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QHTA Newsletter

**the newsletter of the Queensland
History Teachers' Association Inc**

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Incorporated**

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The horror of September 11 shocked the world and caused global outpourings of sympathy for the people of the USA and particularly of New York. The sense of communal grieving and anger at such extensive, senseless, cowardly violence was palpable. Support for military retaliation by the USA has understandably been widespread. In seeking explanations and solutions there have been many appeals to historical events. Many of our students having experienced the shock, grieving, anger and perhaps fear generated by events since September 11 may have sensed these appeals to History. At times such as these History classes take on an added significance. As History teachers we need to help young people to feel, to empathise, to deepen their understandings of the past and to explain events whilst distinguishing between explaining and justifying.

Past events do not justify what occurred on September 11. There was however an intriguing coincidence in *The Australian*, headlined 'US Under Attack' (Sept 12, 2001). Journalist Luke Slattery wrote an article further back in the paper about how 'Kissinger deserves to be haunted by his past'. The article referred to how the family of a former Chilean army chief murdered in a CIA-sponsored operation in 1970 were that week to launch civil action against Kissinger, in the US Federal Court. If you want your students to understand more about why the USA is hated in many parts of the world the Chilean case study, involving the overthrow and murder of Allende and his replacement by the USA backed dictator Pinochet, is a very useful starting point. Documents and student activities can be found in Chapter 4 of *Inquiry 1*, Hoepfer, et al, 1996. It is probably in your library.

As for empathy the report to UNESCO on education in the twenty-first century *Learning: The Treasure Within* (Delors, 1996) was discussed in the last *Newsletter*. This report promotes the importance of *belonging* to personal and global cohesion.

History that relates to the needs and interests of students but extends them beyond self-obsession is crucial for developing empathy and understandings relevant to the future. This is the sort of History supported by the variety of professional development workshops offered at the December **QHTA SOSE Day Program**. This program, enclosed with this newsletter, highlights the importance of History in the core curriculum. It demonstrates how successful we have been since the QHTA conferences of ten years ago and their themes of 'inquiring, integrating, transforming' and 'broadening horizons.'

Please read your program carefully and join us if you can. If you couldn't make it to the last gathering of History Teachers, at the national conference, this newsletter contains a brief report and a summary of some workshops.

History Teachers' Association of Australia
Conference Report
Canberra 2-5 October 2001
Ian Gray

General comments

Due to airline issues, at around 150 people, attendance was lower than normal. There were more attendees from the ACT, WA, SA and Queensland than from Victoria and NSW. In Victoria History is a compulsory strand of SOSE in Years 7-10. In NSW 100 hours per year must be devoted to History. It was possible that many attendees, especially from those two States may not have approved of the way History is positioned within SOSE in the Queensland curriculum. In fact Victorian and NSW History teachers were very supportive of developments occurring in Queensland. Some NSW teachers acknowledged that despite or because of content dominated compulsory History courses in NSW the number of students studying History in Years 11 and 12 was declining.

I presented a workshop entitled *How Queensland SOSE enriches History* and it was very well received from participants who represented all States. If anyone would like one I have a copy of the main points I made at the workshop. Email me at ian.gray@qscq.qld.edu.au The degree of support being provided by QSCC for Queensland teachers was envied by teachers in other States, especially NSW and Victoria. I pointed out that the Lions won too.

In the ACT schools are very free to design their own courses based on frameworks that are far broader than QSCC syllabuses. Many schools choose not to make SOSE compulsory after Year 8. The ACT is however a wonderful cultural, SOSEy place to visit and I can definitely recommend the new national museum, the Australian War Memorial, the National Archives, (*not boring!*) and old Parliament House (where re-enactments occur – let your mind boggle).

Throughout the conference the federation theme was addressed with gusto but not a lot of socially critical perspectives were heard. Younger teachers attended from several parts of Queensland, at their own expense. I discussed with them why more younger teachers did not attend and expense was mentioned several times. In the past schools had access to PD funds.

Sessions attended:

- *Federation and Political Change in Australia*, Dr Michael McKernan's lecture was devoted to arguing traditionally, that WW1 was the most important event of the federation era that shaped political change. Some interesting points he made were that:
 - the first Australian passport was issued in 1915
 - WA may have seceded in the 1920s and '30s had it not been for the impact of WW1
 - After federation and WW1 the most significant change in Australian political history was the 1951 referendum opposing the banning of the Communist Party and the 1967 referendum (well I thought this year's AFL Grand Final fairly significant)

- Dr Jeff Brownrigg's lecture on *The People's Voice* included a welcome break from listening only to the spoken word. We sang 'Unity is Strength' a song from a

federation meeting of 1899. Dr Brownrigg outlined the people's voice project: www.peoplesvoice.gov.au which will be the last celebratory event of this centenary year. It provides historical evidence that relates to the eyes and ears – photographs, songs, film clips of... 'ordinary Australians'... Some interesting points he made:

