

REFLECTING THE 2018 HISTORY MINISTERIAL TASK TEAM REPORT ON COMPULSORY HISTORY IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Abstract

The History Ministerial Task Team Report (MTT), published in February 2018, has been awaited by educators of History in South Africa for them to be informed on thoughts, trends and statuses of compulsory History Education in schools globally. Educators also hoped to be informed about other important aspects of History education, such as educators' impressions of the 2011 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for History and possibilities for revision. Other concerns on the table included the field of teacher training, as well as the financial and logistical implications of transforming History teaching into a compulsory subject. The major purpose of this paper is to reflect on the History MTT's discussion of the status of, specifically, compulsory History in Africa and further afield, and to establish whether the MTT's report can in this regard serve as a reliable indicator for making any informed decision on whether History Education in South African schools should indeed be compulsory up to the Grade 12 level. The authors contest the quality of the research conducted by the History MTT pertaining to compulsory History in other countries, which in turn questions the reliability of the Report in its entirety, but which unfortunately cannot be afforded attention in this paper due to lack of space. Given this contestation on quality pertaining to the first section of the History MTT report, the authors make some observations and propose recommendations to the Department of Basic Education, who commissioned the History MTT. The essence thereof is to strongly suggest that much more thorough research should be conducted than that received by the DBE in this Report, to ensure more responsible considerations and points of departure than those currently unfolding.

Keywords: History Education; The History Ministerial Task Team Report (MTT); Compulsory History; Department of Basic Education; Historical method.

Introduction

On 4 June 2015 the History Ministerial Task Team (MTT) was appointed¹

¹ Republic of South Africa (RSA), Department of Basic Education (DBE), "Executive summary of the History Ministerial Task Team", ca January 2018, p. 1.

by the Ministry in the Department of Basic Education (DBE)² to comply with a mandate (terms of reference) which was officially made public in October 2015.³ The task of the History MTT would be to undertake “a comparative case study on compulsory History...”.⁴ For the DBE, with Minister Angelina Matise (Angie) Motshekga as spokesperson, the History MTT’s mandate was twofold, namely to i) “Conduct research on how other countries have dealt with the introduction of compulsory History as part of citizenship in their schooling system”, and ii) “make recommendations to the Minister”. In addition to this twofold task, the MTT also had to inform the Minister on how best to i) “... implement the introduction of compulsory History in FET schools as part of citizenship located within Life Orientation”; ii) “... strengthen the content in the FET band”; and iii) “... review the content in the GET band”. The History MTT also had to submit to the DBE Ministry of South Africa “A proposal regarding Teacher Development in the Area” [it is accepted that the Minister refers to History teaching as ‘the area’]. It is further accepted that the Minister assumed and expected that the History MTT would also consult with experts in the field, apart from investing in public hearings, before compiling the findings in a report that would, according to the Minister, “... draft the implementation and management plan with clear timeframes, including:

- Alignment of history textbooks according to the reviewed curriculum;
- Make recommendations on the key concerns relating to the introduction of compulsory History in the FET band, and the implications of these recommendations if implemented; and
- Make proposals for gazetting policy and regulations amendments emanating from this process”.

The Minister seems to have hoped for a History MTT Report similar to a recent project⁵ on Africa curricula, inspired by the United Nations Educational,

2 This initiative by the Ministry of Education came some way and was apparently acted on as a result of the request from the South African Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu). See Tebogo Monama, “History compulsory? No way, says DA”. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/gauteng/history-compulsory-no-way-says-da-1928605> Accessed October 2015. It was also reported earlier that compulsory History seems to be the way forward for the Ministry but that the “subject’s content” must first be reviewed. See Poppy Louw, “History is in our future”, *The Times*, 23 April 2015, p. 4.

3 RSA, DBE, National Education Policy Act (Act no 27 of 1996), Establishment of the History Ministerial Task Team. Government Gazette (GG), Notice no 926, 9 October 2015.

4 RSA, DBE, “Executive summary of the History Ministerial Task Team”, ca January 2018, p. 1.

5 UNESCO, New Teaching Tools for ‘The General History of Africa’ Project launched at United Nations, 10 July 2015. <https://en.unesco.org/news/new-teaching-tools-general-history-africa-project-launched-united-nations> Accessed 10 September 2018.

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and African Union (AU).⁶ So, to be extensively informed on many aspects of (compulsory) History by means of representative and reliable research, the Ministry at the DBE wanted to be able to decide on History's future in the General and Further Educational Training Bands.

In the discussion to follow the authors aim mainly to critically reflect, by means of utilising the historical method,⁷ on the research and the outcome thereof in the first section (44 pages) of the 151 page History MTT Report. This should be viewed as a first effort to respond to the Report, and given the prescribed page limits, it unfortunately is not possible to respond to the rest of the Report at this stage, which definitely requires some substantial reflection in a separate paper. Apart from three pages of introducing and contextualising the study (which will be responded to in the discussion) the History MTT in this section largely covers content on "comparative country case studies", inclusive of Africa, as part of its task to comply with the comprehensive DBE mandate of providing insight into the status of compulsory History elsewhere. The other sections of the Report on textbooks, curriculum revision, teacher training and selective reference lists as well as the appendixes are also open to critical reflection, but require another round of discussions due to lack of space.

Before discussing the History MTT's research on the status of compulsory History Education internationally, some contextual information is shared on bits of metanarrative directly related to, and informing the reader specifically on the contributors to the History MTT Report. Their working protocol with regard to producing the research report, and some hidden voices reflecting experiences or observations during and after the History MTT research process, will also be attended to.

Mirroring the MTT context and other metanarratives

the History MTT context requiring a brief discussion are i) the team appointed to see the task through, ii) the research method opted for in data-gathering, as well as iii) responses spontaneously shared by academics (History educators and historians) with the South African Society for History Teaching

6 RSA, DBE, National Education Policy Act (Act no 27 of 1996), Establishment of the History Ministerial Task Team, GG, Notice no 926, 9 October 2015.

7 Source selection, cognition, authenticity and reliability (by means of internal and external criticism) as well as source analysis and interpretation form part of the historical method. See for example Ludmilla Jordanova, *The look of the past* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012), Chapter 1; Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From reliable sources. An Introduction to historical methods* (USA, Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 17-33; 60-108.

(SASHT) during the process of the the History MTT research period and after the Report was released. From voices at historical conferences in 2018 and news reports deliberating on academics and the South African public's opinion regarding the History MTT Report, the following sections share some of these metanarratives. Some were freely gathered through email communication, and are therefore used anonymously to protect the writers as respondents.

The History MTT panel

The originally appointed History MTT panel of seven members could have appeared balanced if gender and race were criteria, but there is reason to believe that the perceptionalised selection from seemingly politically more correct spaces and peoples overshadowed the necessary requirement for expertise that could have contributed constructively. The History MTT⁸ panel as preferred by the Ministry of Ms Motshekga⁹ consisted of:

- Prof Albert Grundlingh (University of Stellenbosch). Prof Grundlingh withdrew in 2016 and the final MTT Report reveals that Prof Amanda Esterhuysen of the University of the Witwatersrand replaced Grundlingh. Esterhuysen, as part of the “Organisational Unit, School for Geography, Archaeology and Environmental Studies” at Wits, had to fill the void of one historian less and to probably provide insight as an archaeologist.¹⁰
- Prof Sekibakiba Peter Lekgoathi (University of the Witwatersrand – School of Social Science).
- Prof Sifiso Mxolisi Ndlovu (University of South Africa – Department of Interdisciplinary Studies and a prominent role-player in the South African Democracy Education Trust - SADET), and also chairperson of the History MTT.

8 Indeed, as academics, other questions emanating from the viewing of the History MTT panel, and which can (with a more extensive research agenda of interviewing etc.) add value to a better understanding, include the following: Given the History MTT status as academics, why did they blindly accept the brief given to them by the Minister? Why did Prof Grundlingh leave the panel? What impact did Prof Mandy Esterhuysen have on the panel's suggestions regarding a future History curriculum? Surely a more in-depth and thorough execution of the Report is possible.

