

‘n oorwegend chronologiese benadering in die boek gevolg, terwyl daar terselfdertyd ook bepaalde temas uit die betrokke tydperke aangespreek word. Hoewel daar ‘n gemis aan bepaalde temas is, spreek dit vanself dat die reeds lywige publikasie nie alle gebeure kan aanspreek nie.

Die 640 bladsye boek verskaf slegs agt kaarte in swart en wit met ongelukkig geen verdere visuele uitleg soos byvoorbeeld kleurillustrasies en foto’s nie. Wat wel interessant is, is die tydlyne wat verskaf word in die eerste hoofstuk, asook die geblokte informasie wat telkens in hoofstukke opduik om bepaalde terme/konsepte/persones meer beskrywend toe te lig. Die skryfstyl is gemaklik wat die boek verder toeganklik maak. Teen die einde van die boek verskyn ‘n lys van die medewerkers met gepaardgaande biografie van elke outeur, asook ‘n omvangryke register en uitgebreide bibliografie van elke hoofstuk, wat uiteraard met groot vrug gebruik sal kan word vir verdere naslaanwerk.

Hierdie omvattende geskiedenisboek in Afrikaans is ‘n welkome toevoeging en maak ‘n waardevolle bydrae tot die historiografie en literatuur oor die algemene geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika. Dit sal nuttig wees vir ‘n breë teikengroep wat skoolleerlinge en studente van geskiedenis, onderwysers, dosente, historici en die algemene publiek insluit. Ongelukkig sal die teikengroep lesers beperk wees tot diene wat Afrikaans verstaan. Om die trefkrag van die boek te verbreed en by te dra tot ‘n meer gemeenskaplike geheue, sal dit wenslik wees indien die boek ook in ander tale vertaal kan word. Daarvolgens sal dit meer toeganklik wees vir alle taalgebruikers om sodoende ‘n groter leserspubliek bloot te stel aan die meer inklusiewe benadering tot die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika wat verdere insig en debatvoering kan meebring.

*No more than a pocket history*

**(Jacana Media, Johannesburg, 2012, ISBN 978-1-4314-0379-0, R103)**

**Saul Dubow, *South Africa’s Struggle for Human Rights***

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This 10 chapter book on the struggle for human rights in South Africa is a much needed recording of this portion of our history. The writer embarks from the premise that South Africa presents a unique history of human rights from colonialism through Afrikaner nationalism to the final liberation. The second premise he embarks from is that despite the embrace of human rights by both the Afrikaner and the ANC neither of these two groups were historically huge champions of human rights.

The second to fourth chapters' deals with Dutch commercial settlement right through the British annexation of the Cape and the subsequent formation of Boer Republics up until the Anglo Boer War. These chapters focus mainly on voting rights, which was the root of citizen's complaints against the DEIC, British colonial rule and Republican era. The Uitlander question was after all one of voting rights. Besides a reference to the work of Dr John Philips little attention is given to other human rights issues such as the treatment of workers and discriminatory treatment of people of colour. Especially the brutal assault against the human rights of the Khoi and the San is largely ignored. What are also ignored are the human rights of Africans. Not only their treatment by the colonial powers but also their internal systems and its effect on human rights.

Chapters 5 and 6 deals with the formation of the ANC post the creation of Union in 1910 up to the the post Second World War adoption of the UN Charter. Dubow continuously make the point that the ANC was not necessarily the champion of the human rights struggle through the years. In fact the point is made that the ANC were believers of the segregation concept and therefore could not have embraced human rights unqualified.

The arrival of the National Party to power in 1947 was the trigger to many significant developments. The liberation movements were forced to adopt the principle of human rights. This was driven by liberal minded individuals of who most were communists. Even the adoption of the Freedom Charter was not an ANC organized event – hence the reference to the Congress of the People. Dubow makes the point that hard core ANC cadres remained sceptics of the Freedom Charter for at least a decade thereafter.

Chapters 8 and 9 deals with the internationalizing of the anti-apartheid struggle in reaction to the harsh, brutal internal repression. This forced the anti-apartheid movement to move closer to the concept of human rights as the universal currency for revolutionary forces. The assistance of the UN in this regard was important. The internal situation also forced a more clear

focus on human rights as the abuses thereof started to surface on a regular basis. It also served the role of cover for anti-apartheid forces such as the Legal Resources Centre and the similar organisations. The adaptation of the concept of human rights by the National Party negotiators during the late eighties and nineties also emerges in these chapters.

The final chapter deals with the interim and final constitution, which sees the pinnacle of the ultimate acknowledgment for Human Rights in the South African society.

The book is a pocket history and is no more that. It sums up the development of the road to the ultimate recognition of human rights without offering any new or fresh insights – a project still waiting to be done.

*Highly recommended to all*

**(Jacana Media, Johannesburg, 2012, ISBN 978-1-4314-0385-1, R 99)**

**Howard Phillips, *Plague, Pox and Pandemics***

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*Plague, Pox and Pandemics: a Jacana Pocket History of Epidemics in South Africa* by Howard Phillips examines the five main epidemics that have emerged in South Africa, tracing the years from the early eighteenth century to today's HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Phillips simplifies these five major epidemics that have shaped the lives and histories' of South Africa and each epidemic is dedicated to an individual chapter in the book. They have been chosen due to their large scale devastating effects that they had on South African communities. From the Smallpox outbreak in 1713 to 1893, which almost destroyed the Khoekhoe population; to the Bubonic and Pneumonic plague of 1901 to 1907, which arrived at ports on flea infested rats, first in Cape Town and later Durban; to the Spanish flu which affected South Africa for a short period after World War 1; to Poliomyelitus, from 1918 to 1963, "the middle-class plague" and finally to modern societies' grave medical and health problem of the HIV/ AIDS