

# Oral History Journal of South Africa

A JOURNAL OF THE ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

MAY 2014 • VOL 2 • NO 2 •  
ISSN 2309-5792

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## EDITORIAL

### ORAL HISTORY JOURNAL OF SOUTH AFRICA VOLUME 2 NR 2, 2014

What is the field of oral history? What do oral historians research and how do they do that academically? The common objects of their research are politics, religious behaviour, trauma, remembering, and the training of developing oral historians. They research these topics by means of the stories of people.

This issue of the Oral History Journal of South Africa contains articles that deal with a majority of the themes mentioned above, and entertain a variety of oral history methods.

Cecyl Esau is a senior researcher at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation that is situated in Cape Town, South Africa. As the project leader of their Schools' Oral History Project he tells the story of how educators and learners have been trained from 2004 to 2010 in producing inclusive histories through oral history methods. Sekibakiba Lekgoathi, relates the history of Radio Ndebele, which from 1983 to 1994 grew from a radio station established by the apartheid government to promote ethnicity into an instrument for establishing Ndebele as an official and written language.

Joshua Chakawa and VZ Nyawo-Shava invited interviews into their research on the reasons why both the Zimbabwe Peoples' Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) as well as Umkhonto Wesizwe (MK) were not able to successfully engage in guerrilla warfare against the Rhodesian and the South African apartheid regimes. The answer lies in them operating from Zambia from where the natural features of the territory were not conducive to this kind of war.

The next two articles address religious realities, one in Zambia and the other in Mozambique, using interviews on two prominent figures as intertexts. Austin Cheyeka describes the case of a clergyman, Pastor Nevers Mumba, getting involved in party politics in Zambia. Fernando Caldeira da Silva discusses Friar Amarel Bernardo Amarel from Mozambique and his translation of the Bible into Gitonga.

The following two articles are from South Africans who address the very difficult question in South Africa at the moment, that is, when to forget and how to remember. Robert Vosloo explores the art of forgetting, and Christina Landman retrieves memories from South Africans on how free they are after twenty years of democracy. Additional to talking about remembering and forgetting, is Dan Whitman's stories of people remembering how they outsmarted apartheid.

Finally comes a story from outside Africa. Michal Louc relates the process through which Antonín Mestecky recovers the story of imprisonment during the Czechoslovak communist dictatorship.

## EDITORIAL

This issue of the *Oral History Journal of South Africa*, then, contains stories of resilience and the survival of trauma, of projects that not only retrieved but fed the voices of resistance and a new tomorrow, and of the controversies that often surround religious leaders and new religious movements. It tells the stories of wars and of freedom. It responds to methods of remembering and forgetting.

Oral history as an academic discipline is growing fast. Congratulations to all who, through this peer-reviewed journal, became part of this newly founded academic discipline.

This is the OHJSA's second year of publication. It is going from strength to strength and the two issues of 2015 are to be looked forward to. The submission dates are 15 January 2015 for the first issue, and 15 July 2015 for the second.

Kind regards

Christina Landman  
Editor: Oral History Journal of South Africa

# LESSONS FROM THE INSTITUTE FOR JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION'S SCHOOLS' ORAL HISTORY PROJECT, 2004–2010

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## ABSTRACT

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) works in post-conflict societies guided by its vision to establish fair, democratic and inclusive societies on the African continent. It seeks to do so through four programmes; one of which is 'Building an Inclusive Society' where the Schools' Oral History Project (SOHP) is located.

In pursuit of the above a variety of processes are explored within formal educational curricula as well as community-wide appreciation of multiple-perspectives as well as multiple-voices that will contribute democratization of local historical consciousness and documentation.

Educators and learners are assisted to explore the notions about the construction and production of history; the methodological approaches to the oral history process, and the various ways in which the oral history research could be presented.

The IJR's oral history project has conducted projects in five provinces.

A number of provisional lessons:

- Older and younger project members from diverse communities are eager to acquire new skills and knowledge in understanding and making contributions to their communities;
- project participants enjoyed to engage the Other in safe spaces;
- local government structures seemed interested to participate but in many instances were overwhelmed by their core business of service delivery;
- one of the ways to stimulate the interest in and development of local history could be to start platforms where aspects of local history could be explored across historical divides.

## INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation works in post-conflict societies guided by its vision to establish fair, democratic and inclusive societies on the African continent (Institute for Justice and Reconciliation 2014). It seeks to do so through four programmes<sup>1</sup>

one of which is 'Building an Inclusive Society' (BIS) where the Schools' Oral History Project (SOHP)<sup>2</sup> is located.

This paper will outline the genesis of the SOHP at IJR, its implementation in six of our provinces<sup>3</sup>, explore some of the challenges regarding implementation and conclude with some of the preliminary lessons learnt.

## THE EVOLUTION OF SCHOOLS' ORAL HISTORY PROJECT AT IJR

Our past as South Africans, like the past of any country and people subjected to oppression and exploitation, contains many untold experiences about people, places and events that brought us to the dawn of the democratic era. However, a master narrative about the defeat of the apartheid state is already taking root that denies our multi-faceted and multi-layered past. Hard-won democratic spaces for contrary voices and views need to be treasured.

The broadcasting of Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) proceedings in 1996 and subsequent weekly episodes by Max du Preez on SABC television presented South Africans with vivid portrayals of some gross human rights abuses during apartheid. For many family members, friends and comrades it was the first time that they could speak out about the pain, suffering and hurt of loved ones. Despite its many shortcomings the TRC process did try to establish what happened under the system of apartheid from 1960–1993 (Villa-Vicencio & Verwoerd 2000; Ross 2003; Posel & Simpson 2002).

However laudable the work initiated by the TRC process, much more is required to understand how apartheid and colonialism impacted on South Africans. Colonialism and apartheid as oppressive and exploitative systems stripped the majority of South Africans from being citizens in the land of their birth. Through the stories told at the TRC forums the master narratives of apartheid rule were challenged publicly. Unspoken stories about the violence of apartheid meted out against individuals and groups were given a wider audience.

Many more stories, however, need to be told. At one level the airing of the stories about apartheid brutality has had a negative impact on certain sections of South African society. Consequently, the TRC proceedings were viewed as suspect and partisan against the former ruling group. Some commentators and even historians charged that the TRC process was flawed because it did not highlight in an even-handed manner the atrocities perpetrated by the liberation forces (Verbuyst 2013).

The multiple lines of political, economic and social division of South African society have persisted to the present. However, progress is being made to counter this on a variety of fronts. Important mile-stones are the adoption of the Interim Constitution in 1993 and the 1996 Constitution with its Bill of Rights; the opening of the radio airwaves with burgeoning talk shows; the flowering of cultural expression; and public debate.

In 2004 the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) initiated the SOHP to

explore the use of oral history as a tool for reconciliation. A number of resource guides were produced for teachers based on project experiences in the Western and Northern Cape provinces which were compiled as SOHP's first series, *Making apartheid history – my contribution*.<sup>4</sup>

One of the unintended consequences of the TRC process has been that some South Africans were seen either as having been a 'perpetrator' or as a 'victim', coinciding more or less with the white and black fault-line in South African society. The fledging South African democracy requires inclusive definitions of nation-building rather than the perpetuation of the divisive categories reminiscent of apartheid classification. Moreover, the undoing of apartheid consciousness necessitates deliberate strategies that will contribute to new ways of interaction and collaboration among South Africans (IJR 2009:65).

Post-conflict societies<sup>5</sup> face many challenges and one of these is to develop an understanding of what happened in the past and to use different understandings of the past to forge a shared future based on fair, democratic and inclusive principles. A raft of approaches, processes and tools are required to undertake such a project of national reconstruction and development.

In South Africa the TRC hearings provided a view, albeit a partial one, of our immediate past since 1960. It set in motion a process for South Africans to revisit the past. Needless to say, there has not been universal agreement that uncovering South Africa's apartheid past could assist us in building a different kind of society. Some hold the view that the past has been dealt with by the TRC and South Africans should leave it at that and move swiftly to build the New South Africa.

Societal conflict stems partly from unequal access to resources, survival of people and discriminatory practices. Parties to past conflict are sometimes forced by internal and external forces and conditions to settle. As part of such a settlement parties are afforded a range of choices of how to proceed to reconstitute or reconfigure relationships to transcend the divisions of the past. One of those choices is societal reconciliation.

Reconciliation can be defined as a process involving parties of past conflict dealing with the issues that gave rise to conflict, and getting a comprehensive understanding of the nature and extent thereof, with the intention of working towards improved understanding and mitigating future occurrence of previous negative conditions (Eisikovits 2010).

Apartheid allowed limited ways for fellow South Africans to get to know one another as South Africans of equal worth and status. Rather, it decreed that citizens engage and experience the Other through racially defined roles premised on inequality. Hence, integral to the reconciliation process is the 'rehabilitation' of the Other as a fellow human being capable of being an equal 'subject' of history.

Much of the discussions that followed in the wake of the TRC were conducted in the mass media dealing with issues of 'reconciliation' and the 'past' on a national level. Very few initiatives were undertaken to explore issues of reconciliation at a local

town level. One explanation for this could be that engaging in matters of reconciliation at a local level brings about discomfort. Face-to-face engagement at local level was eschewed and talking to the Other was left to political leaders at provincial and national levels, experts or academics and newspaper columnists.

## Goals and Objectives of IJR's SOHP

Building on the story-telling work done in Cradock and elsewhere by the IJR<sup>6</sup> the Schools' Oral History Project (SOHP) was initiated in 2004. The objectives of SOHP have been to generate new teaching material for educators in teaching the new post-apartheid school curriculum; to explore the use of oral history methodology as a tool to contribute to reconciliation in our country; bring learners from different cultural and language backgrounds together to explore the past; promote inter-generational dialogue; and, produce new historical knowledge about people, places and events.