9 RSA, DBE, National Education Policy Act (Act no 27 of 1996), Establishment of the History Ministerial Task Team, GG, Notice no 926, 9 October 2015.

10 To note that the History MTT in a final stage of the Comprehensive and Executive Summary discussion suggested that Social Studies should in future be removed from History teaching, thus viewing Geography and History as separate fields. Ironical then, that an expert in Archaeology and Geography like Prof Amanda Esterhuysen filled a void in the team by her replacing a historian?

- Mr/Dr¹¹Jabulani Sithole (according to knowledge and further research, in 2015, at the time of his appointment on the MTT, Mr Sithole was not in the service of the University of KwaZulu-Natal,¹² and was known to be politically active in the African National Congress).
- The respected, long since retired Ms Luli Callinicos (Social historian and known for her earlier generation struggles in writing for a democratic South Africa),¹³ but no longer so actively engaged in present day education and teaching in History.
- Dr Gail Weldon (Independent Educational Consultant but, before retirement, for years an employee of the Western Cape Educational Department, co-involved in the development of the 2011 History CAPS and acknowledged for her PhD-research in post-conflict curricula).¹⁴
- Dr Nomalanga N Mkhize, History lecturer (but viewing herself also as a Sociologist at the Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth, attached to a post-doctoral appointment at the University of Rhodes and also having academic associations with the University of Cape Town).¹⁵

Whether a political ideological dominant rationale guided the Ministry on the History MTT's team of choice, and/or whether a genuine concern about the youth's perceptionalised history knowledge might have been a genuine reason for the Minister's interest in History, resulting in the appointing of a History MTT, will remain silent voices in the corridors of government departments. What seems obvious from the Task Team selection is that the Minister wanted well executed and thorough research by historians (and might have thought that History educators would probably not live up to this expectation, though Dr Weldon at least "made" the team and seems to always have been the only one selected to regularly participate in ministerial tasks related to History Education).

11 At the time of his appointment on the History Ministerial Task Team it is unclear if Mr Sithole have completed a PhD at the University of the Witwatersrand.

12 RSA, National Planning Commission, Mr Dennis Jabulani Sithole, 2015 (Available at https://www.nationalplanningcommission.org.za/Commissioners/Pages/Mr_SITHOLE_2015.aspx, as accessed 10 September 2018).

13 Compare South African History Online (SAHO), "Luli Callinicos, 17 Feb 2011" (Available at <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/luli-callinicos>, as accessed 10 September 2018).

14 Compare G Weldon, History Education in post-apartheid South Africa" (Available at https://www.mineducacion.gov.co/cvn/1665/articles-240963_archivo_pdf_Weldon.pdf, pp. 1-7, as accessed 10 September 2018).

15 *Mail & Guardian*, "Nomalanga Mkhize", 10 September 2018 (Available at <https://mg.co.za/author/nomalanga-mkhize-author>, as accessed 10 September 2018); NN Mkhize, "The precolonial rise of Khoisan Economies", *The Journalist*, 29 May 2018" (Available at <http://www.thejournalist.org.za/spotlight/before-1652-the-rise-of-the-khoi-khoi-hunter-gatherers>, as accessed 10 September 2018); Zamayirha Peter, "Love and legacy with the Mkhize sisters" in *City Press*, 22 March 2018 (Available at <https://city-press.news24.com/News/love-and-legacy-with-the-mkhize-sisters-20180322>, as accessed on 4 December 2018).

Perhaps the Minister might have thought that the team actually represented the fields of both History and History Education very well. If so, in any or both these scenarios, it is, as in the past with similar activities, a gross misconception. The reality is that most members of the Task Team (excluding Dr Weldon) might admit their lack of past knowledge on the historiography, and current trends pertaining to History Education. Active scholars in the field with vast experience have been overlooked in the process. Thus, academics in History Education cannot be but sceptical about the motive(s) behind the History MTT team member selection, which remains exclusive as opposed to being inclusive – as it ought to be.

Criteria for inclusivity in the History MTT, if it is about quality education in History and to be informed by educationally trained experts as to whether compulsory History will meet an educational need for a more informed youth, could, to begin with, perhaps have been:

- Considering expertise in History¹⁶ and even more in History Education from all tertiary institutions and not predominantly from historical English¹⁷ oriented institutions¹⁸ or a long-retired list of academics;
- Including expertise from a diversity of History teaching professions (FET included) and not only HET expertise;
- Involving for example History societies such as the South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT) and the Historical Association of South Africa (HASA) as well as the South African Historical Association (SAHA) to a greater extent and in better ways than expecting them to act as mute observers somewhere in the “research effort” chain.

If the Ministry had genuinely been serious about not wanting to follow or nurture an ideological pathway,¹⁹ the obvious way forward would have

16 See the opinion of Academic C in ES van Eeden Email archive, Discussions with Academic C, 13 October 2015.

17 Compare for example the view of History textbook writer Gengs Pillay who recently said, “... the old history curriculum in 2010 was written by ‘a group of white liberals in the Western Cape’ in Pressreader, “Past has a different future”, 20 May 2018 (Available at <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/sunday-times/20180520/281522226744627>, as accessed 27 September 2019).

18 It is more than possible to list some of South Africa’s currently prominent Historians and History Educators who are amply informed on History Education in South Africa, but it would not serve any purpose to do so at this stage.

19 Some academics seemingly beg to differ from the Ministry’s intentions. See for example Emeritus Prof Peter Kallaway of UCT’s response in a newspaper on the developments as it’s “about delivering on a ‘patriotic history’ that glorifies the ANC’s role in history, much in the same way as the apartheid curriculum glorified the role of the NP and Afrikaner nationalism”. Michelle Friedman, History textbook writer, in the same newspaper likewise confirmed her view by stating that “... it would be ‘a shame’ if in resistance history, the ANC was ‘glorified’”. See Pressreader, “Past has a different future”, 20 May 2018 (Available at <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/sunday-times/20180520/281522226744627>, as accessed 27 September 2018).

been inclusivity, as opposed to avoiding experts who might offer perspectives which sometimes contradict or challenge some intentions or ideas coming from the Ministry. This might have happened in the process towards selecting the members of the History MTT panel. The experiences and opinions of prominent experts in History Education about the Task Team selection (or exclusion) are shared (anonymously) below:

Academic A²⁰

I was asked to be on the Task Team – a long time ago – and I answered that I would consider it IF the brief was to consider WHETHER compulsory was a good idea – not HOW TO.....!! I HAD NO REPLY.

And another, perhaps more positive reflective viewpoint, which will be revealed in the next section when discussing the validity of all these observations on the first part of the History MTT Report:

Academic C²¹

- I'm very pleased that the Minister/DBE has appointed an independent and professional team, with no departmental officials and no union people. (Of course, that also means no representatives of other organisations like ... [the SASHT] ...;

- It's clear that they chose mainly historians and, from the point of view of the content issues, that is not a bad thing at all. (It's far better to have knowledgeable people making the recommendations.);

- The team is well balanced according to race, gender, age and curriculum experience, and I think it will be hard for anyone or union to disagree with their findings on the basis of their representivity.

Whether Academic C maintained this opinion as reiterated above, will surface again later in the discussion. The conversation to follow shifts from the History MTT as a team (chosen for their knowledge abilities and expertise – thus Academic C) to the key issue of being informed on the research method that the History MTT seemingly followed to provide the South African nation with insight.

History MTT research method opted for in data gathering

Though the Ministerial mandate is clear as to what would be expected from the Team, it does not necessarily provide information as to the exact way

20 ES van Eeden Email archive, Discussions with Academic A, 11 June 2018.

21 ES van Eeden Email archive, Discussions with Academic C, 13 October 2015.

forward with all the required processes and inquiries to obtain insight so as to arrive at an informed analysis. Therefore, concisely making sense of the MTT research protocol helps to frame the information used and referenced.

