
briewe • letters

Geagte Redakteur,

Ek verwys na die artikel van Dr S J Esterhuizen in die uitgawe van September 1982 waarin 'n vergelyking getref word tussen punte behaal deur Hoërgraad-kandidate in die kennistipe-opstelvrae en insigtipe-opstelvrae gedurende die eindeksamen in 1981.

Ek dink elke geskiedenisonderwyser van die eksterne eksamensentrums het met die deurlees van die eerste vraestel van die Hoërgraad-kandidate al klaar geweet dat kandidate baie swakker gaan vaar in die kennistipe-opstelvrae as in insig-tipe vrae! Ons het toe al klaar die rede geweet, en dit is beslis nie die afleiding dat "die lang 70-punt kennistipe opstelvrae blykbaar nie die geskikste tipe opstelvrae (is) nie." Dr Esterhuizen moes ook die vraestelle van 1980 en 1981 met mekaar vergelyk het.

Die menslike faktor — onderwyser — leerling — eksaminatore — het hier 'n groot rol gespeel. Sekere paragrawe van die kern-syllabus is vir kennistipe opstelvrae voorgeskryf. In die handboeke is dit sekere hoofstukke. In die handboek van Joubert (wat meeste skole gebruik) sou hierdie drie vrae uit hoofstukke 1, 2 en 5 kom, en kandidate moes een vraag beantwoord. Ons het 'n lang leerplan om deur te worstel. Ek "spot" nie vrae, ek behandel die hele leerplan, maar in die voorbereiding vir die eksamen gaan 'n mens tog meer selektief te werk. Dit is daarom seker menslik (maar so verkeerd!) toe ek en my kandidate, en talle ander seker ook, geredeneer het: hierdie vraag is verlede jaar gevra, en die eksaminatore sal dit seker darem nie vanjaar weer vra nie! As een van die drie vrae herhaal is, kan dit nog gaan, as twee van die drie vrae feitlik dieselfde as die vorige jaar is, is jy al verbaas, maar as **al drie vrae** uit die drie hoofstukke in die afdeling feitlik dieselfde as die vorige jaar se vrae is, dan begin 'n mens wonder of die eksaminatore werklik kennis wou toets!

Vergelyk die volgende vrae en oordeel self of ek onnodig krapperig is en of ek dalk gelyk het:

1980-EKSAMEN

VRAAG 1

Die gebreke in die samestelling van die Volksbond was in 'n groot mate verantwoordelik vir die mislukkings van dié Bond. Bespreek. (70)

VRAAG 2

Beskrywe Stalin se vyfjaarplanne tussen die jare 1927 en 1939 en ontleed die betekenis wat die vyfjaarplanne vir Rusland gehad het. (70)

VRAAG 6

Bespreek die gemeenskaplike probleme van die Afrikastate noord van die Zambesi. (70)

EINDEKSAMEN 1981

VRAAG 4

Beskryf die gebrekkige samestelling van die Volkebond en sy onvermoë om ontwapening te bewerkstellig en om die aggressie van verskeie lande te bekamp. (70)

VRAAG 5

Bespreek Lenin en Stalin se ekonomiese beleidsrigtings en dui aan of dit die ideale kommunistiese beleid uitgedra het. (70)

VRAAG 6

- A. Bespreek die politieke en maatskaplike probleme van die Afrikastate noord van die Zambesi; en (56)
- B. Dui kortliks aan in welke mate hierdie probleme 'n nalatenskap was van die koloniale moondhede en of die Afrikastate self vir die toestand verantwoordelik was. (14)

P A Bothma

Dear Sir,

In your April 1982 issue you published an examination question and memorandum contributed by R Kitto of Roosevelt High, and asked for comments. I apologise for the tardiness of my comments but would nevertheless like to forward them.

Firstly the wording of the question itself leaves a doubt in my mind as to the direction the answer should take. The extract from Mr Krüger's book is at the start of a ministry and asks whether Smuts "would be able to deal with the new political and economic situation"; the question asks whether the statement is a true reflection of the Premiership of Smuts 1919 to 1924. I would argue that there is no statement of Smuts's premiership, only of challenge so that one must question whether Smuts was successful in meeting the challenge or not. Thus what Kruger posed as the main thrust of the comment — Smuts' ability to cope — is minimised by the phrasing of the question which implies a greater concern for the changing situation. It is a question of what balance is required in the answer.