Many experiences of formerly marginalized groups, communities and individuals have not been recorded. Moreover, in many instances, in many historical texts, they appear as mere objects of history. One of the challenges was to document the experiences of these kinds of groups and communities in a way which validates and honours their experiences, and at the same time expose young persons to learn lessons from the older generations.

Initially the oral history methodology was merely used as a tool for recovery and uncovering the lived experiences of people under apartheid. But a clearer focus was developed when the IJR was required to adopt the logic model to develop IJR's integrated monitoring and evaluation system. The SOHP directly contributes to attain Medium Term Objectives (MTO) three and five.<sup>7</sup>

## OVERVIEW OF ORAL HISTORY IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES IN SEVEN ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS

### The first oral history project

The first project tackled by SOHP dealt with the resistance to pass laws in the Western Cape and to document some of the experiences of ordinary citizens.<sup>8</sup> We decided to pilot our approach at a district level. A partnership with the Provincial Education Department was initiated. The subject advisor for history was the driver of the project at district level and a project team at IJR.

The target learner group was grade 11. The reasons for this, the history curriculum for grades 11 and 12 includes the period 1948–1976 (Apartheid), and also the relative fewer demands on the time of grade 11 learners, e.g. preparation for grade 12 examinations.

Fifty grade 11 learners were selected from five culturally diverse schools. One of the reasons for this was to create an opportunity for learners to work jointly to discover what the recent past was like and to recover some of the hidden histories. Working



together across historic divides contributes to a more nuanced understanding of the past and an appreciation for one another.

The following schools were selected, our base school in Langa, Ikamvaletu High School, Pinelands High School, Athlone High School, Jan van Riebeeck High School, and Rylands High Schools. The selected schools were quite varied in terms of school organization, resource endowments and discipline.

After the selection of the schools in consultation by the subject advisor for history, meetings with the school managers and history educators of the selected schools were held to explain the project and negotiate participation. This was followed by briefing sessions of all grade 11 learners at each school. This ensured that all the learners could hear first-hand about the project and questions and concerns could be addressed. The project participants were selected by a combination of self-selection and selection by the history educator.

There were a number of guidelines for the learners<sup>9</sup> as well as for the educators.<sup>10</sup>

At the end of the project cycle it was clear that the schools benefited from the fact that the project work formed part of the new history curriculum; the lesson plans were developed by the subject advisor for history; and, the participation of some members of Black Sash as interviewees were an added bonus. On the other hand, it was realized that adequate contact time for project learners would have enhanced team-work; that learners found the transcription process tough; and finally, the involvement of the language educators with the development of the stories written by the learners would have enhanced the quality of their written pieces.

## The second oral history project

The second project was also implemented in the Western Cape and dealt with the forced removals in terms of the Group Areas Act from Constantia to the Cape Flats.<sup>11</sup> Constantia was selected because it is lesser known than the forced removals from District Six and other places.

Five schools in the Metropole South Educational District were selected, that is, Fairmount Secondary School, Grassy Park, being the base school, Fish Hoek Senior High School, Fish Hoek; Lentegeur Senior Secondary School, Mitchell's Plain; I. D. Mkize High School, Gugulethu; and Sinthemba Senior Secondary School, Phillipi. A large number of the former residents of Constantia settled in the greater Grassy Park.

In January 2005 I accompanied the subject advisor, Mr Spencer Janari, to the participating schools to discuss the project with the school managers and history teachers for grade 11 at the selected schools. During February, I visited participating schools and addressed all the grade 11 history classes at the respective schools. About 400 learners attended these briefings. The project was outlined: how it would fit in with the history curriculum and the selection criteria and expectations of project members. The selection to participate in the project was a combination of self-selection on the part of the learners and guidance of the teachers. Fifty-four learners were selected from the

participating schools. On completion of the project each learner received a honorarium and certificate attesting to their participation. The project members were trained in oral history techniques and methodology during the March school holidays at Fairmount Senior Secondary School.

A reference group, consisting of the subject advisor for history and the grade 11 history teachers from the participating schools and IJR met twice. At the first meeting the content of the lesson plans to be taught during the second school term were developed. At the second reference group meeting the text-writer for the Resource Guide presented a draft outline which was discussed and approved.

The project was fortunate to engage Christopher Petersen, a key member of the Constantia Land Claims committee. He organised about twenty former residents from Constantia to be interviewed by the learners. He also acted as a guide when the group visited the various sites in Constantia as part of the training. Former residents of Constantia were interviewed by the learners at Fairmount Senior Secondary School. The interviews were transcribed and the learners wrote profiles of those interviewed.

For many of the participants their involvement in the project has been a profound emotional, and in some instances, life changing experience. The feedback that has been received from learners suggests that the project has gone beyond a mere historical overview, toward a greater understanding of injustice and the very harsh human impact that apartheid has had on ordinary individuals. Interviewing its victims has made the injustice of the past real in the present to many of these learners. Qaasim (17) writes that ‘after the project I did further research and found out that my great grandfather used to live in Constantia and that I didn’t even know that. Some people say that it was apartheid years and that we should look forward and forget about it. But how can we forget about something like that?’(in Esau 2005: 9).

Some tentative lessons drawn from this project on forced removals are:

- experiential approaches to teaching history inculcate a profound sense of understanding the past and appreciating it;
- learners enjoy mixing with their peers from different communities; the learners enjoyed acquiring new skills, documentation and interviewing skills, and applying those in concrete situations;
- many learners were prepared to go the extra mile once they had done their first round of interviews; and
- the oral history process creates new platforms for young people to engage with older persons and vice versa.

### The third oral history project<sup>12</sup>

The third project took us to two locations in the western half of the Northern Cape

Province, Namaqualand and Siyanda districts.<sup>13</sup> The established implementation project cycle developed during the first two projects was relied on in this project. However, a number of innovations were introduced. Firstly writing workshops were introduced to assist learners once they have conducted their interviews. Once the folktales were written by the learners, the local office of the provincial department of Arts and Culture recruited a number of community artists. They attended a week-long session with an art teacher to interpret those stories visually. Those visual interpretations were used in the resource guide that was produced. In addition, the stories were recorded in a studio in Cape Town by some of the story tellers and learners in a number of languages<sup>14</sup> on compact disk.<sup>15</sup> Three outputs were produced, that is, the resource guide for educators, an anthology of folk-tales and an audio compact.

The *Stories op die Wind* CD, together with the multilingual anthology and resource guide is an outcome of a developmental process involving research, storytelling and writing skills undertaken by over 100 learners, community artists and community workers in the Siyanda and Namaqualand districts in 2006.

Through intergenerational dialogues with the elders in their communities, the participants researched and later conducted interviews which culminated in a collection of over forty spoken folktales. Katriena Esau, fondly referred to as Ouma Geelmeid, a ǀKhomani San elder aptly captures the mood of the elders:

*Dié stories het ek nie in Afrikaans gehoor nie. My ouers het dit aan my vertel in N/u daarom ken ek nou nog die taal. Maar deesdae praat die ouers en die kinders nie die taal nie. Ons stories word ook nie oorvertel nie. Nou, nou hier is ons geleentheid...voor die kuns uitsterwe.*<sup>16</sup>

With the help of trained mentors and a professional editor, Marlene Winberg, the participants were assisted in developing the recorded spoken folktales into written stories. Tremendous effort was taken to promote multilingualism in the context of marginalized indigenous languages. With the help of Nadisa (Nama Development Institute of South Africa) the entire collection was translated into Nama. N/u, the language of the ǀKhomani San is linguistically speaking underdeveloped in written form. As a result, the project could not translate full stories into N/u. The project relied heavily on the local N/u speakers and SASI (South African San Institute) to assist in the translation of key words in N/u in each story. One of the biggest challenges faced by local N/u speakers and language practitioners was translating certain modern words from Afrikaans into N/u. In some cases the N/u speakers borrowed words from the Nama language.<sup>17</sup>

Each folktale contains an introduction of the folktale which help to contextualize it; is accompanied by short biographies of the writers and storytellers; is accompanied by a community-based artist expression of the folktale; contains discussion points to assist artists in expressing storytelling in various art genres; can be printed in Nama and Afrikaans. At least five of the folktales can be printed in English; contains an audio

glossary containing highlighted key words which can be heard in Afrikaans, Nama and N/u; and a glossary of words and terms indigenous to the Northern Cape

The young project participants indicated that the stories resonated well with them. Not only did the stories contribute to a better understanding and appreciation of past lives, indigenous knowledge and practices but also a rediscovery of a rich oral tradition. Furthermore, the older storytellers have risen in the estimation of the younger generation giving rise to increased respect. In addition, the storytellers have discovered an additional sense of self-worth and recognition from young people.

### The fourth oral history project

The fourth project explored the bridging of the apartheid divide in two Western Cape communities, Paarl and Hout Bay.

Emerging from an apartheid past that was characterised by deliberate separation of residential and educational spaces for diverse communities, the establishing of a democratic and non-discriminatory state requires the creation of a multitude of safe space for cross cultural interaction and collaboration aimed at forging democratic attitudes, mutual appreciation and opportunities for the acquisition of intellectual tools to contribute to a democratic society.

The construction of a non discriminatory South African society is a slow and arduous process. There is still the deep-seated perception of ‘us’ and ‘them’ that conform by and large to the apartheid categories employed to promote separate racial identities. One of the challenges of establishing a democratic and non-discriminatory society is to deal collectively with the legacy of colonialism and apartheid in ways that are liberating for all while providing a platform for critical engagement about the mechanisms and modalities of building inclusive communities.

Geographical separation has been a signal feature of apartheid that has physically reinforced and fed upon the promotion of racial group identities. With the scrapping of the Group Areas Act in the latter half of the 1980s and the introduction of formerly Model C schools, deracialisation was initiated. However, these processes were based on income levels without challenging and altering the basis of apartheid discrimination. The net effect of this has been that individuals with middle and upper income from formerly excluded groups moved into formerly white residential group areas and formerly Model C schools. Needless to say that the vast majority of South Africans fall into lower income brackets and therefore remain in the formerly apartheid designated group areas and racially segregated schools.