Research method followed

From the limited pieces of information in the History MTT Report as part of the Team's effort to provide context, it seems as if there had been “productive” discussions. The Ministry's mandate was the main focus, and as far as it concerns the “comparative research on compulsory history in other countries,” apparently each member of the Team was assigned a country (though it is not made clear at all on what basis the countries were selected). Each member then had to find information on the status of History Education in the country assigned to him/her out of the “selected” 12 countries, according to a list of criteria the History MTT had decided on, namely is History...:²²

- ... compulsory in a given country and if so, up to which grade?;
- ... a stand-alone subject or integrated and at what level?
- Other criteria pertaining to the status of teaching History in other countries were also formulated by the History MTT, namely to determine:
- the content framework;
- the level of control or autonomy, for example at which level the content is determined (national/ local level);
- what skills are being looked for;
- why the countries chose the particular approach they took; and
- what kind of identity is being promoted in the curriculum?

The extent to which the Report complies with these criteria with reference to countries in a proper scientific and coherent manner is unfortunately highly contestable.²³ It is accepted that a desktop research method was mainly to be followed, while some (selective) academics in the active field of History Education and teaching were approached for some information, assistance and advice,²⁴ though these resources seem to have been utilised to a limited extent.

22 RSA, DBE, “Executive summary of the History Ministerial Task Team”, ca January 2018, p. 9.

23 See discussion in the next section.

24 The authors of this article possess sufficient correspondence data to be able to state that in especially 2017 the MTT's 2015 obligations to soon submit a report compelled the MTT Chair to quickly reach out to members of especially the SASHT to provide information and to actually task them to take up research and to provide MTT members with some insight required. However, apparently the MTT consequently did not deem it necessary to provide any acknowledgement to the relevant parties. From Section 10 (p. 96) of the comprehensive MTT Report it is also possible to observe some substantial activity in mainly July-August 2017, with no substantial activity observable in 2016.

Thus, other than a desktop approach or relying on a task team member's personal experience regarding the status of the relevant selected country, or contact with a person abroad having knowledge on the status of History teaching in that country, the remainder of the History MTT's research included: One national Round Table and some provincial Round Tables with selective representatives from academics, amongst others. The school educator's voice seems to have been valued more in especially the second part of the Report (covering textbooks, curriculum concerns and teacher training), though a few academic specialist voices were present. Yet, in the full History MTT Report the voice of academics (inclusive of many reports and activity between 2015 and 2017)²⁵ appears half muted and limitedly selective, rather than reliable and inclusive. From the History MTT's concise *Introduction* as well as the *Background and summary of MTT activities* on pages 7 to 9 of the Report it simply is not possible to fully grasp the Team's seriousness with regard to the comprehensivity and responsibility to produce a meaningful, well-researched report, and to provide purposeful information, such as:

- A relevant representative historiographical landscape on South Africa's History Education on compulsory History; on curriculum development; on political interference and action/reaction; on historiography and current institutions and societies in the field of History teaching the Ministry can possibly (and should in fact) rely on in future;
- A proper rationale and motivation as to why only some countries were included and others excluded;
- A proper understanding as to why there is a lack of a coherent structure in each of the deliberations with regard to the countries selected (initially suggested as criteria by the team themselves. See the criteria listed earlier);²⁶
- Proper referencing and selecting of reliable and representative sources on each country (the same applies to the other parts of the Report not presently under discussion).

25 Compare for example L Chisholm's reporting on the research the UJ conducted in conjunction with the University of the Witwatersrand, that also informed one of the MTT's Round Table debates hosted on 18 August 2017 in Gauteng as in UJ, Faculty of Education, "Research and Policy: Researching History Teacher Education and the Potential Policy Change to Make History Compulsory in Schools", Newsletter of the Faculty of Education, Edubrief, p. 6. https://www.uj.ac.za/faculties/facultyofeducation/Documents/Edubrief_Sept2017_Final.pdf Accessed 27 September 2018; L Chisholm (with contribution by M Friedman), "South Africa wants to make history compulsory at school. But can it?", The Conversation, 1 June 2018 (Available at <http://theconversation.com/south-africa-wants-to-make-history-compulsory-at-school-but-can-it-97633>, as accessed June 2018).

26 The countries are critically addressed in the next section.

Other metanarratives on the MTT's approach towards the research process, apart from the author's observations, are noted as follows:

MTT action and process

From other available metanarratives about the History MTT and its process of gathering information, the following are examples of what historians and educators as professionals in History Teaching and recalled:

Academic B²⁷

“Ek het die proses onbekook gevind en die reëlings pateties”.

I found the process not well thought through and the arrangements [MTT meetings] pathetic. (Freely translated from Afrikaans)

The History MTT held a national Round Table on 3 December 2015 in Pretoria (mentioned earlier), in which several interested parties in the field of education participated, for example representatives of trade unions and teacher unions (such as the SASHT). They had, however, been mainly invited as observer participants. After the day's discussions, all the parties exchanged their impressions and felt the meeting to have been constructive,²⁸ yet not without constraints and concerns. One of the five voices from the SASHT articulated a personal impression on the Round Table process:

Academic D²⁹

I was impressed by the fact that the Minister and Deputy Minister and DG all stayed until 15:00. The general feeling was one of doing what is best for the youth of South Africa ... I cannot help wondering if they are not under considerable political pressure to adopt a patriotic nationalism approach to History Education...

Indeed, the “political pressure” as observed (and by the Minister specifically), was confirmed in the History MTT Report:³⁰

... the Minister spoke about the political pressure she was under to deal with the teaching of the discipline of History. The concern seemed to be that our young people do not appreciate our country's history and that of the African continent. There was a feeling that history is necessary to inspire the psyche of the nation and in this regard it is more than just 'another subject'.

27 ES van Eeden Email archive, Discussions with Academic B, 10 September 2018.

28 ES van Eeden Email archive on “Compulsory History”, Discussions with SASHT representatives and other academics who attended the Round Table in early December 2015 during Van Eeden's term as SASHT President, Emails from 4 December 2015–2 January 2016.

29 ES van Eeden Email archive, Discussions with Academic D, 14 December 2015.

30 RSA, DBE, “Executive summary of the History Ministerial Task Team”, ca January 2018, p. 8.

Despite the perceived “pressure” by the Minister, the December 2015 Round Table discussants recognised that “History should not be used for political expediency and that its particular role in developing critical thinking be affirmed and defended”.³¹

The discussants at the Round Table also shared other valuable insights, such as that the History MTT had to take a more in-depth and representative approach towards their presentation of the “comparative case study on compulsory History in certain countries”. Some Round Table respondents felt that “the initial comparative analysis was too narrow and that countries such as India, Russia, Brazil and Nigeria” should also be considered. The rationale behind this remains unclear in the History MTT communication.³²

The Round Table was explicitly commissioned by the DBE (tasked with five commission discussions) to, amongst others, “... explore the advantages of History as a compulsory subject in Grades 10-12” but with an “expected outcome” to “... make proposals for compulsory History in Grades 10-12” [sic].³³ That the History MTT makes no proper reference to the information captured on the day with regard to voices on compulsory History specifically (nor to the voices in written form submitted to the History MTT) allows for impressions of a lack of representative perspectives and insight on all the mandatory requirements. This also applies to the specific emphasis on compulsory History as an ideal expressed by the Ministry but too thinly and selectively reported on in the final History MTT Report as far as it concerns a broader spectrum of voices from South Africa.³⁴

If the research recording process relating to public meetings did not properly find its way into a national report like the History MTT, it could have been believed that the research on the status of compulsory History in selective countries might at least have been more reliable and efficiently articulated.

31 RSA, DBE, “Executive summary of the History Ministerial Task Team”, ca January 2018, p. 9.

32 RSA, DBE, “Executive summary of the History Ministerial Task Team”, ca January 2018, p. 9.

33 RSA, DBE, Programme, History Round Table theme: A nation that does not know its history has no future, Commissions, 3 December 2015.

