decolonisation of the curriculum by saying that for one to move forward, we must first introspect and look

backward into our past and see if there are lessons that can be learned. Thus, as much as decolonial work has its origins in South America, decolonial theorists and practitioners must shift the geography of reason and engage with African modes of thought and historiography, to widen the scope and grapple with coloniality in the South African and African context. The big question is how history education is decolonised, and the answer cannot be a simple one-liner, but a gradual process of ensuring that all voices whose work seeks to bring to the fore marginalised voices.

The history curriculum is not static, but must be diverse and reflect the African personality and African-centred perspective of its majority and minority citizenry. It must also ensure that regional and provincial histories find their way into the curriculum, and that learners have some historical understanding of their province and local history. This paper has scrutinised the works of different Black South African historians and their contribution to historiography. It has also examined how their work can be included and cascaded into the high school history curriculum, where there is a relevance and need for diversity in some topics. It is long overdue that South African historiography deals with the culture of racial marginalisation and exclusion, moves away from a privileging of canonical texts and canon formation and engages a wider and more diverse historiography. The paper engages with historiography and calls for history education to excavate from historiographical sources to enrich the debate on decolonisation of the history curriculum, since this is an ongoing debate.

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