Hout Bay had been selected on account of longstanding and historic tensions between diverse communities. Hout Bay has in recent times been the site of bitter and hard fought battles around land and housing, pitting resource rich against resource poor communities. This resulted in a brokered agreement that provides a basis for consensus access to land and residential development. Paarl witnessed the uprising in 1960 of Poqo, the military wing of the PAC and communities were scarred by the implementation of

the Group Areas Act. Mbekweni, the Black African residential area is situated more than five kilometers from the Paarl business hub.

The participation was secured from the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), participating schools,<sup>18</sup> learners, identified communities and collaborating organisations.<sup>19</sup> The WCED had the following responsibilities: ensure the project fits with curriculum requirements, participate in project implementation, provide access to educational institutions, develop lesson plans and identify appropriate resources for project implementation.

The principal partner organisations were the district WCED Education Management District Centre (EMDC) offices. In addition, a number of role-players were identified that are contributing to social cohesion. Consultations with EMDC (South) and Overberg/Boland EMDC with regard to project feasibility and to identify potential schools to participate in the project took place. Included in these consultations was an exploration to determine the respective contributions to be made to the project, moreover, to secure drivers for the project from the EMDC (South) as well as Overberg/Boland EMDC who would co-manage these projects. A project reference team was constituted from the EMDC (South) and Overberg/Boland EMDC drivers, educators from the participating schools, CVET, and IJR.

The selection of project participants was facilitated by the relevant educator in accordance with the project criteria, self selection as well as drawing on the knowledge and experience of the educator.<sup>20</sup>

For the first time in 2008 grade 12 learners from Hout Bay High School participated in the project. These learners reside mainly in two densely populated areas in Hout Bay, that is, Imizamo Yethu (mainly Black African residents) and Hangberg (mainly Coloured residents). The curriculum advisor for history, Ms Bridget Tobin strongly motivated the inclusion of the entire class in the project on the basis that their project work would constitute their CASS, that is, Continuous Assessment, portfolio for history. All the grade 12 history learners were trained in Oral History Methodology and Techniques, Writing and Photography. Fifteen of these learners also participated in the Video Production process.

Thirty grade 11 learners from three high schools in the semi-urban district of Paarl participated, Charleston Hill High School, La Rochelle Girls' High School and Noorder-Paarl High School. Two curriculum advisors, Alex van Stade and Mike Willemse from EMDC Winelands along with history teachers from each school were involved in the project.

Learner participation in the various training workshops varied greatly with noticeable lower participation from the grade 12 Hout Bay learners who had no choice in participating in the project. In this regard, the project was reviewed to include Grade 12 learners.

In Paarl the majority of the project participants were drawn from Charleston Hill High School (19), La Rochelle Girls' HS (initially nine) and two from Noorder-Paarl

HS. Learners from Charleston Hill HS were from the Afrikaans class. The learners from La Rochelle GHS and Noorder-Paarl HS were from the English class. The two learners from Noorder-Paarl HS participated in the same training sessions with the Afrikaans-speaking learners from Charleston Hill HS. The learners from La Rochelle GHS received their training in Oral History methodology and photography separately on account of them having arranged their holiday programmes in advance. However, they did attend the same writing training session with the learners from the other two schools. The two learners from Noorder-Paarl HS were consistent in their attendance. Unfortunately, one of the learners residing in the Free State could not participate in the film production course because she had to return home during the school holidays.

In Hout Bay the project participants consisted of a smaller group of Afrikaans-speaking learners and a larger English-speaking group. The latter group was virtually all non-English mother tongue speakers and consequently this had to be factored into developing accessible training material, as well as workshop presentations. This is also reflected in the written outcomes at the writing workshops.

Attendance from the Afrikaans-speaking groups proved to be more consistent than the English-speaking group. This could be ascribed to, on the one hand, the teacher having had a firmer control over the relatively small group, whereas the bigger English-speaking group's attendance fluctuated a great deal. However, there was a core of about fifteen learners from the latter group that attended the sessions open to all.

## Educators and Subject-Advisors

Four educators, one each from La Rochelle GHS and Charleston Hill HS and two from Hout Bay HS participated in the project. In addition one subject-advisor for history from EMDC (South) and two from Winelands EMDC participated. The teacher from Noorder-Paarl HS did not participate beyond his initial selection and submission of the names.

The subject-advisors attended the first training workshops and in the case of the subject-advisor from EMDC (South) also attended the interview session at Hout Bay HS. The educators were pivotal to the success of the project in that they motivated the learners to sustain their involvement and were also responsible for making the logistical arrangements for the various workshops in conjunction with IJR programme staff.

However, the role and expectations from subject advisors, educators and schools should be canvassed in greater detail as has been done until now. The various responsibilities, expectations, recognition, incentives and time-frames should ideally be negotiated during the preceding year of project implementation and be spelled out in detail in a memorandum of understanding.

The first four oral history projects were also published in one volume, title *Making*



*apartheid history – My contribution*. It also included a separate chapter on the oral history methodology for budding oral historians.

SOHP then embarked on a second series of oral history projects titled *Building Blocks for Democracy*. It consisted of three projects which was conducted in Cradock (2009), Welkom (2010) and concluded in Potchefstroom (2011).<sup>21</sup>

## The Cradock oral history project

This project differed from IJR's previous projects in several respects: firstly, it focused on the status quo of the citizens of Cradock and required them to imagine Cradock in 2019, 25 years after the dawn of democracy; secondly, learners from historically Black African, White and Coloured backgrounds were recruited to work in project groups on an identified local project; thirdly, project members kept journals in which their reflections about project participation and experience were recorded; fourthly, collaboration with local government, libraries and sites of memory were organized. Learners' documentation and journals would form part of an archive on democracy in Cradock that would be located at a site of memory or local library that could be available to social historians and other interested parties.

Cradock was selected on account of longstanding and historic tensions between different historical racial and income groups. In addition IJR piloted its Community Healing Project there. This new oral history intervention on *Building Blocks for the Democracy*, would enable youth and learners from these particularly deeply divided communities to elicit, record, document and share stories from their respective communities across racial and class barriers.

In 2009 South Africans participated in the fourth democratic elections of the national and provincial government. These elections presented an ideal opportunity to record and document how the election campaigns of the various political parties were conducted, what issues and in what manner they are raised, as well as explore how the issues of nation-building were canvassed. Moreover, learners from Cradock would be able to track memories, feelings, views, fears and hopes of the people of Cradock that abounded at the time of the first democratic election in 1994, and the subsequent elections of 1999 and 2004.

The central goal of this project was to create a platform on issues that are pertinent to nation-building. Key among these is the ability of young people to engage critically with their social context and to acquire awareness and skills that will contribute to them becoming social change agents. The central goal of this project consists of the following subsidiary goals: foster greater understanding and appreciation of past events and experiences among diverse learner communities; create collective learner opportunities for diverse learner communities; stimulate interaction between diverse learner communities; and, empower learners with core skills in research, oral history methodology, interview and multi-media presentation skills.

Two interesting components were added to the Cradock oral history process, that is, oral history and the archive as well as intergenerational dialogue on a vision for Cradock 2019. The first workshop was presented by the national English Language Museum (NELM.) from Grahamstown. The key objectives of the training session were, to introduce archiving as an important process element in the oral history methodology, and, secondly, to explore the setting up of a digital archive.

The second component, exploring a vision for Cradock by 2019 was facilitated by two local pastors. At the workshop adult and youth members engaged one another through an interactive process. Participants were drawn from the three historically racially defined communities, that is, black African, Coloured and White.

As stated in the resource guide produced as an output for the process:

Some of the key challenges for communities in post conflict situations are to acknowledge the past and also to craft a desirable future that is inclusive and recognizes past injustices. In all probability, this complex process requires, amongst other things, willingness on the part of individuals and communities to explore and negotiate a new *modus Vivendi*, a range of activities and events aimed at providing spaces and platforms for engagement, economic justice and the creation of new symbols signifying a fresh start and inclusiveness (IJR 2009: 64)

At the workshop *Vision for Cradock 2019* held over two sessions one of the outstanding aspects highlighted by the majority of participants was the appreciation of engaging fellow Cradonians across the historic divides as fellow participants. As one Black African participant put it when s/he goes home will tell his/her family that s/he ‘fell engaged with Coloureds and Whites’. Another participant put it as follows, ‘I will tell them that I had a nice time because I was sharing ideas with White and Coloured people and that it was fun.’

It is clear that the first step is to provide a platform for exchange and that considerable thought be given as to how it is constituted. Since 1994 the norm has been that structured interaction across the historic divides has been facilitated through political parties. These entities were viewed as being legitimate representatives of various, largely historic racial, constituencies. Engaging the Other was on the basis of political party programme. It perpetuated the ‘us and them’ characterization of the broader South African society.

The need for a more inclusive process that seeks to promote understanding and rapprochement, that is, identification of local social capital, the changes required and how the transformation required could be effected. Moreover, that the negotiations or multi-stakeholder dialogue feature becomes the preferred method of building a different and inclusive society.

## The Welkom oral history project

This project was initially conceived to explore the construction of a non-racial society in



Welkom, Free State. However, following a training workshop that was held for history educators, this broad thrust was narrowed to focus exclusively on the education sector.

Impressions of how residents relate in post-apartheid South Africa are consistent with the IJR's Annual South African Reconciliation Barometer<sup>22</sup> findings with regard to racial interaction on a day-to-day basis. The kind of integrated spaces that exist are in the workplace and in the former Model-C schools. By and large pre-democratic residential patterns persist.

Right from the outset of the project efforts were made to recruit project participants from across the apartheid divides. However, at the time no white learner at Welkom's public schools was taking history as a subject. On the other hand, the history educator at Welkom High School was white and participated wholeheartedly throughout the project.