34 See for example an array of prominent scholars reacting against the History MTT’s major finding of History to be compulsory: Debbie Schäfer “WCED objects to education dept making history compulsory”, Capetalk, 18 June 2018 (Available at <http://www.capetalk.co.za/articles/308092/wced-objects-to-education-dept-making-history-compulsory>, as accessed June 2018); Prof Karen Harris objecting the Ministry’s decision to opt for compulsory history. She recommended that the DBE should instead focus on improving the quality of education in the country before making history compulsory. See Thando Maeko, “Discussion Chair Historical Association of South Africa”, *Political Analysis South Africa*, 1 June 2018 (Available at <https://www.politicalanalysis.co.za/listen-fix-education-system-before-making-history-compulsory/>, as accessed from Prof Harris on 2 July 2018); Prof Wessel Visser, “Die kwessie van Geskiedenis as verpligte Skoolvak”, prepared and published by Die Burger, 23 July 2018; Responses by Proff Peter Kallaway, Fransjohan Pretorius and Elize S van Eeden on the KykNet Television programme “Prontuit”, 18 July 2018.

However, as observed by the previously discreet³⁵ Academic C³⁶ after the release of the Report:

... The main problem is that the report is so poor in almost all respects ...

Whether this “poorness” of the Report also surfaces in the baseline research activities regarding which information was requested, specifically compulsory History globally, is now further under review.

Learning from other countries on compulsory history? Reviewing the MTT report

The History MTT’s mandate was, amongst others, to inform the Ministry “on the feasibility of making History compulsory”, and that this “informing” should be supported by research conducted on a global scale and from local inquiry. An overview follows on the findings, as narrated by the History MTT on pages 10 to 44 of the Report.

Compulsory history: History MTT Research conducted on a global scale?

The History MTT (after being criticised during the December 2015 Round Table as to the fact that the international research and selection of countries appeared too limited)³⁷ added some research and eventually “selected” 12 countries, of which eight in Eurasia, one in Latin America and three in Africa (South Africa excluded). The rationale for the selection of countries simply seems to have been endlessly belaboured and poorly motivated. Ironically, the MTT utilised more countries in Europe in their selection, which perceptually are viewed as the colonial oppressors. The countries selected are:³⁸

- Countries from elsewhere (excluding Africa and Asia):
- Europe: **5** (Poland; Netherlands; Italy; France; Austria)
- Latin America: **1** (Brazil)
- Countries from Africa (excluding South Africa): **3** (Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Nigeria)
- Countries from Asia: **2** (China and India)
- Countries from Eurasia **1** (Russia). Strangely, in the section on Russia a full verbatim quoted online article on Wales from Sir David Cannadine’s book “The right kind of History” was also added from pp 34-35 and totally overshadows the discussion on Russia.

35 ES van Eeden Email archive, Discussions with Academics, Academic C, 13 October 2015.

36 ES van Eeden Email archive, Discussions with Academics, Academic C email, 6 October 2018.

37 RSA, DBE, “Report of the History Ministerial Task Team”, February 2018, p. 9.

38 RSA, DBE, “Report of the History Ministerial Task Team”, February 2018, pp. 34-35.

Regarding this section of the Report, the Chair informs the reader that reporting on the research followed a very specific list of criteria (as mentioned earlier) and that this was (see the last part of the quote as underlined by the authors of the article):³⁹

... submitted and later [sic] collated by the Chairperson and his Deputy in order to provide a systematic overview and analysis on where South Africa falls in terms of the place of History in the school curriculum and whether the subject should be compulsory throughout the school system. Collecting, collating and rigorously engaging with the comparative data was time consuming but is an invaluable basis from which to consider the question of the place and role of History in the South African curriculum in fulfilment of the mandate.

However, how the information regarding the 12 selected countries was presented (and according to the MTT chair “collating and rigorously engaging with the comparative data” is not clear, selective, not equally informative on the same criteria, and not focused enough. In some instances, discussions seemingly relied too much on nameless or unreliable Internet sources, and often copied verbatim with hidden or no acknowledgement.⁴⁰ Examples of these, pertaining to pages 10 to 39 of the History MTT, are cryptically pointed out in the Table provided (attached as addendum to this paper).

As for Africa, the History MTT claims that compulsory History on both the primary and secondary level can be found in countries like Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Madagascar, Chad and the DRC,⁴¹ but offers no explanation as to why it was decided to select countries like Nigeria, Rwanda and Zimbabwe for the discussion. The MTT also, as stated by MB Ramose, infers that Zimbabwe’s approach to History by 2000 appeared to be a:⁴²

‘Patriotic History’, [that] demonstrated a state-driven fixation with history – but for political reasons, and not for educative analytical purposes. In this way, the scholarly study of History gradually lost its legitimacy within the schooling and higher education systems, as well as in the public sphere ...

Oddly enough, in the discussion of Zimbabwe, as in the case of Nigeria and others, the History MTT only takes note of some historical and/or political trends impacting on the status of History teaching, but not necessarily in a balanced or diverse way, as can be viewed in the few listed concerns by

39 RSA, DBE, “Executive summary of the History Ministerial Task Team”, ca January 2018, p. 9.

40 Compare these impressions by the authors with similar views but also other comments originating from the recent SASHT conference at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology in the Western Cape, such as the response of Ms Leah Nasson, 5-6 October 2018.

41 RSA, DBE, “Report of the History Ministerial Task Team”, February 2018, p. 12.

42 RSA, DBE, “Report of the History Ministerial Task Team”, February 2018, p. 17.

academics in China.⁴³ When later in the Report the History MTT therefore frankly recommends that South Africa should resort to compulsory History teaching on all educational levels,⁴⁴ they can be accused of having provided limited clarity on how the South African historical narrative could learn from elsewhere and should unfold in schools within the framework of a prominently politically-driven need.⁴⁵

History in schools should also be able to explore its richness as discipline in the way this field of research embraces the value of understanding the past from multidiverse and inclusive angles.⁴⁶ The Finnish historians refer to “intercultural education” and “cultural diversity”, which they see as having recently become more crucial to history.⁴⁷

A big question is whether any meaningful analyses, interpretations and “comparisons” (as promised in the early pages of the History MTT Report) could be possible from such a limited scope of countries, and based on such scant research? Also, the MTT might have realised that this is hardly possible, hence the promised (or promising?) comparative analysis implied from page 39 to page 44 in the comprehensive report (titled *Conclusions and lessons learnt from comparative case studies*)⁴⁸ never seriously materialised. Instead, pages 40 to 44 side-step the focus on South African “issues” like teacher training, the CAPS content, what teaching in History at schools “should be” and what “universities want”. The History MTT continues with a discussion on aspects regarding which hardly enough research was done and continuously speaks on behalf of “we”, with no comparative intentions in sight.

To candidly recap on the distorted international image of History Education as presented by the History MTT (and what has been further informed on), the comparisons on compulsory History elsewhere in the world and Africa would be that:

43 Zheng Wang, “National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory ...” *International Studies Quarterly*, 52, 2008, pp. 803-804.

44 This recommendation is visible in the executive summary as well as the comprehensive History MTT Report.

45 As mentioned earlier by the Task Team, the pressure under which the Ministry of Education is, emanates from the youth’s intolerant (and uninformed) practices.

46 Elize S van Eeden, “Reflections on writing and teaching History in South Africa”, in Elize S van Eeden and Pieter Warnich (eds), *Teaching and Learning History and Geography in the South African classroom*, p. 47; Elize S van Eeden and Johannes L van der Walt, “Creating a future for History within South Africa’s Curriculum 2005”, *Journal for Theory and Research in Social Education*, 28(1), 2000, pp. 85-95.

47 Arja Virta and Eija Yli-Panula, “History, social studies and geography education in Finnish schools and teacher education”, in Hannele Niemi, Auli Toom and Arto Kallioniemi *et al.* (eds), *Miracle of education*, 2nd rev. ed. (Rotterdam, Sense Publishers, 2016), pp. 191-209.