- 1880 there were 2.3 million Australians and about 700,000 pianos
 - Catherine Spence is a well-known SA advocate for women's rights but Mary Lee is celebrated in song lyrics from 1890s and Mary advocated for votes for all women, including Aboriginal women.
 - At the local level more women than men were involved in the 1880s to 1890s federation campaigns.
- *Telling the Story of Indigenous Peoples in Australia* was a workshop presented by David Arnold and Trish Connors (national museum). We got to see the travelling trunk from the War memorial too and explored the role of Aboriginal Australians in Australian international wars. Teaching ideas:
 - What's in the box?... (eg if it contains artefacts about Aboriginal Australians in Australian international wars what might it contain??) Encourage hypotheses and slowly reveal contents.
 - *Federation and a Republic, one hundred years on* was a lecture by Professor Lyndall Ryan. I noted it had no visual or sound effects support. It did explore the nature of Australian republicanism, and eventually stressed that republicanism needs to be associated with wider social changes and not just administrative political changes if it is to be widely accepted. This was the case in 1890s – as Professor Ryan acknowledged in reply to a question from a Queenslander (not me !) She emphasised that republicanism in the 1890s was anti-monarchical, nationalist and full of xenophobic racism – and now, to have any significance, it needs to project how it will address environmental issues and the growing gap between rich and poor. Interesting points:
 - Inglis Clark did not support the final constitution because he thought it would be administratively too costly
 - Louisa Lawson, mother of Henry, advocated for a republic mainly on grounds of how it would improve social relations eg votes for all including Aborigines, equal pay between men and women so that they could share child rearing, compulsory education and an end to domestic violence – she thought the royals provided very poor role models for families (they're arranged for a start !!)
 - Feminists in 1990s advocated in constitutional conventions for a less adversarial parliament and more open public debates
 - *Gallipoli Revisited* was a fascinating lecture by Dr Richard Reid, an historian with the Department of Veterans Affairs. He mentioned that there are now over 15 000 Australians who turn up for the dawn service on Anzac Day at Gallipoli, compared to only dozens 20 years ago. Dr Reid:
 - encouraged teachers to adopt a local history approach and involve students with questions such as: 'Who was the first Gallipoli death in my local area and how was this written about, on memorials, newspapers etc
 - displayed sections of the website, www.anzacsite.gov.au where there is an excellent example of a multidimensional time-line. A unique and exciting feature of this site is that as well as captioned information about 'important events' associated with events at Gallipoli in 1915 there is a section called 'History,' where the historian who wrote the information reveals how it was written and some of the problems encountered.

- *Reconciliation and History* – Professor Henry Reynolds lamented that although the reconciliation process from 1991 to 2001 has caused great change in local communities across Australia and the size of the reconciliation marches was unprecedented, overall:
 - A Treaty has not occurred
 - No new clear definitions about the place of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people in our Constitution or legal system have emerged
 - Revisions of white Australian history have not greatly advanced and remain as contested as ever.

There have been some advances. History has been almost continuously on the front pages since the Mabo/Wik decisions of 1992, and judges have called Aboriginal history an 'un-utterable shame' and the old romanticising of the frontier past has been replaced by a profound retelling of History – that acknowledges how removing children from their families was illegal even under British law.

The *Bringing them home report* stressed the role of the State in systematically forgetting that Aborigines ever occupied this land yet a range of people have criticised what they term this 'black-armband' view of Australian history. These people have included PP McGuinness, Keith Windshuttle, Bill Hayden and Peter Hanson (the former Minister of Aboriginal Affairs). McGuinness called black-armband history 'a ritual abasement of the white community' and argued that the violence did not happen, was atypical or accidental.

For such writers History is seen as a distraction from the real job of getting on with the future. It is practical reconciliation that is needed says John Howard and rejects the idea that reconciliation is reconciliation with the past. The contradiction is that the Howard government has not hesitated to spend millions of dollars promoting Federation commemorative events and Anzac Day. The history promoted in these contexts however is one where Aborigines are ignored and domestic violence in the white community is not to be associated in any way with the Anzac legend. The message is that we can deal with the past but you can't.

In fact black-armband historians have existed since at least the 1820s. The current crop of them do not need to impose their views on the past because those views have always been there. Read Henry's *The Whispering in our Hearts* and note that Malcolm Fraser has said that we must acknowledge how partisan was the previous History taught in Australia, we must face the truth of the past and we must say sorry.

Dispossession was a global phenomenon but what was distinctive in Australia was the failure to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people at all.

In future the Australian War Memorial must acknowledge the invasions following 1788 and the wars fought to defend this land.