The memorandum itself places greater emphasis on the changing situation than it does on the abilities of Smuts to deal with them. This being emphasised only in terms of the "guidelines for insight". Generally speaking the memorandum is too rigid: unless the pupil has used subheadings (which I personally dislike and discourage) it is difficult to see whether he has the required 10 facts in each section (and what of the socially minded historian whose knowledge of the Unionist merger is non-existent, but whose analysis of the loss of support at grass root voter level is outstanding? Must he be penalised because he left out facts twelve to eighteen although he included an extra thirty relevant facts somewhere else?). The "guidelines for insight" do not include any comment on the need for Smuts to consider the demands and needs of the capitalist mine owners; a need which was probably greater than a lack of understanding of Labour. The situation was more complex for Smuts than the memorandum implies and while simplification for the average pupil is necessary, this must not allow us to penalise the bright pupil because of rigid memoranda geared to the average.

The great problem with any memorandum is how it is used and by how many people; the greater the number of markers, the greater the need for a comprehensive guide to the marking in order to maintain standards. Some measure of individual responsibility must, however, be left with the marker. The outstanding essay with a different approach must not be denied its distinction and here the marker needs to be allowed discretion. The concept of categories of evaluation are useful here and are used by the J M B in their marking of the matric history papers.

Flexible memoranda and a greater degree of marker discretion are needed if the varieties of history are to be encouraged and assessed.

I am
Yours sincerely

Jimmy Verner
(St. Stithians)

Geagte Redakteur,

Onbetrokkenheid... 'n siekte van ons tyd — of die wagwoord vir die val van ons volk? Vir my as student, wek die woord 'n gevoel van kommer, dit maak my onrustig — want as moeder sal ek my kinders in dié wêreld moet grootmaak en as Geskiedenisonderwyseres, sal ek leerlinge moet motiveer om betrokke te bly by dit wat vir ons as volk belangrik is. Onbetrokkenheid seëvier op al die vlakke van ons samelewing, maar die belangrikste slagoffer is die Hoërskoolkind wat nie meer betrokke voel by die (gevoel) vak Geskiedenis nie.

Soos die leser seker beseft, is die oplossing van die probleem nie geleë in die hande van een gemotiveerde en entoesiastiese Geskiedenisonderwyser nie.

Na 'n gesprek met hoërskool-leerling, het ek agtergekom dat die hele probleem op drie bene staan. . . Vir die leerlinge is Geskiedenis 'n statiese vak van gister — 'n warboel feite van dinge wat honderd jaar gelede gebeur het en wat geen sin meer het in ons moderne wêreld nie. Verder is Geskiedenis nie 'n vak wat volgens hulle, inpas in ons kapitalistiese land waar geld so 'n belangrike rol speel nie, m.a.w. met Geskiedenis kan 'n mens nie ryk word nie. Vir baie leerlinge lê die groot probleem by die Geskiedenisonderwyser, die aanbieding — die oordra van die vakinhoud. Volgens my kan al die standpunte bydra tot onbetrokkenheid, maar ek as voornemende Geskiedenisonderwyser, voel so oor die saak.

Dit is jammer dat Geskiedenis as "stories" ervaar word, want Geskiedenis herhaal homself en elke oomblik van die dag word daar Geskiedenis gemaak. Aansluitend hierby beseft ek dat daar wel probleme kan wees met die oordra van die vakinhoud, maar hier moet ek 'n lansie breek vir ons opleiding deesdae. Die dag as jy vir die eerste keer voor die klas staan, is jy veronderstel om die vak lewendig aan te bied, m.a.w. te aktualiseer en wat media aanbetref, is jy volledig toegerus. Ek beseft dat bg. nie in al die gevalle geld nie, maar ek voorsien dat die druk in die toekoms so groot gaan wees, dat 'n Geskiedenisonderwyser verplig sal word om dit so te doen in 'n poging om in sy werk te oorleef. Geskiedenis is beslis nie 'n kommersiële vak nie, maar sonder 'n tradisie, sonder 'n kultuur, kan geen mens geld maak nie en gelukkig wees nie.

Ek wil afsluit deur te pleit vir 'n groter betrokkenheid by gister, 'n wakker belangstelling in vandag en 'n toekoms vol tradisie, vol liefde vir ons land Suid-Afrika.

Arina de Beer.