48 RSA, DBE, “Report of the History Ministerial Task Team”, February 2018, pp. 39-44.

- Compulsory History from the lower grades to the senior educational levels, in the 12 countries selected by the History MTT, appears to apply only to Poland, Brazil and Russia (the latter up to Grade 11). The remaining selection of African, European and Asian countries does not properly inform, except for the featuring of histories pointing to patriotism, nationalism (Zimbabwe, Poland, Russia and Rwanda) and/or a total aversion to acknowledging diversity (as in Rwanda);
- Compulsory teaching of History, where it exists on lower or all levels of education, is not necessarily acceptable, appreciated or viewed as a medium to encourage tolerance, but in fact patriotism⁴⁹ and an appreciation of local or indigenous knowledge seem prominent.
- All history curricula through phases of education, promote local, national and continental or global events (e.g. Zimbabwe).

Patriotism, openly encouraged in many curricula globally,⁵⁰ is viewed by some academics as having the potential to be divisive and dangerous, not necessarily conducive to promoting tolerance, and remains “untenable insofar as it conflicts with the legitimate aims of education”.⁵¹ This applies especially if the conceptualising of what might appear to be patriotic is narrowly defined.⁵²

The gaps in the MTT’s research on countries

As pointed out earlier and in explanatory footnotes as well as in the Table in the addendum, not enough explanation is provided as to why some countries were included and others excluded. A wider and perhaps more representative perspective from 195 potential countries in the world to select from could have been achieved by, for example, selecting 10 countries where History is partially compulsory up to a lower educational level, 10 countries where History is totally compulsory up to a senior educational level and perhaps five countries or so in which History Education in schools is optional

49 See Terence Ranger, “Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: the Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30(2), 2004, pp. 215-234 (Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305707042000215338>).

50 Even the USA is no exception. See Michael S Merry, “Patriotism, History and the Legitimate Aims of American Education”, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41(4), 2009, pp. 378-398 (Available at <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2007.00363.x>).

51 Compare the globally informed work of Mario Carretero, *Constructing patriotism. Teaching history and memories in global worlds* (North Carolina, Information Age Publishing, 2011), Chapters Four and Five; Michael S Merry, “Patriotism, History ...”, *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41(4), 2009, p. 378 (Available at <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2007.00363.x>).

52 The same principle applies to the concept of “Africanisation” which the History MTT frequently mentions but does not conceptualise for implementing its understanding in a future South African history curriculum. The concept “Africanisation” should be teased out in its broadest understanding, and so avoid a misconception of it possibly being “race-centric”.

or not visible. If the South African network of knowledge associated with other countries had been utilised more wisely, some serious gaps in the MTT Report could have been meaningfully reduced. By means of example, three countries are concisely referred to in each of the selection criteria as suggested above, and mainly pertaining to the compulsory status of History education, though other interesting snippets regarding History Education are shared below:

England as example of History as partially compulsory

In England, History has never been compulsory up to the official school-leaving age (which was recently changed to the age of 16). Although the original National Curriculum (NC) originally planned for History to be compulsory to the age of 16, this never happened and in the revised NC of 1995 this changed to learners having a choice of selection between History or Geography to the age of 16 years. Later versions (1999 onwards) removed this requirement.⁵³ At present (2018), academy schools and free schools are not bound by the NC and can teach whatever histories they want (but normally they teach History to learners up to the age of 13 to 14 years). Other schools have to follow the NC and learners have to do it at a “Key Stage 3” (KS3), normally known as Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 which used to be 11-14 years, but can now be shortened to a two-year KS3, meaning that learners can drop History at the age of 13 to 14 (thus two years after having entered high school), which about 60% of learners in this age group indeed choose to do.⁵⁴

As far as cultivating a national awareness of history content is concerned, Haydn shares insightful perspectives:⁵⁵

... the enduring popularity of a form of school history which is based predominantly on the idea that the transmission of a positive story about the national past ... [has been viewed as having the potential to] ... inculcate in young people a sense of loyalty to the state; a reassuring and positive sense of identity and belonging; and a sense of social solidarity with fellow citizens. England is one of the countries which has to at least some extent moved away from this model of school history; but the past few years have seen suggestions for a move back to a history curriculum which focuses predominantly on the transmission of ‘Our Island Story’; and which presents a positive rendering of that story.

53 Compare Richard J Evans, “Make history compulsory for the right reasons”, The Guardian, 26 August 2011 (Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2011/aug/26/history-compulsory-right-reasons>, as accessed 2 November 2018).

54 The author’s inquiry, responded to by Prof Terry Haydn, a leading expert in History teaching in England. See also Terry Haydn, “Secondary history: Current themes”, in Ian Davies (ed.), *Debates in History teaching* (UK, Taylor & Francis Group, 2010), Chapter 3; John Lawson and Harold Silver, *A social history of education in England*, vol. 18 (London, Routledge, 2007 from the 1973 issue), pp. 480.

55 T Haydn, “History in schools and the problem of ‘The Nation’”, *Education Sciences*, 2(4), 2012, pp. 276-289.

The restoration of traditional school history in England has been the emphasis in recent years.

Romania as example of History as totally compulsory

According to Speranta Nalin,⁵⁶ further informed by Mihai Manea, a feature of Romanian History Education prior to, and during the communist era of the country, was that history content for the History curriculum was ideologised along Marxist theories to satisfy official propaganda. Textbooks were mistrusted and in the event teachers, by not using the available textbooks, actually also tended to indulge in patriotic lecturing. By 1989 this trend changed and the emphasis was to remove any elements of a political or ideological nature by reframing the curriculum. As a result school history in Romania has therefore become fully compulsory from the age of 10-18 years (Grades 5 to 12). Themes not taught previously, like the Holocaust, became part of the compulsory curriculum for learners and appears to be a still strongly appreciated theme for teaching.⁵⁷ The European Association of History Educators (Euroclio) seems to as from 2006 have become quite involved in History Education in Romania to bring together a national network between History educators and others who stress the role of History Education in the light of democratic and civic society. They also ensure that networking, training and monitoring good practice can be established and prevails.⁵⁸ In 2011 Mihai Manea observed that the need has developed for a more inclusive view of History than just mainly that of Romania. He also noticed at the time that “School history is the witness of a lively and passionate debate on the validity of the myths of national history”.⁵⁹

Nigeria as example (with History Education as totally optional), and the USA

It will take much more than desktop research or being informed on United Nations projects covering the histories of Africa – though long overdue – to gain an informed understanding of History teaching practices and trends in the 54 countries of Africa. Though the History MTT points out Nigeria as a country which seems to have rejected the compulsory teaching of History on

56 Speranta D Nalin, “History Teaching in Romania”, *Diogenes*, 194(49/2), 2002, pp. 40-45. See also Nicolae M Dascalu, “History teaching in Romania”, *European Education*, 24(4), 1992, pp. 28-38.

57 Mihai Manea, “Teaching History in post-1989 Romania”, in Elisabeth Erdmann and Wolfgang Hasberg (eds), vol. 1, *Facing-Mapping-Bridging Diversity* (Germany, Wochenschau-Geschichte, 2011), pp. 175-195.

58 Euroclio, “Fostering History and Citizenship Education in Romania”, 1 June 2003-1 June 2006 (Available at <https://euroclio.eu/projects/fostering-history-citizenship-education-romania/>, as accessed 22 November 2018).

