

Peter Kallaway, Teacher Educator

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History is above all ‘a discipline of context’, wrote EP Thompson, and in this short piece, I focus on the context in which I first met Peter Kallaway in the History Department at Wits University (University of Witwatersrand) in the early 1970s. Wits at that time was home to significant critical scholarship. In 1971, the History Department had appointed Philip Bonner as its first African History scholar, and other significant scholars in the 1970s included Charles van Onselen, Belinda Bozzoli, and Eddie Webster. Postgraduate History students regularly attended African Studies seminars where papers by revisionist scholars such as Martin Legassick and Stanley Trapido provided critical alternatives to what was termed ‘liberal’ analysis. Shula Marks had iconic status, and ‘history from below’ featured alongside political economy analyses. In the 1970s, the photocopied writings of the banned Harold Wolpe were secretly circulated, and the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) was active in student protests. It was in this formative context of rigorous social and historical analysis and political pushback against apartheid that I first met Peter Kallaway. I always associate him with this context.

At the time, having recently returned from a spell at SOAS University of London, Peter was appointed to the Wits History Department to teach History Methodology in the newly established Higher Diploma in Education (Postgraduate). I was one of his first students. Peter was a confident classroom History teacher and a strong proponent of discovery methods in History teaching, and significantly, he was also closely linked to the network of critical scholarship and contributed to it. Peter always stood for the signal importance of History as a discipline, as well as its place in classroom teaching, and he conveyed this to his students with humour and a genuine sense of care. Peter was socially engaged: he promoted the local History Teachers Association and, later, the History Workshop. In the Higher Diploma, Wally Morrow taught Philosophy of Education alongside Peter’s History. Needless to say, both have been enormously influential in the field of teacher education in South Africa, and I was privileged to have been taught by them.

I completed my Master’s in Education and later my PhD in Australia, broadening my theoretical interests away from History, but still anchored in the rigour of the discipline.

Peter had no time for ‘theory’, and we had many humorous exchanges about this. My contention was that although historians might abjure formal theory, they nonetheless use it. Peter remained unconvinced to the last.

Yet, some of Peter Kallaway’s most influential work was in drawing together the work of the broader field of teacher education scholarship, most notably in *Apartheid and Education* (which included a co-authored article of mine), and *Education After Apartheid*. Expanding his interests to the fields of History of Education and Comparative Education, Peter has nonetheless remained anchored in History as a discipline of context, impatient of those who venture into the field without the required rigour.

For me, Peter Kallaway stands as one of the custodians of the field of History in and of Education in South Africa, and he will always be my History Methodology teacher.