

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*

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**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

virus, which has 'resulted in an epidemic of orphanhood and child-headed households' in South African communities.

In the pocket history Phillips brings to the fore the reality that these epidemics and diseases had on the communities within South Africa and its direct effect on the history of South Africa and in shaping South Africa. This is interwoven into the mainstream historical record, including pivotal moments such as, European Colonisation, the Mineral Revolution, The South African War, World War 1, Apartheid and post-Apartheid. The book addresses how disease has dramatically effected South Africa's history and vice versa. The epidemic and disease factor has directly affected the demographics of this country over the centuries.

Phillips acknowledges the lack of research and writing by scholars and academics that has gone into the study of plagues and epidemics, even though these diseases have had a largely noticeable effect on the history of South Africa, its people, and its conflicts. Despite the ravaging effects of the disease at the time, these epidemics have been under recorded and recognised. Herein the book provides a springboard to such a necessary and no doubt fascinating history that is yet to be written.

Chapter One of *Plague, Pox and Pandemics*, examines the Smallpox outbreak in 1713, which lasted until 1893. Smallpox's survival is addressed as a disease that was dependent on that of human movement and more specifically trade. The disease arrived mostly from Dutch colonies travelling across the Indian Ocean, with the vector being smallpox-infected clothing. This caused outbreaks in areas that had never before been introduced to Smallpox and therefore no immunity had been introduced. Large scale deaths were experienced in the Cape by the Khoekhoe who were first affronted by the 'great sickness' in records dating back to 1658. Whole communities were wiped-out as the disease favoured and thrived on close proximity and crowded areas. This epidemic was one of the first challenges and, subsequently an achievement for biomedicine in South Africa, as the discovery of vaccinations was revealed and eventually distributed in 1789 to Cape Town.

Phillips consistent focus on producing asocial history of epidemics exposes the reader to the larger non-medical related effects of disease in South Africa. Epidemics in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries allowed for the 'racialising' and blaming of new diseases on groups of people. Large scale prejudices and superstitions grew amongst communities, with the Khoekhoe, Black and Indian communities often being blamed for such outbreaks and

the racial underpinning of 'other' and 'unclean'. This can be seen for both smallpox and the plague.

Furthermore, epidemics caused a clash of culture. In areas where vaccinations were available and encouraged, Muslims among other communities were hesitant to be vaccinated due to the spiritual implication of going against divine will. These advancements in biomedicine posed a threat to societies, who were unsure of the implications of western medicine and religious obligations and cleansing associated practices of their culture. The disease factor produced conflicting solutions for religious, scientific and folklore solutions. These curious social effects of disease are examined further in *Plague, Pox and Pandemics*, and this allows for a deeper understanding of the complications and multi-layered suffering associated with sickness and scourge, as well as the direct emotional, psychological and social cost to society. On a lighter note, such epidemics and outbreaks paved the way towards modern day health care units, the establishment of a ministry of health, the provision of immunisation and medical officers through the progression of public reform.

Chapters Two to Four examine the Bubonic and Pneumonic Plague, the Spanish flu and Poliomyelitus, and continue with the underlying social theme of the socio effects on the communities on which they effected and changed. The strong racial implications of disease and those affected resulted in deeper problems and scapegoating of groups depicted as 'unclean' by colonials. The plague was often blamed on Africans "with their filthy habits, who brought the disease into the town", regardless of the knowledge that the epidemic had arrived with rats on ships and had slowly spread from these posts to inland areas such as Pietermaritzburg and Johannesburg. In some extremes cases entire areas were burnt down. An entire "coolie Location" in Johannesburg was burnt in an attempt to stop the spread of the disease to "white" areas. In addition medical examinations were forced on Africans or Indians who were travelling by rail or sea, and this treatment entrenched the 'racialised' association of disease and sickness. This 'victim blaming' took on 'racial', religious and geographical attitudes involving slave, Khoekhoe, Muslim, migrant worker, Blacks, Whites, Christians, and others as being responsible for the disease outbreaks.

The complicated relationship between epidemics and conquest, prejudice and movement is illustrated in the accounts of almost all the epidemic diseases that are mentioned in *Plague, Pox and Pandemics*. The final chapter on society's modern day pandemic, HIV/AIDS provides surprising insights

into the complexity of the epidemic, and gives the reader a great appreciation of the added perspective that a historian brings to one's epidemiological understanding of disease, illness, and racial stereotyping within societies.

The book makes for a fascinating read and provides insight not only into the diseases themselves, but the socio and macro political responses to these diseases both in a private and public sphere. One is affronted with the crude racial 'pathologising' of diseases and the association of 'clean' and 'unclean', which played out in societies at the time. Phillips undertakes to change the way the reader views the history of South Africa, and this is achieved to a large extent. However, in some instances, the book does not fully engage with a 'grassroots' history of societies affected by disease.

*Plague, Pox and Pandemics* is recommended to all scholars studying history and the social sciences, as well as the health sciences. It provides a review of epidemic disease and augments our understanding of epidemics, while deepening ones' understanding of human society and the associations that we place on one another both privately and publically.

*One history, multiple truths: From educational reproduction to transformation*

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**Johan Wassermann & Angela Bryan (editors), *From College to Faculty of Education: Memories of the Edgewood Campus of The University of Kwazulu-Natal***

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The motivation behind this publication was to capture the memories of the Edgewood Campus covering the period since its inception in 1966 as a College of Education, to its present status as university Faculty of Education of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The publication was launched as part of the year-long celebration of "100 years of academic excellence"