59 M Manea, “Teaching History in post-1989 Romania”, in Elisabeth Erdmann and Wolfgang Hasberg (eds), vol. 1, *Facing-Mapping-Bridging Diversity*, pp. 181-184.

any level, it is an optional discipline. As a consequence a loss of both identity and a good sense of historical consciousness might be the outcome.⁶⁰

With governments seemingly being the major decision-makers on whether History must have a space in school education and how that must display, it is of interest to observe from recent happenings in 2017 that some schools in the United States have decided to abandon the teaching of American history (which seems to totally reflect the opposite view of what seems to be the current norm in England). In the USA a 2012 survey of elementary schools showed that educators considered History to be a “low priority” because learners are not “tested” on this level, and educators themselves fall short of knowledge sufficiency in History. The notion to “no longer offend anyone” and teach what seems to be acceptable, and in a fractured way,⁶¹ is alarming. In any consideration South Africans should also learn from this scenario currently presenting itself. By not embracing the histories of diverse cultures in a country in a balanced and meaningful way as part of creating a national identity, will allow for distorted preferred narratives. This will pave the way for cultures, parents and even schools to take decisions about History teaching that might be equally detrimental to South African learners’ sense of identity and consciousness (as in Nigeria) for decades to come.

Embracing more research and methods to learn from local perspectives on compulsory History

In Section 10 of the History MTT Report some voices from the nine provinces in South Africa which were visited and opinions raised where workshops were conducted during July-August 2017 are shared. The Report seems to merely list a selection of insights by representatives with no clear framework for these “consultations” which ostensibly had in mind to, amongst others, gain an impression on the feel for compulsory History. The MTT received a good mixture of concerns and pro-compulsory processes, but for both sides it was a matter of politically related motives or emotions, and also concerns that the discipline of History might be seriously affected.⁶² A lack of inclusivity of voices and a balance of all are surely to be questioned from the MTT Report

60 RSA, DBE, “Report of the History Ministerial Task Team”, February 2018, pp. 14-15.

61 Karol Markowicz, “Why schools have stopped teaching American history”, New York Post, 22 January 2017 (Available at <https://nypost.com/2017/01/22/why-schools-have-stopped-teaching-american-history/>), as accessed 2 November 2018).

62 RSA, DBE, “Report of the History Ministerial Task Team”, February 2018, pp. 96-113. See also other voices that the History MTT received but did not reference or utilise, e.g. South African Society for History Teaching (SASHT), History Task Team folder, Statement SASHT to the History MTT, November 2015.

and are problematic throughout the Report. Equally so, many questions can be asked due to the absence of reliability. How the History MTT came to the following conclusion after two weeks of workshop discussions with a non-inclusive voice, remains a fascinating mystery:⁶³

At the consultations held in the various provinces, the main feedback was that a proposal should be forwarded to the DBE to make the subject of History compulsory in South Africa. However, it was agreed that all the various contextual factors, concerns and challenges specific to South Africa would have to be carefully considered ... These are crucial matters to be considered by the DBE to begin the process of implementing compulsory History from Grades 10 to 12.

Considerably more consultation will still be required and informed from some recent academic research like that of Linda Chisholm and her team referred to earlier, as well as the recent successfully completed work of the Master's student in Education at KZN, Zoleka Mkhabela. The study, titled "History teachers' views on the possibility of making the subject compulsory up to Grade 12: A case study", provides additional insight into some of the historiography of compulsory History Education trends globally and some research locally. Mkhabela's structured approach to the research (akin to the History MTT being informed through workshop discussions) could have benefited the MTT. The essence of the approach from the Mkhabela workshop discussions is captured below:⁶⁴

Data analysis and findings

Positive views

- Educational reasons
 - » Relevance of history
 - » History will give learners generic skills
 - » Learners' view of the subject
- Political reasons
 - » Promotion of political literacy
 - » Promotion of roots and identity
 - » Promotion of historical conscience
- Economic reasons
 - » Teacher employment

63 RSA, DBE, "Report of the History Ministerial Task Team", February 2018, p. 114.

64 Z Mkhabela, "History teachers' views on the possibility of making the subject compulsory up to Grade 12: A case study", MA, History Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal, 2018, Chapter Four, pp. 14-59; 80-102.

Negative reasons

- Politically informed negativity
 - » Manipulation of content
 - » History as a tool for indoctrination
- Educational impact
 - » Impact on the subject
 - » Lack of learners' interest
- Human resource impact

By acknowledging this informative part of Mkhabela's study,⁶⁵ the History MTT could have further extended their study with more insight obtained from History educators and historians as well as information gathered from publications related to teaching in South Africa. In so doing they could have gained a balanced historiography perspective instead of merely brushing aside this possibility with the introductory words in the History MTT Report that merely state:⁶⁶

The history of the History curriculum or the historiography of the History curriculum in South Africa has been fairly well documented and commented upon.

Other than History educators on GET and FET levels, the HET academics have so far been much more cautious in their deliberations pro-compulsory history in schools. Ms Leah Nasson has lucidly articulated her overall impression on the History MTT's report and recommendations:⁶⁷

Ultimately, the model proposed by the MTT is far too vulnerable to political manipulation and far too reliant on a presentist interpretation of History as a subject discipline. This is not to dismiss the report in its entirety, but rather to argue that there are flaws in its construction and argumentation which render its findings somewhat unconvincing. Given the serious implications of making History compulsory in any society (as the history of authoritarian and populist regimes have hitherto taught us), the quality and depth of analysis in the report requires urgent improvement and revision.

65 Though Mkhabela's study also shows a serious lack of inclusive reflections on the South African historiography of History Education and her preference for compulsory history, her efforts are to be noted and are of more value than that which the History MTT could bring forth. See for example her wider scope on African countries and other European countries on the levels and status of compulsory History.

66 See RSA, DBE, "Report of the History Ministerial Task Team", February 2018, p. 7.

67 SASHT conference, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Western Cape, discussion Ms Leah Nasson, 5-6 October 2018.

In conclusion: Compulsory History and impressions on the outcome of the History MTT research conducted

The History MTT has deemed it appropriate to add to their summarised as well as more comprehensive reporting, a recommendation on compulsory History for South Africa. This recommendation contradicts the actual case study findings from the international research on the status of compulsory history, namely suggesting that the DBE should:⁶⁸ “Introduce History as a compulsory subject in the FET (Grades 10 – 12) Phase”.

The main aim of this discussion was to reflect on the History MTT’s Report that covers the status of compulsory History in Africa and globally. It was found that the Report, as presented in the first 44 pages, cannot yet serve as a reliable and descriptive indicator for making any informed decision on whether History Education in South African schools should indeed be compulsory up to Grade 12 level.

The lack of in-depth quality research and the presentation of the research findings that is supposed to inform South Africans have been pointed out in this article, with numerous examples (not even touching on most of the other sections of the Report). The Report’s findings share no sound information to firmly, constructively and informatively suggest why South Africa should follow the route of compulsory History.

Important side aspects that have much to do with this thin body of research partially lie in the unfortunate lack of inclusivity of expertise in the History MTT, especially experts in History education. In addition, the concern about the youth’s lack of historical knowledge, resulting in actions of intolerance, should rather be researched and assessed among the youth themselves and their impressions and those of the broader parent corpus, on what South Africans want, and how they view the discussions about compulsory History in schools, should be noted. Who must therefore be exposed to levels of tolerance and what historical content will “cure” intolerance, will be contestable points. Equally so, “Africanisation” as solution will require a much more elaborate and clearer conceptualisation before it can be applied and implemented in a revised curriculum.

It is therefore recommended that the DBE seriously reflect on all these concerns regarding the shortcomings of the History MTT, which cannot serve as a healthy basis to depart from for decision-making on History as a potentially compulsory subject in Grades 10 to 12, amongst others.

