

Festschrift for Peter Kallaway

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17159/2223-0386/2026/n36a2>

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While the focus of this Festschrift is Peter Kallaway's work on the history of education in South Africa and beyond, I want to highlight his pioneering career as a history educator. From 1974 to 1981, Pete trained cadres of history teachers at Wits, known affectionately by some as the 'Kallaway Kids'.

In 1976, I enrolled for a Higher Education Diploma (Post-Graduate) and for Pete's history education elective. I was emerging from a traumatic year in which I battled my way through courses and a dissertation for a BA Honours Degree. It was the most difficult study I have ever undertaken. (My work for my MA, 12 years later, was not as demanding or alienating).

Pete turned that experience into a source of inspiration. History students were required to participate in Advanced Studies of various topics. As I had an Honours degree, I was exempt from this requirement. Pete immediately had me researching an original history of Sophiatown, which I thoroughly enjoyed. It was particularly relevant as I knew my grandmother had worked with Father Huddleston there in the 1950s.

Pete's elective on history teaching concentrated on the development sets of historical material (such as documents) for topics both in the existing History curriculum and, importantly, outside it. Pete expected us to know the most up-to-date debates about South African history by such luminaries as Phil Bonner, Peter Delius, and Jeff Peires. Most of it was Marxist in approach, and Pete encouraged us to debate the main ideas underpinning this work. How to integrate such 'revolutionary' material into the school curriculum was a question that occupied all our minds.

My Honours dissertation focused on the wars of the Eastern Cape Frontier and on the Cattle Killing episode in particular. I now developed a brace of documents about these events for Standard 8 pupils, as well as a new narrative, based on Peires's research. I put together a soundtrack to accompany the material. The following year, Pete asked me to

improve what I had done. He was able to get my work published.

During the year, student teachers had to spend six weeks in a (white) high school. This was known as 'teaching practice'. This was a test of all we had learned. Pete had very high standards and expected the same from us. But he was always encouraging and spent much time thinking through solutions to problems with his students. Many of these problems were not only about history, but also about the school milieu at a time when Christian National Education and programmes such as the proto-military Youth Preparedness informed all aspects of schooling.

My political education took place in this context. Pete had novel ways of exposing us to the political realities. My first field trip involved a trip to the Magistrate's Court in Johannesburg to support four National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) leaders and a Sociology lecturer accused of conspiring to promote the aims of two banned groups, the Communist Party and the African National Congress. We arrived at the Court and were handed posters which we dutifully held while the security police filmed us.

On June 16, 1976, I was on teaching practice at St John's College, a prestigious private boys' school, when I received a phone call. On the other end of the line was Pete. In a voice full of emotion, he almost shouted, "Come quickly they're killing kids in Soweto". I joined him on Jan Smuts (Avenue), holding posters and banners to let the world know what was happening.

Pete kept in touch with his students long after they had graduated. On a number of occasions, he roped them in to teach the history elective with him. When I was on maternity leave, he asked me to do so. I was rather depressed at that time, and this was a godsend.

In 1981, he left Wits to take up a position at UWC. We were heartbroken

But Pete's influence remained. Once a month on a Friday night, four of us, now history teachers in state schools, would meet to discuss both the latest research and our experiences in the classroom. The discussion grew more animated as the red wine flowed. We ended the evening with a toast to Pete.

I have known Pete for nearly 50 years. I am proud to call him my friend and mentor.