In Welkom like most South African towns apartheid prevented inhabitants to get to know one another as fellow South African citizens. They experience the 'Other' primarily through the racial lens, in short the adverse social distance of the past shows little signs of crumbling. In addition, there are other fault-lines like huge income disparity, social status and ethnic divisions that militate against making common cause. For example, an educator who hails from Limpopo Province was asked by local Welkom educators why he had come to teach in Welkom 'passing Johannesburg to where most people are flocking to.'

As an indication that locals can start to view themselves and others differently, project participants produced four short video documentaries, virtually all comparing various aspects of education in townships and one former Model-C school ranging from discipline, safety and security, as well as the former Bantu Education and the new education curriculum.

The Welkom SOHP empowered educators and learners with knowledge and skills to contribute to a different looking at themselves and Others.

## The Potchefstroom oral history process

This project had three components to it, that is, history educators, education students from North West University (Potchefstroom campus) and learners from various schools in Potchefstroom and Ventersdorp. However, the main focus group was the history educators.

Seven educators attended the training sessions. Two of them were from Ventersdorp which is about 60km from Potchefstroom. The teachers' experience ranged from 6 to 21 years in the education sector.

The process of changing place and street names has elicited substantial interest locally and in the rest of the country. In terms of the colonial history Potchefstroom served as the initial capital of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek. The area in which they settled was also occupied by Sotho-, and Tswana-speaking people. As the establishment of the town of Potchefstroom proceeded the Voortrekkers imprinted its identity on the townscape. This was in line with a universal practice that whoever emerges as victors

in war, subjugates the former foe and puts its identity stamp on the landscape. After the Second South African War, with the influx of English speakers, a process was indeed initiated to change the names of a number of streets to reflect the new political reality of British rule. In that process Church Street was renamed King Edward Street. However, an initiative to have that decision overturned was started and shortly after the National Party came to power in 1948, the Afrikaner groupings were successful in having King Edward Street changed back to Church street. After the name change process initiated by the City Council in 2007 Church Street was renamed Walter Sisulu Street.

## Sharing of experiences of Apartheid

Participants shared their knowledge of Potchefstroom before apartheid and how the landscape was impacted on by forced removals in terms of the Group Areas Act. 'Prior to 1958 the African and Coloured people of Potchefstroom were located in Makwateng, a township outside the town, while the Indian and Chinese people lived in an adjacent area about three kilometres from the town centre. After 1958 all Africans, Indians and Coloureds were forcibly removed moved to Ikageng (Black Africans), Mohadin (Indians) and Promosa (Coloureds) respectively, in terms of the Group Areas Act' (IJR 2011: 22).

During the course of training a spontaneous discussion took place. Here are a few excerpts (IJR 2011: 22): 'one cannot just change everything that refers to the past, because it would be tantamount to distorting the past.' Furthermore, 'history cannot be only about the things one agrees with'. Moreover, 'places have different histories and none should be suppressed'. 'The new street names should not only have reflected national heroes but local ones.' 'Maybe an expert panel inclusive of academics should have been asked to research the issue of street names in Potchefstroom and have made recommendations.'

The spontaneous discussion focused in a very direct manner on some of the key aspects of the oral history project. Most of the participants supported the need for changing some street names because the street names in the CBD of Potchefstroom reflected Afrikaner heroes and excluded the majority Black African population. Furthermore, participants argued strongly that a thorough research process should have been undertaken before embarking on changing street names. For example, they contended that the name change process in other parts of the country should have been examined and could have yielded some insights about the process.

## Oral accounts of colonial experience

Some of the educators were participants in the Time-travel South Africa which utilises re-enactments and role-plays of historical periods as teaching tools. In addition, one teacher was also active in a local history project, Tlokwe Heritage Foundation. They indicated that the oral history training provided an additional tool to document local history.

Most of the names selected as new street names since 2006 have been those of national leaders from the anti-apartheid struggle. In one instance, however, Dan Tloome, was given to the new council chambers. In the process of conducting the oral history interviews names of people who played key roles in the local anti-apartheid struggle also emerged.

During the first training session, educators engaged in an impromptu discussion on how the past should be remembered and why the wholesale change and removal of offensive names and items will distort history.

The interview with Theo Venter provided a very broad, yet coherent narrative and insight into the minds, as well as motivations, of those who were opposed to the changing of street names.

A student-teacher participant in the visual literacy workshop from Viljoenskroon in the Free State believes that one cannot understand contemporary issues without exploring the history of those issues. He viewed his experience as invigorating because he collaborated with people whose views did not always accord with his, and he viewed that as an enriching experience (IJR 2011: 54).

The impromptu discussion referred to earlier, made the teachers realise how inter-related the narratives of the various identity communities are. But some of them also clearly articulated the view that the various divides, stereotypes and prejudices brought about by colonialism and apartheid would require a radical break from that past and those beliefs.

Here are some of the post-training feedback: 'The importance of documenting and archiving local and family histories'. 'Extend (the training) to cover a whole range of issues and include whites.' 'I was not aware about the impact of the names of streets and places have on citizens but now I know.' 'I (now) know that I also have to greet someone else first and not wait for him/her to greet me first, whether Black, White or Coloured.'

The training has also highlighted the need for documenting local history, as well as family histories which will simultaneously contribute to the democratization of the local archival and historical record.

A project participant in the visual literacy workshop who majors in English and History cited an experience he had with learners at a school in the Free State who felt that the history of apartheid is forced upon them and that they preferred looking forward instead of looking back. He was of the view that the visual literacy training course stimulated his thinking and made an impression on him (IJR 2011: 54).

## PROVISIONAL LESSONS LEARNT

At the launch of the Welkom oral history resource guide the Provincial Subject Head for history in the Free State stated that history was fast becoming a 'township subject' and in addition, dwindling numbers of learners were taking history as a subject. These are indeed worrying trends because in post conflict societies it is important that various perspectives and voices must engage the past and together explore a desirable future.

In the limited ways in which SOHP has worked in the various communities as indicated above, there are reasons to be positive about the following:

- Older and younger project members from diverse communities are eager to acquire new skills and knowledge to acquire understanding and make contributions to their communities;
- project participants enjoyed to engage the Other in safe spaces;
- local government structures seemed interested to participate but in many instances were overwhelmed by their core business of service delivery so that they could not participate in the documentation of local history;
- one of the ways to stimulate the interest in and development of local history could be to pursue educational institutions, museums, libraries, community organizations, faith based organisations and local media to start platforms where aspects of local history could be explored across historical divides.

## CONCLUSION

There are many challenges facing South Africans in building a post-apartheid society, and in order to overcome the many divisions along the lines of race, colour, ethnicity, religion and class which have been enforced since colonial times, we require conscious and deliberate initiatives. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that past socio-economic and political systems have caused a lot of trauma and should be taken into account when projects of this nature are considered.

Educators and learners together with members from civil society across the historical divides, to varying degrees, have shown a willingness to acquire new knowledge and skills to contribute in material ways to the production of new historical knowledge and thereby assist in the processes of democratizing the local historical record.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 The other programmes are Communications & Strategy, Policy & Analysis and Justice & Reconciliation in Africa.
- 2 The BIS has the following additional projects: *Memory, Arts and Culture* (MAC), *Community Healing* (CH), *Ashley Kriel Youth Leadership Development Project* (AKYLDP) and *Education for Reconciliation*.
- 3 The resource guides have been published by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (2004, 2005a, 2005b). For the Northern Cape Province see (IJR 2007); for the Eastern Cape (IJR 2009); for the Free State Province (IJR 2010); and for North West Province (IJR 2011).
- 4 *Making apartheid history – My Contribution: An oral history resource guide* (2008).
- 5 For example Rwanda, Argentina, Chile, Bosnia, etc
- 6 A project based on the notion of '*masiyithathe apho siyeke kona*' (isiXhosa) ['let us fetch it where we left it'] was developed. It was designed to use memory as a tool to assist those

who were once central to the struggle against oppression, and who became alienated by and excluded from the new dispensation. Through a range memory exercises, it allowed such people to rediscover their innate resources as a basis for engagement.

- 7 MTO 3: Historical narratives based on exclusivity and oppression are deconstructed and inclusive narratives based on fair and democratic principles are developed ; and MTO 5, communities which were previously divided across socio-economic and political conflict are constructively engaging in ongoing dialogue with one another.
- 8 See fn. 5 above
- 9 For project work to be done outside contact time, the in/exclusion of project work as part of learner portfolio had to be negotiated between educators and learners. Parents of participating learners would sign indemnity forms for the project work done outside official school time, and the learners would receive a stipend on the successful conclusion of the project.
- 10 In addition to their facilitative role in respect of the learners, the educators were required to attend all the training sessions, they had to participate in the content discussions on the resource guide and, finally, they would receive a honorarium at the end of the project depending on the availability of funds.
- 11 See fn. 5 above
- 12 See fn. 5 above
- 13 Namaqualand District – Springbok, Kharkhams, Steinkopf, Kommaggas, O’Kiep and Concordia. Siyanda District – Kakamas, Upington and Rietfontein
- 14 Afrikaans, English and Nama
- 15 This CD contains a multilingual anthology of 24 folktales passed on from generation to generation in the Northern Cape communities of the Namaqua district (Okiep, Springbok, Steinkopf, Kommaggas, Concordia, Kharkhams) and Siyanda district (Rietfontein, Askham, Andriesvale, Philandersbron, Welkom, Kakamas, Riemvasmaak and Upington).
- 16 ‘These stories I did not hear in Afrikaans. My parents told me those stories in N/u that is why I still speak the language. But nowadays neither the parents nor children speak the language. Our stories are also not transmitted from generation to generation. But this project affords us an opportunity to preserve those stories before they disappear into oblivion’ (translated by author)
- 17 The project promotes storytelling in other art genres by the inclusion of visual art expressions of the folktales in the CD. These visual art pieces were created by community artists who have subsequently formed an art network, Studio Tshepang, in the Northern Cape. Each visual art piece is inspired by the individual artist’s interpretation of the imagery and symbolism in a particular folktale. The San music which can be heard throughout the CD is an expression of artist and musician, Garth Erasmus’ exploration of his identity. His personal journey has led to self-made replicas of San musical instruments which he has used to create a musical expression honouring his San ancestry.
- 18 Hout Bay – Hout Bay Secondary School and in Paarl – Charleston Hill Secondary School, Noorder-Paarl High School and La Rochelle Girls’ High School.
- 19 Community Video Education Trust (CVET).
- 20 Some of the project selection criteria were, commitment to participate in the project till conclusion, willingness to attend training sessions during weekends and school vacations, and to complete all project assignments.