68 RSA, DBE, “Executive summary of the History Ministerial Task Team”, ca January 2018, p. 4.

ADDENDUM

Critically reviewing the History MTT Summary Report¹ on the status of compulsory History internationally

COUNTRY	COMPULSORY UP TO WHAT GRADE?	History MTT-notes	Authors' comments on the MTT Report	Assessment of the sources used in the Report
AFRICA ⁷⁰				
ZIMBABWE	<i>Up to O level [Which is Grade 10]</i> ⁷¹	<i>Contentious. Curriculum 2167 seen to be shaped by proZANU Patriotic History</i>	- Reliability of this discussion can be contested. - The period under study is vague and seems to stretch only to 2003.	- Reference to Magubane in the H Stolten source in footnotes 11 incorrect. Should be 2007. Magubane passed away in 2013. - Content of footnote 17 does not appear in Magubane's chapter. - Footnote 14 incorrect. A 1968 source cannot advise content of 2000. - Moyo quoted several times with no reference in sight. - Footnote 18's source wrongly referenced as that of Beckles and actually should be Terence Ranger's "Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: the Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe". <i>Journal of Southern African Studies</i>, 30(2), 2004, pp. 215-234.
RWANDA	<i>Primary school and Lower secondary [Which is Grade 9]</i>	<i>Primary school: Social and Religious Studies. Lower Secondary: Citizenship and History</i>	- Not user-friendly. Differs from the Zimbabwe and Nigeria discussions. - No indication of historical time. - Rwanda's promotion of a single identity through its history curriculum should have been better analysed, motivated and sourced.⁷²	No references except for using a curriculum (no date) verbatim, devoting no less than five pages to it.

69 Columns one to three of the Report have been copied verbatim and all information in italics are verbatim as they appear in the Report.

70 It is not clear why the three countries used as examples were selected, as none could inform South Africans in particular with regard to compulsory History up to a possible secondary (grade 12) level. In both Zimbabwe and Rwanda teaching compulsory History up to date only takes place on lower educational levels, although it extensively features a politically driven patriotism. Nigeria's inclusion could only inform the History MTT on the possibility of NOT including History in schools at all.

71 The "O-level" with which Zimbabwe is associated actually refers to the Cambridge O Level (an international acknowledged qualification for 14- to 16-year-old learners. In South Africa the "O-level" is equal to the Grade 10 level, but ironically not equal to the FET phase because learners cannot continue with "O level" History in Grades 11 and 12.

72 Compare the note on p. 26 regarding the identity promoted for Rwanda in RSA, DBE, "Report of the History Ministerial Task Team", February 2018.

NIGERIA	N/A [Thus no History]	From late 1960s, a move towards doing away with History. Expunged from primary and then the senior level. Ostensibly due to economic considerations but in reality it was for political reasons	History in schools only one of the many electives and thus optional. Motivation for choosing Nigeria to discuss not well articulated in the light thereof that the History MTT wanted to accentuate the “desirability and viability of making History compulsory in South Africa”. ⁷³	Footnotes 1-7 missing.
EUROPE ⁷⁴				
POLAND	Grade 4 - 6 (10- to 13-year-olds), lower secondary (13- to 16-year-olds), and upper secondary education (17- to 19-year-olds)	History and Civics. Amount of time devoted to History increases the further up the learner progresses	- Norway was included in the “broader” discussion of compulsory history teaching internationally by the History MTT, but was not listed in the Table of countries. From the length of discussion, it must be regarded as merely an afterthought, and does not shed light on compulsory history on a senior level of teaching. - Sources for Poland only hint towards History up to a post junior level (See p. 143 J Brynkus & P Trojanski).	- Footnote 24 in the History MTT Report cannot be used for the content of referencing Norway as it relates to Phil Bonner <i>et al</i> ’s source on the Cradle of Humankind in South Africa, published in 2007. - Footnote 25 on Poland also does not fit as it refers to Martin Legassick <i>et al</i> ’s source on <i>Skeletons in a cupboard ...</i> (2000), again strangely referencing South African history. - No sourcing for Poland specifically offered by the History MTT, whereas the knowledge of Krzysztof Jasku Łowski <i>et al</i> . could have been deployed ⁷⁵ as well as the knowledge of J Brynkus & P Trojanski, “Historical Education-Historical Culture-History Didactics in Poland”, in E Erdmann & W Hasberg (eds), <i>Facing-Mapping-Bridging Diversity</i> , pp. 117-148).

⁷³ See the History MTT remarks on page 16 of RSA, DBE, “Report of the History Ministerial Task Team”, February 2018.

⁷⁴ It is uncertain why the MTT decided to give the “colonial oppressor”, as they perceived Europe, the “benefit” of no less than five examples in this research, while interestingly avoiding the United Kingdom in the process, to which South Africa was attached (and still is) for more than two centuries. Yet the Netherlands, as a country with 143 years of pre-colonial ties to the Cape of Good Hope, was the only one selected for the discussion? Also strange is the exclusion of a (mentioned in the summary Report but not included in the full Report), Australia and New Zealand as countries reflecting cultural diversity and all sharing a colonial history as in the case of South Africa.

⁷⁵ See the criticism offered against using History as a nationalist tool in Krzysztof Jaskułowski, Piotr Majewski and Adrianna Surmiak, “Teaching the nation: history and nationalism in Polish school history education”, *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 39(1), March 2017, pp. 77-91 (Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2017.1304205>).

NETHERLANDS	<i>Compulsory in Primary and Secondary education</i>	<i>Integrated into Social and Environmental Studies alongside Geography</i>	According to Dr Huub Kurstjens of the Netherlands, the Canon into which the Netherlands has moulded its history, emphasises opposing views of historical awareness versus “canonical” knowledge. ⁷⁶ It is uncertain why the History MTT asserts that “The Dutch history curriculum clearly gives priority to particular historical knowledge”, as this is a skewed and unsourced reflection. It is furthermore not clearly articulating the reality that History in the Netherlands in the Upper Secondary level has four so-called profile fields from which learners can select one, and of which two of the four have History as a mandatory subject. ⁷⁷	It is impossible that the source of S Dubow (2006) could have informed on the History Education of the Netherlands when the content suggests the Canon ⁷⁸ and its use in specifically 2009-2010. ⁷⁹ The History MTT has minimally explored what is available on Europe in general on the status of History teaching. The contribution of Jokum van der Leeuw-Roord covering Europe’s History teaching in general is well-known. ⁸⁰
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76 HKJ Kurstjens, “The teaching of history in the Netherlands”, 7 June 2007 (Available at <https://histoforum.net/history/historycanon.htm>, as accessed on 7 November 2018).

77 See Information provided to ES van Eeden by Dr Albert van der Kaap of Histoforum in the Netherlands at <http://histoforum.net> 8 November 2018.

78 The Canon refers to Dutch history as originally (in 2001) defined in 10 periods by the Prof Piet de Rooy Committee covering the “chronological outlines of Western European history with special emphasis on the Netherlands”. In 2005 the Canon saw further refinement with the Prof FP van Oostrom Committee suggestions which have also proven completely unsatisfactory. See HKJ (Huub) Kurstjens, “The teaching of history in the Netherlands”, 7 June 2007 (available at <https://histoforum.net/history/historycanon.htm>, as accessed on 7 November 2018); M de Vos, “The return of the Canon: Transforming Dutch history teaching”, *History Workshop Journal*, 67(1), March 2009, pp. 111–124 (available at <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbn051>); F van Oostrom, *A key to Dutch history. Report by the Committee for the development of the Dutch Canon* (Amsterdam University Press, 2007), pp. 16-18.

79 See the History MTT remarks on page 31 of RSA, DBE, “Report of the History Ministerial Task Team”, February 2018.

80 See Joke van der Leeuw-Roord, “Beyond the doorstep: The nature of history teaching across Europe”, in S Aktekin, P Harnett, M Öztürk, and D Smart (eds), *Teaching History and Social Studies for multicultural Europe* (Ankara, Euroclio, 2009), Chapter 11 (pp. 155-176). Van der Leeuw informs us that “Compulsory History education starts almost everywhere in Europe with age group 9, and in a few countries earlier. In most countries, History is obligatory till the end of compulsory education, generally with age group 15. In England/UK history is only compulsory till 14. In many countries History is also compulsory in upper secondary education. However, there is a tendency to decrease the time allocated to the subject or even to make the subject optional” (see p. 156).