A letter to The Friend 10-1-1927

The Friend Newspapers Ltd.
Bloemfontein

Sir,

In one of the late issues of "The Star" a letter appears, signed "Percy Trotter", in which the writer endeavours to minimize the splendour of Gen. Andries Pretorius vic-

tory over Dingaans armies under Tambusa, declaring that the Zulus were not thoroughly vanquished and compares the Bloed River battle unfavourably with the battle of Ulundi fought against Cethwayos army, a generation later, whereas the two events do not permit of any possible comparison. The Zulu force, under the capable Gen Tambusa, who attacked the gallant Pretorius and his 400 burgers, was an unbeaten and until then, victorious army, never having known defeat, unless indeed the successful resistance put up by Boer lagers on the Tugela, on one or two occasions, could be regarded as such, whereas the half hearted attack on Ulundi, was made by an already badly defeated, disheartened and despirited army.

At the great battle of "Bloed-river" the burgers, although in position in lager, were unsupported by Artillery, with the exception of "old Greta", an obsolete old piece, and were armed only with old flint lock muzzel loaders. On the other hand the British at Ulundi, although in Square formation and entrenched, were well armed with breech loaders and were supported by several batteries of Artillery. The fight at Ulundi lasted 40 minutes, that at Bloedriver for approximately two hours, after which, thoroughly defeated, the Zulu army, routed disorganized and disheartened, fled to the Kings kraal, and, upon the approach of the Boer commando, burnt the village and without offering resistance, retreated to the deep ravines and gorges in the inaccessible and prapitious country leading down to the banks of the Umvilozo. True, a portion of the Boer Commando under Landman and de Lange, led by a Zulu warrior Bongosa, who had been left behind for that purpose by Tambusa, followed the retreating army which hoped to recover cattle looted by the Zulu at Tugela and Blaauwkrantz, down the rugged mountains, to the banks of the Umvilozo, in a bend of which they were entrapped, and had to retire with the loss of six men, Gert v Staden, Alex Beggar, Barend Bester, Jan Oosthuizen, Martinus Goosen and Nicolaas le Roux, after which Dingaans army continued to retreat.

Now anyone acquainted with the characteristics of the Zulu, know him, in the first instance, to be the bravest of the brave, full of dash, charging courageously and recklessly, disregarding of death, but when once beaten, is beaten for good, flees panic stricken and disheartened and fails to recover his dash and spirit — I have seen 20 armed horsemen pursuing a fleeing regiment without any resistance being offered — They never seem to recover courage, losing all dash and vim. It was such an army of Dingaans, after the battle of Bloedriver, that was attacked and defeated by Panda's warriors, supported by the Boer Commando only when Pretorius was convinced by attitude that the Pandas intended no treachery. This defeat gave the finishing touch to the Bloedriver victory, and did Ulundi to the Kambula battle, Dingaans army was completely and finally vanquished and when he was killed and beheaded by Sobazas orders, he was a fugitive in every sense of the word.

A generation later, at the time of the Zulu war of 1878-79, the Zulus held an unbroken record, victorious and undefeated, if we except the brilliant and heroic stand, made by Bromhead and Chard at Rorkesdrift, against a disorganized mass of Zulu warriors. After the disaster of Isandhlawana, flushed with victory, they obtained further successes, surprising and taking Col Moriatys Convoy Lager at Intembi River, from which only one man escaped, and then, on the 28 March '79 obtaining their last success when we lost the brave Piet Uys, Col Wetherby and his son and about 80 others, and where Col Redvus Buller and Capt Cecil D'Arcy obtained the Victoria Crosses which also might have well been conferred upon Commandant P E Raaf of Raafs Rangers, and Lt. Berry

Brecher of the Zwazi contingent, as such were well deserved. The disastrous attack, by Col Wood, on Zlobanna, saved Kambula, but that is another tale.

The first and greatest defeat the Zulus ever experienced during that war, was on the following day, when, according to the estimate of some, 27 000 Zulu warriors, under Majamana, attacked in flanking formation, Col Woods (afterwards Gen Sir Evelyn Wood) flying column, then entrenched in Lager at Kambula. At a quarter to eleven they advanced in massed formation, with two embracing horns or wings thrown out in their well known flanking movement. Colonel Wood, who had never failed to consult Piet Uys, and having been so advised by him in case of attack, sent out some of Raafs mounted Rangers to attack the right horn and draw them into conflict before the out flanking movement was completed and to persist in such until they broke and charged and thus prevent the flanking horns joining in his rear — Again and again we dismounted and poured at close quarters, volley after volley into the flank, but as dozens dropped, their places were filled from the rear, and even they continued to endeavour to carry out the flanking movement without responding to our attack, but eventually, the sting of such became so great that they broke and charged. Then the retire was sounded, we galloped back into the Lager, the opening was closed with a wagon, the general attack began, and the surrounding movement was never effected that day. From eleven that morning the enemy attacked, and continued to do so without intermission. A large number were armed with at least 1 500 Martini rifles captured at Isandhlwana, Intombi and Zlobanni, whilst many of our men were only armed with snyders. Fortunately for us the enemy did not place much reliance, or were perhaps not too well acquainted with the working of breechloading rifles, or perhaps placed all their faith in the stabbing assegai. Anyway at 50 yards distance, probably without taking aim they fired their first and only volley into the lager, and still retaining their rifles and cartridges, charged again and again stabbing in between the spokes of the wagon wheels — Major Halkett, in the first volley, was shot through the temple, both eye balls protruding and he called upon his men to finish him.