21 See fn. 5 above

22 Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. Retrieved from <http://reconciliationbarometer.org> (accessed 9 December 2014).

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# SIKHULUMA ISIKHETHU<sup>1</sup>: NDEBELE RADIO, ETHNICITY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN SOUTH AFRICA, 1983–1994

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## ABSTRACT

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) established nine African language radio stations ostensibly to cater for the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of the African communities in the country. In reality, however, these stations acted as a government mouthpiece and means through which a monopoly over the airwaves was asserted. Through these stations the government promoted ethnic compartmentalisation and popularised the ethnic ‘homelands’ created from the early 1960s to the early 1980s. One of these stations was Radio Ndebele, established in 1983, with a clear mandate to reinforce Ndebele ethnic nationalism. This article seeks to explore the history of this radio station, using both oral sources and documentary material, though privileging the former. The article makes a two-pronged argument: Firstly, Radio Ndebele came into existence not only because of the government’s mission but because of pressure from Ndebele-speaking people who needed radio programming in their own language. Secondly, this radio station helped turn a spoken language that was on the throes of extinction into a vibrant written language that found its way into the schooling system, particularly in areas with a large concentration of Ndebele-speaking people.

**Keywords:** Ethnicity, Ndebele, KwaNdebele, listenership, ethnopreneurs, language

## INTRODUCTION

Radio is considered to be the biggest and most popular form of communication on the African continent. In recent years this medium has begun to receive some serious scholarly analysis from media studies scholars, anthropologists as well as from historians (Gunner, Ligaga & Moyo 2011; Fardon & Furniss 2000). A number of studies in South Africa have explored public radio and African language radio in particular (Gunner 2000, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006; Lekgoathi 2009, 2011, 2012; Gqibitole 2002; Mhlambi 2009; Theunissen, Nikitin & Pillay 1996) and even fewer have focused on the use of radio by the liberation movements in Africa (Lekgoathi 2010, 2013; Davis 2009; Mosia,



Riddle & Zaffiro 1994). Except for Lekgoathi's (2012) article, no scholarly work has been produced on Ndebele radio. This article focuses on the history of Radio Ndebele, a station that was established as part of the ethnic radio stations of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) by the National Party government just a few years before the crumbling of the apartheid system.

The Ndebele radio station was officially launched as Radio Ndebele on 29 March 1983, roughly two years after the establishment of KwaNdebele as the 'homeland' for the 'Southern Ndebele'-speaking people of South Africa. This was the last in a series of the radio stations to be established by the SABC. Today the station is known as Ikwewezi FM (*ikwewezi* means 'star'), following the renaming of all of the SABC's African language stations as a gesture to signify their repudiation of the separatist policies and overtones that characterised these stations under apartheid. Today this radio station attracts more than 1.7 million listeners per day, a figure which is significantly above the number of Ndebele-speaking people in the country. How do we explain the popularity of this radio station, which in terms of its initial conception, was unmistakably intended to convey government propaganda messages?

This article provides an historical analysis of Radio Ndebele from its inception to the eve of political transformation in 1994. It looks mainly at the underlying motives for the establishment of the station and the key agents involved in its formation. It also probes more deeply the role of the station in fomenting or building Ndebele ethnic consciousness, cultural identity and language. The article is based on a combination of archival material – mainly audio footage and the *SABC Annual Reports* stored in the SABC archives at Aucklandpark, the Corporation's headquarters – as well as on oral accounts collected through the interviews that I conducted with the presenters and other employees of the same radio station. The article foregrounds orality and makes a strong case for the utilisation of the sound archive as a crucial resource from which the voices of ordinary people can be retrieved in the process of reconstructing the past.

I have to stress that apart from fragmentary clips here and there, the radio station's old audio footage is very patchy, if not virtually non-existent today as a result of the practice, in the early years, of erasing and reusing the taped audio reels to record new programmes. Presumably, this was part of cost-cutting measures of a racially stratified public broadcaster-cum-state broadcaster. In addition, compared to the white side of the SABC, the culture of archiving had not yet been entrenched in the African radio section of the SABC until about 1986, when the consciousness about preservation of old recordings began to develop. This accounts for the paucity of audio footage on African language stations particularly in relation to their early years. Notwithstanding these difficulties, enough of these sources exist, albeit scattered, and combined with interviews conducted with some of the founding presenters and other staff members of the station, a fuller picture of the workings of Ndebele radio can be painted.

The argument of this paper is twofold: firstly, the apartheid government's need for an additional outlet for its propaganda messages dovetailed neatly with the Ndebele ruling elites' and ordinary Ndebele listeners' desire for a separate radio station that



would place the Ndebele roughly on par with other language groups in the country. This happened right at the moment of heightened Ndebele ethnic consciousness shortly after the establishment of KwaNdebele as a homeland for the Ndebele speaking people in the country. Secondly, Ndebele radio played a pivotal role in promoting Ndebele culture and ethnic pride. It contributed to the development of *isiNdebele* (Ndebele language) which until then was a spoken language but soon became a written one. This was a language that was generally looked down upon (even by some of the native Ndebele speakers themselves) as it was associated with backwardness; but soon evolved into one that the Ndebele speakers could now proudly assert and speak with pride even in public spaces.

Clearly, there was something sinister about the enthusiasm with which the apartheid government pursued the idea of the establishment of a separate Ndebele radio station. However, on the part of many Ndebele-speaking people it was quite pleasing that their language, which had hitherto remained a spoken language and was in danger of dying out as its usage among the native speakers was diminishing considerably, would get a chance to flourish and develop into a fully-fledged written language. For that reason they embraced the new radio station with great enthusiasm. However, before this moment many ‘Southern Ndebele’ people strongly identified themselves with Radio Zulu, in part because of some very limited Ndebele programming on that station.

### ‘NGEZAMANDEBELE: RADIO ZULU AND NDEBELE PROGRAMMING, 1965–1982

When, in 1960, the SABC established four separate ethnic radio services of Radio Bantu (for the Northern Sotho/Pedi, Southern Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa), to which the Tswana, Venda and Tsonga stations were added in the following years, the Ndebele were not on the agenda of the apartheid state’s architects. The Nzunza – the largest section of the Southern Ndebele – as the remnants of one of the most wayward of the late nineteenth-century chiefdoms that had been completely shattered during the colonial wars of conquest, were initially not encouraged to regroup into a territorial authority (Delius 1989). Even as some government ethnologists (*volkekundiges*) were touting the Southern Ndebele as worthy of being given ‘a home of their own’ from as early as 1960, the government’s expectation was that the group as a whole would be accommodated within the existing ‘homelands’ of Lebowa (for the Northern Sotho/Pedi) and Bophuthatswana (for the Tswana) where they would eventually be culturally assimilated and cease to exist as a distinctive group. However, the mere establishment of the homelands for other groups, as well as the establishment of the different African language radios gave impetus to the crystallisation of Ndebele ethnicity (Lekgoathi 2003, 2006). It was as a result of agitation by the Ndebele ethnic nationalists, alongside the mechanisation of commercial farming and the concomitant need to get rid of excess Africans on white farms that the government finally put in place plans for the establishment of a Southern Ndebele ‘homeland’ in the early 1970s, a plan that came into fruition in 1981. Once this primary objective had been achieved, other symbols of

‘nationhood’ such as a radio station soon followed.

Prior to the official launching of Radio Ndebele in 1983, the Ndebele listeners, according to several of my interviewees, had had a very limited amount of programming in their language on Radio Zulu (now called *Ukhozi FM*) from around 1965. This was partly based on the fact that prior to the standardisation of their language most Southern Ndebele parents sent their children to schools and colleges that offered tuition in the Zulu language, especially in the present-day KwaZulu-Natal province. However, according to John Poki Skosana and Shorty Peter Mahlangu, veteran broadcasters of Ndebele radio, a large number of Ndebele children continued to attend school in the Transvaal where *isiZulu* was offered as a language of instruction. It was from this crop of learners that Radio Zulu selected some of its broadcasters (such as Winnie Mahlangu and Thetha Masombuka) as well as presenters for the solitary Ndebele show *NgezaMandebele* (literally meaning ‘Matters of the Ndebele’), a programme about Ndebele culture, music and language. Thus, the roots of Ndebele radio were deeply entrenched in the history of one of the most popular radio stations in the country.

Pinkie Mabona, a male presenter, and Meriam Nofanezile Mashiane were both native Ndebele speakers who were among the path-breakers for Radio Ndebele. Both initially presented the Ndebele programme on Radio Zulu at Broadcast House in central Johannesburg, from the mid-1960s to the early 1980s. During this early phase the Ndebele programme was allocated a paltry 30-minute Sunday midday slot that was enormously appealing to Ndebele listeners (Skosana, Interview 8 December 2011; Mahlangu, Interview July 2013). Other interviewees maintain that the programme was about an hour long, which suggests that the time allocated to it may have been increased over time (Mothers of *amasokana* (initiates) of Vlaklaagte village no. 2, Interview 20 July 2013). Shorty Peter Mahlangu, who started off as a junior announcer on Radio Ndebele in 1983 and now serves as the executive producer of culture and language on *Ikwekwezi FM*, recalls the level of excitement that accompanied the introduction of this programme on Radio Zulu: ‘The Ndebele listeners used to turn the volume of their radio receivers very high when they were listening to the programme *NgezaMandebele*’ (Mahlangu, Interview 5 July 2011).