ITALY	<i>Primary to Upper Secondary education</i>	<i>History is part of the common curriculum across all the education streams</i>	-The MTT fails to inform on why, in Italy, the National Guidelines for the Curriculum were only put in place as from 2007. -The excuse that no information could be obtained on History teaching in the secondary level does not sit well. Basic information available contradicts the History MTT's assumption that History teaching in Italy has been made compulsory up to upper secondary education. It seems only to be compulsory until the age of 16 years. -The contributions of Luigi Cajani, amongst others, could have been explored better.	The unauthored Internet source in footnote 22 could not have informed on Italy as this source emphasises South Africa and the USA. The source used for Italy is also not displayed.
FRANCE	<i>Primary to Mid Secondary (Ages 6 to 15)</i>	<i>Ages 6 to 8 in Discovering the World, combines Science, History and Geography. From ages 8 to 11 is included in Humanities and Arts; ages 11 to 14, History is offered with Geography and Civic Education; to ages 15 and 16</i>	- The report on France is just another example of compulsory History up to Lower secondary Educational level.	One source reference on Robert F Kennedy (dated 1966) for the four paragraphs on France is provided, which indicates that most of the content provided does not cover a 2017-2018 status on History Education in France. It might have made more sense to use the sources of History Education experts like that of Marie Duru-Bellat, "France: permanence and change" in Yan Wang, (ed.). <i>Education policy reform trends in G20 members</i> (Springer, 2013) pp. 19-32.

AUSTRIA	<i>Ages 10 to 14</i>	<i>History is paired with Social Science or Citizenship Education, taught on average two hours per week</i>	- A meaningful motivation as to why Austria was selected as example is absent. - Virtually nothing is said (and could be said) in only one paragraph on Austria on p. 28 Report.	It is impossible to understand how sources in the <i>Yesterday&Today</i> (as referenced in footnote 20) could have sufficiently informed on the status of History Education in Austria.
ASIA				
INDIA	<i>Compulsory Grade 6/9 [sic]. Probably Grades 6 to 9; then optional Grade 10-12.</i>	<i>History is integrated into other social subjects</i>	- The History MTT strangely relies only on a 1952 source to inform if History Education in 2017-2018 is a “stand-alone or an integrated subject”.⁸¹ In what sense India’s pre-colonial and colonial past has impacted on its people’s historical consciousness and the influence of an Indology approach on school curricula⁸² such as History presents a warped picture of the educational context of history teaching in India. - It seems as if History in Grades 11 to 12 is not allowed to be taken due to the “stream” in which it appears. History fades in the Grade 10 (matriculation or secondary) level as merely being “visible” in Social Studies.	- Footnote 31 on John Henrik Clarke’s African Warrior Queens and the vague reference to Cheikh Anta Diop of Senegal’s 1989 source on The Cultural Unity of Black Africa hardly fit the discussion on India to which it is referenced. - No reliable source on India is provided to suggest that “appointees of the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) in India have proposed an indigenous history curriculum”⁸³ and when. In India the quest for indigenous education dates back to colonial times.⁸⁴ - Quite alarming in the History MTT research is their selection of mainly political party perspectives and that academic voices remain mostly mute.⁸⁵

81 RSA, DBE, “Report of the History Ministerial Task Team”, February 2018, p. 36.

82 Compare with the discussion as in “India’s National Policy on Education (with modifications undertaken in 1992)”, Part 1, 7 May 1992, pp. 1- (available at www.ncert.nic.in/oth_noun/npe86.pdf, as accessed on 8 November 2018).

83 RSA, DBE, “Report of the History Ministerial Task Team”, February 2018, p. 36.

84 S Nurullah and JP Naik, *History of Education in India during the British period* (Bombay, MacMillan, 1943), Chapters 1 to 10.

85 The following Indian scholars, amongst others, provide informative contextual insight on Indian History Education that could have been fruitfully utilized: Geeta Gandhi Kingdon, “The progress of school education in India” (Report GPRG-WPS-071, Global Poverty Research Group, 2007), pp. 1-37; Neeladri Bhattacharya, “Teaching History in Schools: the Politics of Textbooks in India”, *History Workshop Journal*, 67(1), March 2009, pp. 99-110 (available at <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbn050>).

			Students in India are not allowed to take Chemistry and History in grades 11-12 because they are part of different 'streams'.	
CHINA	9-year compulsory programme for History	History is incorporated in general terms as citizenship education, internationalism, communist morality and nationalism.	The scant reference to China that the History MTT provides indirectly informs that no compulsory teaching of History at a secondary level is visible in China and that academics would appreciate to see multi-perspective curricula.	No sourcing of the merely one concise paragraph on China. ⁸⁶
EURASIA				
RUSSIA	[Up to] Grade 11	Age 6 to 18. Two streams: World History and Russian History which is regionally focused	- The unstructured content offered by the History MTT on Russia at stages makes no sense. For example: "There are some subjects that are associated with History: Social Studies, which is studied from Grade 6 to Grade 11. This subject consists of the four areas of public life: political, economic, social and legal". ⁸⁷	- From page 34 of the History MTT Report the discussion on Russia is cut short and, still under the heading of Russia, some "Debates on the teaching of History in the United Kingdom" appears and so the history of Wales (not listed in the original table) receives some scope? Needless to mention that the only reference(s) for Russia's discussion hardly fits, namely: Peterson, 'The ties that bind', p. 876; P. Rich, <i>Race and Empire in British Politics ...</i> (1990); B. M. Magubane, <i>Race and the Construction of the Dispensable Other</i> (Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2007). - Several sources on Russia could have informed the History MTT much better. ⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Academics prominent in writing about their concern regarding patriotic education that could have been pointed out, are Zheng Wang, "National Humiliation, History Education, and the Politics of Historical Memory: Patriotic Education Campaign in China", *International Studies Quarterly*, 52, 2008, pp. 783-806; Edward Vickers, "In search of an identity. The Politics of History as a School Subject in Hong Kong, 1960s-2002", New York, Routledge, 2003 (and digital 2005) Chapter 2. This source also covers a useful broader transnational perspective on the teaching of History in Chapter 1.

⁸⁷ See RSA, DBE, "Report of the History Ministerial Task Team", February 2018, p. 33.

⁸⁸ Compare Tatyana Tsyrlina-Spady and Michael Lovorn, "Patriotism, history teaching, and history textbooks in Russia: What was old is new again", "Globalisation, Ideology and Politics of Education Reforms", in *Globalisation, Comparative Education and Policy Research*, GCEP, vol. 14, 2015, pp. 41-57; Alexander S Khodnev, "History teacher education in Russia", in Wolfgang Hasberg and Elisabeth Erdman (eds), *History Teacher Education. Global Interrelations*, 2 (Germany, Wochenschau-Geschichte, Jan 2015), pp. 143-157. The source of Hasberg and Erdman includes discussions on History Education in several European countries as well as in selective countries globally, including South Africa.

LATIN AMERICA				
BRAZIL	<i>At all school levels (primary and secondary levels) History is compulsory</i>	<i>Governmental Law 10.639 of 2003 defines legislated injunction to make African History compulsory in the curriculum</i>	- The History MTT eventually, more than once in the Report and based on workshop advice, suggests that South Africa should consider following the Brazil approach to compulsory history. Hence their own discussion on pp. 26-27 is no discussion but just a verbatim copied website content. - No response by the History MTT on the aforementioned copied website content is offered; - Historical contextuality and Brazil's possible relatedness to the South African former colonial scenario are not even touched on.	- The authors are not convinced that an UN website on p. 26 was the best and only source to inform on Brazil's history education.⁸⁹ The website's content was copied verbatim from pp. 26-27 of the report. The History MTT also exposes themselves to a falsification of the content on p. 27 by asserting that the following person and source provided what they actually had copied verbatim from the website: L. Dubois, 'Atlantic Freedoms: Haiti, not the US or France, was where the Assertion of Human Rights reached its defining climax in the Age of Revolution', 7 November 2016. https://aeon.co/essays

89 A more meaningful consideration for insight and reference would have been that of Maria Aparecida Bergamaschi and Juliana Schneider Medeiros, "History, memory and tradition in indigenous school education: a Kaingang school case study", *Revista Brasileira de História*, 30(60), 2010, pp. 53-73.