

WITZ, L. 1988: *Write your own history*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press. R11,95.

This publication, written under the auspices of the Sached Trust, an organization “committed to establish participatory, non-ciscriminatory and non-authoritorian learning processes” and the History Workshop of the University of the Witwatersrand focussing on history of the ordinary people, may create the impression of a radically committed publication by those who are sceptical about trends in history teaching and writing.

Personally I was pleasantly surprised at the scholarly approach and educationally sound presentation. Of

course the focus is a bit biased, the interpretation of what constitutes "the people" is debatable and the various racial groups are cast in rather conventional stereotypes. Apart from these interrelated flaws, I found it a most rewarding and stimulating experience to read the publication.

The author starts off with a positive interpretation of history as a possible means of helping to create a more just society. Personally I have no problem with this point of view, if the intention is to present reality in a multi-dimensional way, presenting "different people's points of view" (p. 18). However, the real test lies exactly in giving more than one point of view the opportunity to present it's case as objectively as possible – in this sense the examples chosen to illustrate the arguments could have been more balanced, as already mentioned.

Generally speaking, the publication is really a most useful manual for the creative history teacher and even pupil. Matter of fact is that one is hardly able to think of any other publication presenting the writing of history in such a readable and systematic way. Most useful advice is given on local history, family history, oral history, sources, using photographs and the like. Furthermore advice on collecting evidence, on asking the right questions, planning an interview and interpreting it, are given. Throughout the approach is scholarly and in the concluding section useful information is given on sources and institutions where further information can be obtained.

This is a publication every history teacher should possess if he is interested to teach about the living past.

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