I was inspired and made a note: 'Create some SOSE modules that culminate in students writing letters advocating for local war memorials to include the Aborigines who were long ago written out of History.'

- *The National History Project* emerged from the national inquiry into History teaching that occurred last year. It involves numerous components and is encouraging a range of related developments eg a national centre for History Education established at Monash University, the production of different PD modules by State-based teams (Qld team is lead by Dr Brian Hoeppe), the formation of a new national body bringing together History teachers, historians and teacher educators, (Historical Educators Network Of Australia - HENA), resources being produced by Curriculum Corporation, a course leading to a Grad

Dip qualification from a combined Melbourne/Monash team, a Handbook for History Teachers that will describe excellent pedagogy and lots more.

Generally the workshop explored ways the different History teacher communities can cooperate. Teachers wanted the academics to emphasise process at least as much as content in their proposed courses. In the context of these discussions the need for balance between content and process, as in the Queensland SOSE core learning outcomes, was mentioned, by a South Australian. The socially critical nature of Queensland syllabus learning outcomes was also commented upon favourably by a number of teachers. It was an excellent conference.

Care to discuss anything you have just read?? Join the QHTA

Email discussion list.

A discussion list means you can join a discussion or ask a question of any QHTA member, including the Executive, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and usually receive a reply in less than 24 hours. It also means that those of us who have subscribed to this computer-based discussion list will be able to read all correspondence and chip in our two bob's worth (to use a very old expression). If you have used other lists and found them a little busy with tech-talk, join us and talk History. We hope this is a particularly useful service for our non-Brisbane members. Please use it.

All you need is e-mail. Send an email to:

lyris@rite.ed.qut.edu.au

with the words

subscribe qhta end

in the message space. Leave the subject line blank.

After that all will be revealed. If you have any problems give us a call on 07 3378 5425

History in the USA and Canada

The July 2001 edition of *Independent Education* - the national magazine of the independent sector Australian teaching unions carried an interesting and relevant article by Mariles Rettig, President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Mariles made these points:

- 'In the US, in an effort to maximise student performance on high stakes tests, curriculum and teaching practice is increasingly geared almost exclusively to test preparation.'
- In the UK, USA and Canada there have been official moves away from supporting the Humanities. 'In Canada this debate has been most pronounced at the post-secondary level. In Ontario, Premier Mike Harris has stated categorically that students should not pursue studies in Geography or Sociology at the university level to ensure they pursue studies that will benefit society. In other states there are proposals to gear post-secondary education away from the Arts and the Humanities.' Mariles objects that 'the definition of education is not to prepare a student for a job... it speaks to the development of the mind, the heart and the spirit... and... education is that critical link between the generations' (Can I hear some cheering? As History teachers we are certainly aware of this.! Fingers crossed we're not following too many USA trends.)
- Compounding these trends is the looming world shortage of teachers and already some places are making up the shortfall with unqualified teachers. 'Los Angeles is the worst case where three out of every four teachers are unqualified.' (Let's hope our universities keep up the supply of History specialists who can not only teach Years 11-12 History

classes but also maximise the benefits of the History that lives in the core learning outcomes of Years 1 to 10 SOSE.)

Still looking for a Years 8 to 10 SOSE/History Work Program?

- A program with History topics mapped against the Queensland Studies of Society and Environment core learning outcomes was published in *The History Teacher* in February 2000. It can be found electronically inside the 2000 edition of *The Australian History Teacher*, the journal of the History Teachers' Association of Australia (HTAA.)
- ➔ Go to the LINKS section of the QHTA website, select the first link, to AFSSSE, then Member Associations, then History Teachers' Association of Australia. Scroll down until you see *The Australian History Teacher*.
 - ➔ *The Queensland School Curriculum Council* website also has a course of study in History available. www.qscc.qld.edu.au

Web stuff

Tourism, Culture and Change is a Tourism Queensland SOSE module. It is available at: <http://www.tq.com.au/education> The only section of the site that is protected by a password is the answers section in the teachers' area and the password is tcc-ans

The Adelaide Declaration *can be used to justify why SOSE and the other seven key learning areas are crucial for all students* (<http://www.curriculum.edu.au/mceetya/nationalgoals/natgoals.htm1999>).

Materials for teaching SOSE/History can be found through Access Education, a section of Education Queensland. See the Curriculum Exchange at: http://education.qld.gov.au/tal/curriculum_exchange/teachers/sose/

A technical device for creating integrated planning using Queensland SOSE outcomes
<http://www.trip/html/band4.htm>

World links for development - don't be put off by the words world bank in the url. This site provides students with easy access to students from around the world for a range of projects and the development of mutual understanding, and don't we need that at the moment.
<http://www.worldbank.org/worldlinks/english/index.html>

SEE YOU AT QHTA SOSE DAY