The pride with which the Ndebele audiences listened to the programme in their own language was confirmed in a group interview with rural Ndebele women at the village of Vlaklaagte No. 2 in Mpumalanga Province (the area of former KwaNdebele). These women had very fond memories of this weekly programme, and they reminisced about the contentment derived from listening to programme content that included music, culture and news in their own language. They also had recollections about how they used their ‘Eveready’ radio batteries sparingly in order to make sure that they would not run flat before the commencement of the programme (Mothers of *amasokana* (initiates) of Vlaklaagte village no. 2, Interview 20 July 2013).

Rhobongo Petrus Mahlangu was about 15 years of age when he became aware of the Ndebele programme on Radio Zulu around 1979. His grandfather possessed a small FM-only ‘wireless’ which he almost unfailingly listened to on Sundays. Mahlangu still

has vivid memories of his grandfather instructing him to place the ‘wireless’ on top of the front courtyard wall (*emthangaleni*) so that they could all have better reception of the programme *NgezaMandebele* which at that time featured Nofanezile Meriam Mashiane, Thetha Masombuka, Pinkie Mabona and others (Mahlangu, Interview July 2013). The popularity of the Ndebele programme on Radio Zulu among the Ndebele-speaking people in the years prior to Radio Ndebele thus shows that vernacular radio did fulfil a role that defies the notion of it simply being a government propaganda tool.

Elijah Thetha Masombuka and Mduduzi Hlophe are also included in the list of Radio Ndebele’s pioneers who presented this initial Ndebele programme. Thetha Masombuka very quickly established himself as a very successful and popular Zulu sports presenter and commentator. He had a following not only among the Ndebele and Zulu radio audiences but also among multitudes of admirers across the ethnic spectrum in different areas with adequate reception of Zulu broadcasts. He was very energetic and his lively sports commentaries, particularly the live soccer matches, endeared him to many listeners. Liz Gunner (2000) aptly captures the power of radio and the enormous capacity to create an ‘imagined community’ in which the listeners were bound together ‘beyond the reach of any ethnic programmer’. The appeal of Thetha’s sports broadcasts on Radio Zulu transcended the kind of ethnic particularism that the SABC was trying to cultivate. In Gunner’s own words,

One did not need a pass, or money for travel through apartheid mapped cities, to move in the mind to that pitch, spurred on by the fevered eloquence and soaring voice of Thetha Masombuka as he created verbal pictures of skill, daring energy, spectacular tries, near misses, penalties, fouls, offsides... (Dlamini 2009: 30)

Through their effective use of their voices broadcasters like Thetha became instant celebrities not only in an economic sense of higher salaries but also in the sense of being cultural innovators using a modern medium. Thetha’s skilful use of language and lively voice were enthralling, enabling his audiences to develop vivid images of sports events happening far away from their homes or workplaces. He made it possible for his listeners to connect with one another and to be transported into the stadiums and other arenas where the games were being played. He brought the dramas of soccer matches played out in the stadiums into his audiences’ living rooms, in shebeens or any other places where they might have been listening to their radio sets. Thus, at a time when television had not yet been introduced in South Africa, radio served as ‘theatre of the mind’, to adopt a phrase from media scholars Ruth Teer-Tomaselli and Coenie de Villiers (1998). According to them,

[Radio] can stimulate the imagination as the listener attempts to visualise what he or she hears and to create the owner of the voice in the mind’s eye. The pictures which are created carry emotional content – a crowd at a national celebration, the commentator at a soccer match, a disc jockey linking music selections, or a character in a radio play intoning joy, sorrow or pathos (Teer-Tomaselli & De Villiers 1998: 147).

## 'SIKHULUMA ISIKHETHU' (WE SPEAK OUR OWN LANGUAGE): THE BIRTH OF RADIO NDEBELE, 1983

When in 1960 the SABC established four separate ethnic radio services of Radio Bantu (for the Northern Sotho/Pedi, Southern Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa), to which was added a service for the Tswana, Venda and Tsonga a few years later in the same decade, the Ndebele did not feature anywhere in the apartheid state's plans. It is quite ironic that just as the colourful Southern Ndebele wall paintings were growing in salience and being increasingly appropriated in the marketing of South Africa to international tourists visiting the country, the people and the culture behind the art were not seen as worthy of being granted a territorial enclave. The state was at first not enthusiastic about abetting their regrouping because of their rebelliousness in the 1880s. These were remnants of a late nineteenth-century African polity that was systematically dismantled during the wars of conquest. Their inhabitants were divided up among white farmers as indentured servants and their rulers incarcerated in prison in Pretoria for many years (Delius 1989; McCaul 1987). The expectation in the early 1960s, in fact, was that they would be integrated into the existing 'homelands' of Lebowa (for the Northern Sotho) and Bophuthatswana (for the Tswana) where they would eventually be culturally assimilated. However, the very act of establishing 'homelands' for other groups triggered Ndebele ethnic consciousness and the desire to be like other recognised groups (Lekgoathi 2003; 2006). It was partly as a result of the mobilisation of ethnic consciousness by the Ndebele elites – which had its roots in the 1920s but was actually intensified in the 1960s and early 1970s – that the Southern Ndebele ethnic brokers, ethnic nationalists or '*ethnopreneurs*' were finally granted their wish for a 'homeland' named KwaNdebele in 1981. Once that primary goal had been achieved, the Southern Ndebele were now a step closer towards acquiring their own separate radio station.

Radio Ndebele as a distinct station only hit the airwaves for the first time on 29 March 1983 at 6.30 p.m.<sup>2</sup> It was officially opened with an *igwabo*, an Ndebele war song that used to be sung by warriors to celebrate their victory in battle. Today this song is commonly performed when young men come back home after spending about two months in seclusion at *engomeni* (male initiation) in the bush. The song is also performed during the installations of traditional leaders as well as during heritage commemoration events such as the King Nyabela Day (for the Nzunza Ndebele) or King Silamba Day (for the Manala Ndebele).

Early on the day of the station's inauguration a bull was slaughtered as an offering to the ancestors and the meat was cooked and served as part of the meal prepared for those who had turned up to celebrate the occasion. This bull was contributed by the KwaNdebele homeland administration (Skosana, Interview 8 December 2009). Immediately after opening with the *igwabo* the two presenters of the very first programme, namely Shorty Peter Mahlangu and John Poki Skosana, followed with the greetings. Mahlangu said jubilantly in *isiNdebele*, 'Greetings to you, Ndebele people! This is the moment you have all been waiting for...Radio Ndebele, the last born baby

of the SABC's vernacular radio stations has finally been delivered.' Then he went on to explain to his listeners what was in store for them and hoped that they would enjoy the first evening of the broadcast. The radio had been established to cater for the needs of a particular ethnic group, for this reason the presenter made it clear that he was specifically addressing Ndebele-speaking listeners. By specifying the Ndebele as his audience the presenter was excluding, consciously or unconsciously, non-Ndebele speaking listeners as possible listeners, something which fed directly into the apartheid state's policy of ethnic separatism.

After a very sombre religious song, an opening prayer and the reading of Biblical scriptures (Luke 4: 20–25), the second presenter, Shorty Peter Mahlangu, announced the next item on the programme, namely the broadcasting of a pre-recorded speech given earlier in the day by Steven de Villiers, Director General of the SABC who had also been in charge of African language radio service for seventeen years. Delivering his address entirely in Afrikaans, De Villiers started off by giving a bit of a background about the decision taken in the early 1960s to establish a radio station for each of the African language groups in the country (an explanation which was only partly true as the Ndebele were not really under consideration in the initial framework). It was only 23 years after the initial decision was taken that Radio Ndebele was introduced. Yet De Villiers presented this development as the culmination of a grand plan to ensure the growth of African language radio in the country. From only four ethnic language stations broadcasting for a total maximum six hours per day on 1 June 1960, by 1983 these had gone up to nine stations broadcasting a total of 174 hours per day. Radio Ndebele started with a modest 3 hours a day.

Central to De Villiers' speech was the explanation of the core business of the SABC's vernacular radio service, namely to satisfy the listeners' needs by providing information, education and entertainment. The Director General was quite blunt in stating that a sense of cultural belonging was to be promoted on the new radio station (certainly similar to what other ethnic stations were doing), and that it should also serve as a platform to expose Ndebele youths' talents. There was nothing novel about this point. In his position as Director General of the SABC, De Villiers was simply echoing the policy framework of the National Party government when it came to using vernacular radio to promote and reinforce ethnic identification. Lekgoathi (2009) in his article on the establishment of Northern Sotho radio argues that the SABC created the ethnic radio stations to serve as a tool of government propaganda, even though a tiny minority of presenters found creative ways of subverting this underlying political agenda. As the previous Director General of Radio Bantu, Carl Fuchs, had said at one point in 1969, the programme policy of the SABC was 'linked to national policy, based on the recognition of the diversity of language groups', which was really about 'encouraging language consciousness among each of the Bantu peoples, to encourage national consciousness' (Fuchs quoted in Lekgoathi 2009).

There was hardly any subtlety or any hidden intentions about what was going on, as reflected in what De Villiers said in conclusion of his speech at the opening of the new station: '*Radio Ndebele is 'n radio diens deur die Ndebele, vir die Ndebele*' (Radio Ndebele is a radio service by the Ndebele for the Ndebele).<sup>3</sup> To that effect, he reiterated that the African personnel employed as presenters on the station had to be native Ndebele speakers so that they could naturally connect with their Ndebele audiences and effectively discharge their responsibilities at the level of communication. In stating that he hoped Radio Ndebele would find its place in the heartland of the Ndebele in the same way that the idea of an Ndebele homeland had done, the director general was simply highlighting the clear connection between vernacular radio and the apartheid government's Bantustan policy. He was merely restating a longstanding policy that had existed from the beginning of vernacular radio in the country.

