

Peter Kallaway, History Educator

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Unlike mathematics and science education, where there is a relatively established and fixed body of knowledge that informs classroom teaching, history has neither a particular body of knowledge nor always established practices to draw upon. Thus, it is true to state that, to a certain extent, history education is what you make of it. Peter Kallaway understands that and has always gone out of his way to make of it as much as he can.

For Peter Kallaway, the chief distinction between the History of Education and History Education is that the former involves much work and study, often in libraries and archives, on one's own. At the same time, the latter is always a shared activity based on practice and trial and error. The quality of History Education is completely determined by the quality of the practitioner. This he would have experienced from the start when sharing intensively with a small group of students in Professor Winnie Maxwell's history Honours degree at Rhodes University in 1964, but it was equally what he contributed to his own history method students at Wits in the '70s. They had the privilege of a teacher who believed in his students, trusted and challenged and kept faith in them.

Beginning as a high school history teacher, what could he bring to history education? The answers are pretty self-evident, the results far better than that. Peter focused on textbooks, assessment, examinations and curriculum change, always gathering around him groups of people with whom to work. He made his mark with the publication of the Shuter and Shooter *History Alive 9 and 10 books* (1987). Taking the gap left by the fact that MS Green's *The Making of South Africa*, first published in 1947, was, despite revisions, overdue for replacement as the go-to textbook for schools writing the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB) examination. Peter Kallaway assembled a team of writers who were committed to both a new historiography and a new pedagogy – the first glimpse of what history might look like in a post-apartheid South Africa. It was highly annoying, on the one hand, that the Afrikaans translation of the books was rejected for prescription because 'dis Marxsisties', but also satisfying that it should have earned this sobriquet. It is distressing that by the time there was a common Senior Certificate examination in 2003, History Alive had been

arbitrarily replaced by more conventional texts and history in the 'new South Africa' lost the jewel in the crown of the old South Africa.

Probably unknown to many except the dozen or so members of what was called the 'history education group', in the early 1990s, it was that Peter Kallaway had arranged with the publishers of *History Alive* that the royalties from the books would be paid into a fund for promoting history education. This move, especially when seen against the typical behaviour of textbook writers of the time, who were seemingly always prepared to gouge the prices of textbooks, is typical of his altruism and determination that he would not enrich himself at the expense of others. The chief beneficiary of this money was a series of history curriculum conferences in 1993 in Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town, bringing together history teachers of all persuasions to plot the way forward for history in the country as a whole (as opposed to the myriad of departments of education at the time). These activities absorbed much attention and effort and, unfortunately, diverted attention from the task of creating a revised and expanded *History Alive* series.

History textbooks for the future was also the theme of three conferences, which became known as "Sparking Waters" (the resort where they were held). The conferences took place under the auspices of the Georg Eckert Institute for Textbook Research (GEI) in Braunschweig, represented by Dr Falk Pingel and Professor Jorn Rüsen. It was the first time that the institute had sponsored a programme which was within one country rather than between countries. Neville Alexander was the local link to them. However, Peter Kallway played a very prominent role in the deliberations, given his experience with the *History Alive* series, and it should be added, his ability to work alongside and facilitate contact between the varied writers and groupings.

There are some notable occasions when Peter Kallaway has simultaneously been both a history of educationist and a history educator. A favourite of mine is the publication of the book *Johannesburg: Images and Continuities: A History of Working Class Life Through Pictures, 1885-1935*, co-authored with Patrick Pearson (Ravan Press, 1986). It celebrates the power of visual history in teaching in the time before there were no online videos, while giving access and a proper place to working class/peoples' history.

Peter Kallaway agreed (with much soul searching) to take part in the Human and Social Sciences Council's investigation into History Education in South Africa in the late 1980s and accepted responsibility for a research project on the assessment of history in the Senior Secondary phase (the Senior Certificate examinations). Those who did not know him might have been surprised by this choice of project, but it reflected his strong previous interest in the matric history exam, as an examiner with the Joint Matriculation Board (JMB). As with the textbooks, Peter involved a group of people in this research, making it possible to do a

comprehensive survey across all the various history senior certificate examinations (the first and only one of this kind?). This experience went beyond examinations, however, touching many aspects of the history curriculum and complementing his textbook contributions. It has been a source of ongoing concern and disappointment to him and others that the kinds of changes and improvements which this study foresaw in the future Senior Certificate history examination did not eventuate.

To return to Peter Kallaway's contributions to curriculum change in history, it is notable that he has produced the most in-depth and critical analysis available of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) History curriculum (History in Senior Secondary School CAPS 2012 and beyond: A comment. *Yesterday & Today*, No. 7, July 2012). While it appeared that everyone else was prepared to accept the CAPS curriculum because it was an improvement on the previous National Curriculum Statement (NCS), nothing but a thorough breakdown and criticism of the CAPS was permitted by him. For the sake of future curriculum development in history, it is worth drawing attention to some of the key issues that Peter Kallaway identifies. He asks the following questions:

What are the educational objectives of this document? What assumptions were made with regard to the selection of knowledge (content)? Why these topics rather than others? Why has there been continuity with previous practices in some areas and rupture in others? What meaningful educational objectives can be attached to the teaching of the discipline of history for 15-17-year-olds? What resources are needed to make these objectives attainable? Are the teachers capable of making educational sense of the CAPS prescribed curriculum and translating it into viable pedagogical strategies?

These are surely the most important questions with which to confront any history curriculum. The conclusions are typical of Peter Kallaway's sympathy for classroom teachers and their students, that "the CAPS... is far too ambitious in terms of the factual content to be covered, the conceptual targets for the students, and the demands on the teachers". This has been the main shortcoming of all post-apartheid curricula. It needed someone with the experience, discernment, and confidence of Peter Kallaway to point it out. May he long continue to be the history educator to history education in South Africa.