**Minutes of Meeting March 25 with Mr Gove’s Assistant, Pam Raven, This meeting, organised by BASA, was held at Queen Mary College, where we were offered free space.  Many thanks!**

**Speakers**

Hakim Adi: Introduction – what is BASA, why it was formed, lack of taught courses/research  
*Martin Spafford*, speaking as a BASA and SHP member, secondary school teacher:  problems with the curriculum, re missing histories of women, the working classes and peoples of African and Asian descent/origins  
*Ilona Aronovsky*:  problems and suggestions for primary school curricula

*Katherine Edwards*:  history teacher who launched the ePetition  
*Katharine Burn*, Institute of Education: the perspective of teacher trainers  
*Marika Sherwood*: an outline of the history of people of African origins/descent in the UK

*Nick Draper*:  'Understanding the role of slavery in helping form modern Britain'

*Sharon Yemoh* is speaking as a Secondary teacher of History

**Minutes**

**Hakim Adi** outlined the history of BASA and its work re the history curriculum and teacher training.

**Pam Raven**: process for consultation closes in April; There is a questionnaire on line. All responses will be considered; ‘we are listening’.

**Martin Spafford**, secondary school teacher, BASA and SHP member, was the main speaker. He praised some recent TV programs which actually included the presence/history of ‘Black’ peoples in Britain. Aims expressed by Gove are OK, it is the programs that are totally unsatisfactory.  We have to look at the whole population – all social classes, women, peoples of different ethnicities. One hour per week for history in primary schools is wholly insufficient; and that the curriculum has to stop in 1688 means the family histories of many pupils is unacknowledged / irrelevant. Unbelievable that China is totally absent from the curriculum when it has become a major power.  A full version of Martin’s presentation will soon be available on the BASA website, prior to despatch to the Dept. of Education.

**Ilona Aronovsky**, retired teacher, education consultant: one of many omissions in the curriculum is racism, and its history. World history is marginalised. Primary teachers have little knowledge of ancient histories except for Egypt. Please see <http://www.harappa.com/teach/news.html> and <http://www.harappa.com/teach/InclusivePrimaryHistory.pdf>

**Katherine  Edwards** secondary school teacher, originator of the ePetition:: The curriculum must be politically neutral. Mr Gove’s is very biased, glorifying the military and the upper classes. This would alienate some children and certainly instil feelings of superiority in White children. For more info <http://historynotpropaganda.weebly.com/events.html>; for petition, <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/46338>

**Katharine Burn**, Institute of Education: to understand the present you must understand the past. She reported on the findings of a recent survey on teachers’ attitudes and responses to the suggested curriculum.  The results of this survey will soon be made available by the HA.

**Nick Draper**, historian of the Slave Compensation records: the ‘industrial revolution’ is not even in the curriculum. It was a totally transformative event, moving the population from agrarian to industrial work. Why did it only happen in the UK? The importance of transatlantic slavery; the commercialisation of agriculture; institutional changes, eg re banking; the development of various industries, eg cotton (dependent on slaves). The  full history of the enslavement of Africans must be incorporated in the history of Britain.

**Marika Sherwood**, historian:  in KS1 the personal/family histories of the pupils can serve as an introduction to migrations within the UK, to emigration and immigration. Too many misinterpretations in order to glorify Britain: eg slavery was not abolished in the whole British Empire in 1838; research indicates it was there almost a hundred years later. There are almost no  undergraduate courses in this history, and no post-grad courses, so very little research; difficult to get funding for research.

**Sharon Yemoh**, history teacher: while a pupil in Primary school, she had felt she was ‘Other’. In Secondary, learning about an African Queen gave her confidence, strength. Such inclusions have a powerful impact. New curriculum is dehumanising; the history of Africa does not begin in the 21st century. Everyone should see everyone else in the curriculum.

**Contributions from the floor:**

Descendants of British West Indians’ don’t know more of their history than the Windrush. ‘Black ‘ history is part of British history.

History is dumbed down in the curriculum and humanities faded out. Black people now have to research their own histories and teach their children.

Everyone needs a broader understanding.

It used to be ‘cool’ to be Jamaican but NOT African. Slowly changing.

Everyone has a place in history. Gove just wants to take a tiny piece – so where am I?

History has to inspire as well as inform. My children complain that all they learn is about war and more wars; by the end of secondary have  lost all desire to learn.

We must understand racism and its history.

Is the aim of this history just how Britain influenced the world? Did the world influence Britain?

Everyone should learn about their own culture and ‘race’.

Local history projects unearth some of the histories of ‘Black’ peoples; we need an accurate account of the past. How can such research findings be introduced into schools?

Schools in some parts of London attempt to teach a comprehensive history, and struggle with ignorance.  In other areas divisions just grow.

Social class and women’s histories are excluded by Mr Gove. Pupils are not permitted to ask why XXX happened.

The curriculum does not help people to live together or recognise their full identity.

Teachers need access to information/materials in order for their teaching to be more flexible/inclusive.