The other speakers to go over the mission and vision of the SABC's African language stations were Advocate J. H. Mills, a white Commissioner General of KwaNdebele, and N. J. Louw, a white Programme Director of the SABC Black Radio Services. The first Chief Minister of KwaNdebele, Mr. S. S. Skosana was also in attendance and he was obviously elated with the establishment of Radio Ndebele as an indication of yet another accomplishment on the long and arduous struggle towards the full realisation of his dream of Ndebele nationhood. In his speech Skosana had this to say:

Greetings to you, the Ndebele people! Today I greet you and inform you of the great news. There is now a Ndebele language on radio. Accept this with both hands. This is not a minor development. This radio station will help us in the process of creating one Ndebele nation. You are now the owners of this radio service. I am now informing you officially that Radio Ndebele is open. *Kusile AmaNdebele. Asiyephambili kabili kahlanu. Phambili!* (It is now crack of dawn, the Ndebele people. Let us step forward twice, five times over. Forward!).<sup>4</sup>

At the core of his speech the Chief Minister stressed the link between radio broadcasting and the forging of Ndebele ethnic nationalism. Chief Minister Skosana and other Ndebele ethnic nationalists saw the potential in using the new technology to foster a sense of collective consciousness around Ndebele identity, something which they had been struggling to forge from the 1960s right until that moment in the early 1980s. In that sense their interests and motives coalesced with those of the ruling apartheid government who sought to promote Bantustan identities or ethnic balkanisation through the medium of vernacular radio. The development of a common language was certainly at the centre of this exercise.

The relationship between broadcasting and ethnic nationalism found clear expression in Radio Ndebele's adoption of the ethnic nationalist movement's slogan '*Kuvuswa esivusako*' (One who tries to lift himself or herself up should be given a helping hand). For a long time this saying was maintained as the station's signature tune and deployed when opening or closing the station. But it was changed slightly to '*Vusa esivusako*' (Lift up only those that attempt to uplift themselves).



The KwaNdebele Commissioner General, Advocate Mills also delivered his address which revealed something significant about the relationship between vernacular broadcasting and state policy. He expressed some words of appreciation that the Ndebele were getting their own radio service on the day, which he viewed as a major milestone in the development of their culture and history. He hoped that the station would use the opportunity to develop interesting cultural programmes, such as actuality programmes or documentaries, and to celebrate the rich cultural heritage of the Ndebele, as well as using the outside broadcasts to provide ‘correct information about the developments’.<sup>5</sup>

For his part Louw in his position as programme director gave his entire address in Zulu, the language that was familiar to Ndebele-speaking people. In his speech Louw showed off his fluency and deep understanding of the Zulu language by invoking some idiomatic expressions. It was perhaps because of his language abilities that he occupied the position of programme director, a role that involved the monitoring or surveillance of what was being said by the African presenters, especially on Nguni services (Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, Tsonga and Ndebele). One of the expressions he used was, ‘*Ingani engakhali ifela embelekweni*’, literally translated as ‘A child that does not cry dies in its mother’s cradle’; which means that your grievances will never be addressed unless you express them loudly and clearly.<sup>6</sup>

Louw revealed quite a lot not only about his thorough knowledge of the most widely spoken vernacular language in the country but also about the apartheid state’s conceptualisation of African ethnic groups as ‘nations’, this within the context of the policy of ethnic compartmentalisation and the creation of homelands as ‘national states’. These issues are so well captured in his speech that it is worth quoting it at length:

It has been quite a long time that you [the Ndebele] have been crying wanting to have your own station. You have been complaining that you are tired of being carried by Zulu Radio. You wanted to stand on your own two feet and now we are very proud of this step that you have taken. You will now be able to listen to your own presenters who were carefully selected... The station’s progress will depend mainly on the extent to which you support it through listening to it. The Ndebele nation is the smallest of all national groups in South Africa. But you have shown that you have great tenacity and that you are really determined to build yourself as a nation. Parallels can be drawn between you (the Ndebele) and old Boers who had to read and write Dutch before they could develop their own language. The old Boers who spoke Afrikaans, had to learn and read in Dutch in the same vein as you read and write in Zulu today. The Boers triumphed and you will also become victorious with the support of this radio station. There will be books in this language (*IsiNdebele*) as a result of this station. The Ndebele Language Board, which has been formed already, will play an important role in this enterprise. Without language you will not be a nation. The Ndebele are a very small nation, but the numbers are not of primary significance when it comes to nation building. The Ndebele radio station will work with you to create big things... We want your own music, which reflects your identity. It must come out from within your communities... *Umtwana ukhunyuliwe embelekweni...ukuze akhule kumele ancelekunina* (The baby has now been untied and released from the cradle...for it to grow it now has to suckle from its mother). The Ndebele nation must embrace it (the baby). It will help you in promoting your culture and identity.<sup>7</sup>

What this quotation is telling us is that the apartheid government was fully committed to supporting the development of Ndebele language by the 1980s (for its own political reasons, i.e. to reinforce ethnic consciousness). This was a ploy to counter growing African nationalism in the country, even at this late hour, as well as to mollify the Ndebele *ethnopreneurs* who wanted to reap the material benefits of embracing the homeland system. The Ndebele nationalists had been pleading for the establishment of a separate Ndebele station and they had the support of many ordinary Ndebele people since the mid-1960s. Thus the interests of the apartheid government and Ndebele elites coalesced around the establishment of this radio station.

The establishment of Radio Ndebele caused great excitement among the Ndebele in general, particularly among members of the elite with some measure of higher education some of whom took up employment as broadcasters. These people made a living from broadcasting cultural products to their audiences and made a huge contribution in turning a marginal spoken language into a written and fairly popular language. Shorty Peter Mahlangu, for example, was one of the first presenters of Radio Ndebele who soon established himself as an author of Ndebele literature that became prescribed reading in primary schools in KwaNdebele. This provided an additional stream of income for him (Mahlangu, Interview 5 July 2011). Opportunities became available for some with creative abilities to be involved in the production of radio dramas that became part of the radio station's staple diet.

The apartheid state viewed language very seriously as a means through which 'national' consciousness could be cemented; hence it supported the initiative to develop *IsiNdebele* into a written language. The *SABC Annual Report* of 1983 pretty much captured that spirit when it noted that,

So far South Ndebele exists only in the spoken form. Radio Ndebele is thus faced with its greatest challenge in taking part in the creation and expansion of the Ndebele language (SABC Annual Report 1983: 86).

Radio Ndebele made it possible for the expansion of the vocabulary and this occurred through the involvement of broadcasters in the government-sponsored language boards. In the sphere of sports, notably soccer, new Ndebele words were invented which replaced commonly used Zulu words. A new word '*usofengwane*' (whistle man or referee) replaced the Zulu word '*unompempe*'; '*umsizikasofengwane*' (assistant-referee), '*somutha*' (linesman) and others became popular at this time (Mahlangu, Interview July 2013). In this way Radio Ndebele presenters profoundly shaped the making of *IsiNdebele* into a written language. For Rhobongo Petrus Mahlangu, one of my main interviewees, the establishment of Radio Ndebele

...helped revive *IsiNdebele* which almost became extinct. It brought back the Ndebele who were being swallowed up by the Zulu, Tswana and Pedi language groups through schooling before *IsiNdebele* became a written language. The radio helped in making the language respectable (Mahlangu, Interview July 2013).



## RADIO NDEBELE PROGRAMMING

Once Radio Ndebele was established, a broad variety of entertaining, informative and educational programmes were introduced on the station. As seen earlier, Ndebele programmes were initially allocated 30 minutes to one hour only per week on Radio Zulu between 1965 and early 1983. After the establishment of the new station broadcasting could now last for three hours every day, which was steadily increased over the next few years. The new programmes ranged from informative and educational to entertaining ones. *Asiphumele ngaphandle* (Let us go outside), for example, was a programme about the social and political developments in the broadcasting region of the station, mainly in KwaNdebele, parts of Pretoria and surrounding areas with a higher concentration of Ndebele-speaking communities. There were also others such as *Ezolimo*, a programme about farming generally; *Asithuthuke* (Let us progress/develop); *Asishuke isikhumba* (Let us soften the leather/hide together); *Asikhumbule abagulako* (let us remember those who are sick); *Ezempilo* (Health matters); and *Iphasi lekhenu* (Your own surroundings). These, among others, provided educational information to the audiences of the radio station.

There were also entertainment programmes that provided sports (*Ezemidlalo*), especially soccer, and a broad mixture of music genres, such as traditional Ndebele music. *Ingoma zesikhethu* (Our traditional songs) actually exposed and helped develop neo-traditional Ndebele music, and contemporary popular music also got a fair amount of airplay, for example the popular music show 'Radio Ndebele Top 10'. *Zidhobhele* (Make your own picking or choice); *Emgidini* (At the festival); *Ngihlelinani, nihlelinami* (I am seated with you, you are seated with me) and other programmes provided good entertainment to the listeners. There were also greetings and postcard reading programmes, even phone-in programmes where the listeners could send their greetings to family members and friends; *Asiyakhe* (Let us build) and *Ngikhumbule* (Remember me). *Ezabondanga* (Matters of friends) and *Ezabatjha* (Matters of youths) were some of the programmes targeted more specifically at the youth category.