Years afterwards he was to be met at his London Club enjoying good health. Excuse this degression. The enemy then took the cattle lager, driving the defending force back in to the Main lager — After cutting open the pockets of sugar and bags of meal with their assegais, they renewed their charge and were mowed down by continuous rifle fire and artillery fire. With unabated courage and dash, they attacked again and again at close quarters, but as these attacks were not simultaneous, the flanking movement having been frustrated, the attacks were made first by one and then by die other flank. For 6 long hours the battle was fought, but at about 5.30 in the afternoon, a simultaneous retreat began, ending in a panic stricken army, fleeing before the mounted volunteers, who pursued the fugitives until darkness came, and gave the disheartened, vanquished, broken and disorganized armies of Cetchwayo some relieve from pursuit, although such was later on taken up by the people of Cham, Cetchwayo's brother, our useless ally, who, when they heard of the disastrous fight at Zlobanna on the previous day, fled into the mountains behind Kambula, and consequently were too late to participate in the early general pursuit — It was in this pursuit that I first learnt, that a Zulu once beaten, is beaten for good, loses all power of resistance and has no more heart for any further fighting. I saw twenty horesemen following a regiment of fleeing Zulus, still well armed, with assegais and very many with rifles and cartridges, but once on the

retreat they put up no fight or resistance. I often wondered afterwards, if they were unable to extract the empty cartridge cases, which I found still in the breech of many of the recaptured rifles. Anyway the Zulus were a thoroughly vanquished army (between four and five hundred dead and left on the battlefield) and so ended a great, if not the greatest battle ever fought on South African soil against natives, the one fight that can be compared with the battle of Bloedriver when the Zulu armies were completely vanquished by Pretorius. I do not think that the credit due to Col Wood was given him in full need. I have never read a report of the battle, but there existed a general feeling that for some inexplicable reason, more especially after the war, the splendour, importance and completeness of the victory, remained unrecorded. The battle of Ulundi, about two months after Kambula, was vastly different. There we were in the open in square formation, but the enemy, no longer flushed with victory and not then holding an unbeaten record, still disheartened and dispirited by their heavy losses and defeat at Kambula, would not come to close quarters. Their attacks, despite the endeavours and encouragement of their leaders, were half hearted and they were in full retreat after a fight which lasted 40 minutes. But Ulundi was the sequel and finishing touch to the battle of Kambula, as Dingaans defeat by Panda, supported by Pretorius, was the sequel and put the finishing touch to the battle of Bloedriver. Therefor no comparison can be drawn between Ulundi and Bloedriver.

The fight of Ulundi, and the importance thereof, were greatly exaggerated at the time, but it must be remembered that, after the disaster of Isandhlwana, Lord Chelmsford's reputation was somewhat clouded and still more so after the Prince Imperial was killed. Lord Chelmsford was to be superceded by Sir Garnet Wolseley, who would have taken over before the fight of Ulundi, but was unable to land at Port Durnford on account of a rough sea, and so had to proceed via, Durban, and before he could reach the British forces, the battle of Ulundi was fought and won, and the more that victory and its importance was enchanced, the more effectually and speedily would the cloud, renting above Lord Chelmsford's reputation, be lifted. Anyway that is as I, a participant, saw it. Very often however, an onlooker has a better view than one engaged in the hurly burly of the struggle.

(This letter was submitted by B. Nicholson. The letter was written by his grandfather — Any comments on the factual correctness? — Ed.).

GESKIEDENIS VIR 'N PRESIDENT

In 'n artikel in die nuustydskrif TIME het Hedley Donovan die vernaamste vereistes waaraan 'n goeie Amerikaanse President moet voldoen, uiteengesit. Een van daardie eienskappe is die volgende:

"A President needs a sense of history, including a feel for the situations where history does not apply. . . From a sense of history (preferably not just American) flows an informed patriotism, a feel for the powers of an office unique in the world, the restraints upon it, and the tempo of a presidential term. . ."

Time 13.12.1982, p. 15