Religious programmes featured very prominently on the radio station, most notably on Sundays. These included programmes like *Lala mphefumulo wami* (Rest my soul) and *Ngeezemthonjeni* (Those that come from deep down the pool [or well]). The latter was broadcast every fifth Sunday of the month. These programmes featured on different days, some on a daily basis while others featured once a month. On top of these there were regular news, current affairs and news editorials programmes that proffered the apartheid government's perspective (Lekgoathi 2009). As the SABC Annual Report of 1983 suggests, the government's viewpoint on political developments had to be given prominence. In reporting on the events such as the bomb explosions in Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Warmbad and elsewhere, the riots in the African townships and constitutional reforms, including the consolidation of KwaNdebele, as well as on treason trials of the captured cadres of the liberation movement (called 'terrorists' on the SABC's radio stations), the continued defence of the national borders and a proposal to

conclude non-aggression pacts with neighbouring countries, Radio Ndebele (like other vernacular stations) was required to reinforce the government's point of view (SABC Annual Report 1983: 80). The stations were expected to counter what the SABC Board perceived as multi-dimensional 'Marxist-socialist inspired attempts against South Africa', which had intensified in the 1980s. Radio Ndebele and all other ethnic stations were expected to act 'as a voice of moderation and reason in a fast-changing South Africa...to anticipate and interpret the situation for the black population' (SABC Annual Report 1986: 46). Despite the budget cutbacks which adversely affected smaller services such as Radio Ndebele (as well as Tsonga, Venda and Swazi stations), 'these services had to continue in the midst of the intensified anti-South African propaganda campaign by hostile stations broadcasting from outside the country's borders' (SABC Annual Report 1986: 46). The latter was a veiled allusion to the African National Congress's Radio Freedom, which was headquartered in Lusaka, Zambia, but broadcasting illegally into South Africa (Davis 2009; Lekgoathi 2010).

Drama serials were played virtually every day and these drew thousands of listeners to their radio receivers in the evenings and created listening communities, as Liz Gunner (2000) has argued so persuasively for Zulu radio. These are the programmes which were introduced immediately upon the opening of the station in March 1983.

The station had six full-time presenters (all males), namely Mandlakayise Sonnyboy Masanabo, Peter Mahlangu, David Micky Malatsi ka Sibanyoni, Paulus Oupa Mandlakayise Mahlangu, Raymond S'mangaliso ka Ntuli, and John Poki Skosana. In addition, there were other employees on the station such as translators or interpreters, technicians, music compilers and others. Each of the presenters was responsible for presenting a number of programmes. There were few female presenters who were mainly in charge of women's programmes about domestic matters, cooking, cleaning, child care, as well as religious matters. The SABC Annual Report (1983) openly declared this latest trend in hiring:

As part of a concentrated drive at listener participation, radio endeavoured to involve women more and more in modern society. This was done by means of profile programmes, discussion programmes, interviews and documentary series (SABC Annual Report 1983: 86).

Radio Ndebele continued with the SABC's long established practice of hiring few female presenters as freelancers or on a part-time basis, a practice which only changed in the 1990s.

## CONCLUSION

By the early 1980s when Radio Ndebele hit the airwaves for the first time, the apartheid state's social engineers had effectively turned the public broadcaster into a government mouthpiece. Through stations such as Radio Ndebele they tried to herd African listeners into ethnic communities and to normalise ethnic separatism. However, the establishment

of this station was not only determined by forces from above but also by pressure from below. Ndebele *ethnopreneurs* such as the Bantustan administrators sought ‘ownership’ of the radio station in order to mobilise an ethnic base. For educated elites, the station provided opportunities for employment and developments of cultural products such as *IsiNdebele* books, drama serials and ‘traditional’ music that could be marketed to ethnic audiences and popularise the language. This radio station effectively rescued IsiNdebele from extinction by popularising its usage and helping to turn it into a written language.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 This is an Ndebele phrase meaning ‘We speak our own language.’ This was adopted by Radio Ndebele as its motto when it was launched in early 1983.
- 2 SABC Sound Archives, Auckland Park, Accession Number 67212, Programme ‘*Asiphumele Ngaphandle*’ – Official Opening of Radio Ndebele Station, 23 March 1983.
- 3 SABC Sound Archives, Auckland Park, Accession Number 67212, Programme ‘*Asiphumele Ngaphandle*’: Official Opening of Radio Ndebele Station, 23 March 1983.
- 4 SABC Sound Archives, Auckland Park, Acc. No. 67212, ‘*Asiphumele Ngaphandle*’: Official Opening of Radio Ndebele, 29 March 1983.
- 5 SABC Sound Archives, Auckland Park, Acc. No. 67212, ‘*Asiphumele Ngaphandle*’: Official Opening of Radio Ndebele, 29 March 1983.
- 6 SABC Sound Archives, Auckland Park, Acc. No. 67212, ‘*Asiphumele Ngaphandle*’: Official Opening of Radio Ndebele, 29 March 1983.
- 7 SABC Sound Archives, Auckland Park, Acc. No. 67212, ‘*Asiphumele Ngaphandle*’: Official Opening of Radio Ndebele, 29 March 1983.

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# GUERRILLA WARFARE AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: IMPEDIMENTS FACED BY ZIPRA AND UMKHONTO WESIZWE.

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## ABSTRACT

Zimbabwe Peoples' Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) was the armed wing of Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) which waged the war to liberate Zimbabwe. It operated from its bases in Zambia between 1964 and 1980. Umkhonto Wesizwe (MK) was the ANC's armed wing which sought to liberate South Africa from minority rule. Both forces (MK and ZIPRA) worked side by side until the attainment of independence by Zimbabwe when ANC guerrillas were sent back to Zambia by the new Zimbabwean government. This paper argues that the failure of ZIPRA and Umkhonto Wesizwe to deploy larger numbers of guerrillas to the war front in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) and South Africa was mainly caused by bio-physical challenges. ZAPU and ANC guerrillas faced the difficult task of crossing the Zambezi River and then walking through the sparsely vegetated areas, game reserves and parks until they reached villages deep into the country. Rhodesian and South African Defense Forces found it relatively easy to disrupt guerrilla movements along these routes. Even after entering into Rhodesia, ANC guerrillas had environmental challenges in crossing to South Africa. As such, they could not effectively launch protracted rural guerrilla warfare. Studies on ZIPRA and ANC guerrilla warfare have tended to ignore these environmental problems across inhospitable territories. For the ANC, surveillance along the Limpopo River and in the Kruger National Park acted more as impediments than conduits. The ANC also had to cope with almost all challenges which confronted ZIPRA guerrillas such as the Zambezi, Lake Kariba and various parks which Rhodesians always used as a first line of defense, but geographically speaking had a difficult task in South Africa where the environment was not favourable for guerrilla warfare.

**Keywords:** environment, savanna, guerrilla insurgency, infiltration, campaigns

## INTRODUCTION

There are several impediments which worked against ANC and ZIPRA guerrilla warfare between 1967 and 1980. For both, these include the strength of governments they were fighting against, organizational skills, logistical support, the attitude of the international community, internal crises and the detention of the political leadership. The paper is fully aware of all these challenges but posits that for both guerrilla movements, the environment was indeed a major problem. For this paper, environment refers to physical conditions viewed in relation to the possibility of life (Brown 1993: 832). Both movements operated from Zambia which was not only independent but also friendly judging from the massive support Zambia gave to ZAPU in particular (Nkomo 2012: 147–164). Namibia was under the jurisdiction of South Africa and effectively controlled, hence guerrillas could not use her as an entry point. As for Mozambique, it was under Portuguese rule. Even when Mozambique did become independent, it was often bullied by South Africa against supporting ANC guerrillas. For example, on 16 March 1984, Mozambique and South Africa signed the Nkomati Accord (Gevisser 2009: 186–187). Under this agreement, Mozambique was to stop supporting and harbouring the ANC in return for South Africans' agreement to cease funding and training an insurgency which had plunged Mozambique into a disastrous civil war. Rhodesia which was still under minority rule, seemed to provide a logical route because when attacked, guerrillas were justified in fighting back an illegal regime. The major challenge for ZIPRA and the ANC was negotiating the Zambezi River itself walking long distances mostly through the forests and game parks until they reached villages. To add to ANC guerrillas' woes, they had to cross Limpopo River, Kruger National Park with its crocodile and hippo filled streams not counting the vast savannah grasslands dotted with trees. The results of these problems was that ZIPRA could not field as many guerrillas into the country as ZANLA did while the ANC was hardly able to field a forceful and numerous force because of geographical challenges. ZIPRA failed to cover as much ground as ZANLA mainly because of environmental problems posed by having to operate from Zambia. When Zimbabwe became independent, ANC guerillas who had entered the country alongside ZIPRA guerrillas were quietly sent back to Zambia as a way of preventing confrontation with South Africa.

The paper first gives the methodology and then a brief overview of the physical environment of the area from the Zambezi River across to the Limpopo River. This will be followed by an analysis of what that geography may imply for a guerrilla army bearing in mind that South of the Sahara, vegetated areas are crucial for a successful guerrilla operation. Ways in which the natural environment cost both ZIPRA and MK during the 1960s are discussed with a view of explaining how this eventually compelled SADF to operate in Rhodesia in a bid to keep both forces beyond the river. Throughout the 1970s, both guerrilla movements revised their approach but were not quite able to overwhelm these environmental realities.



## METHODOLOGY

Information for this paper was collected mainly by gleaning through published sources with a view of establishing environmental challenges faced by guerrillas as they went to the front or returned from the front. Useful interview information was provided by Sharp Shooter who was one of the commanders during the Sipolilo campaign. Similarly, Dumiso Dabengwa provided information related to the planning of these campaigns. A few other former ZIPRA and ZANLA guerrillas were also interviewed.

## THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE CONFLICT

Between 1967 and 1980, ANC guerrillas who were based in Zambia entered Rhodesia on their way to South Africa by crossing the Zambezi River and then traversing across parks and game reserves before reaching any homesteads. Once in Rhodesia, dispatched guerrillas were also expected to negotiate their route until they found their way to South Africa (Sharp Shooter, Interview 24 August 2012). The task was in comparative terms a little bit easier for ZAPU guerrillas, because they had reached the front. It is pivotal at this stage to review the geography of conflict tracing it from Zambia right into South Africa for purposes of analysing challenges posed to guerrilla warfare by physical impediments from the rear to the operational area.

The natural environment of Hurungwe, Kariba and Sanyati districts is more understandable by following it from the Zambezi valley to Hurungwe District. The highest point in Hurungwe is Nyangawe hill which is 1 411m above sea level (School atlas for Zimbabwe 1985: 8–9). The Zambezi valley is about 40km long before one gets to these ranges of hills. In the valley itself, the lowest average temperatures are usually around 25 degrees Celsius. The valley is infested with tsetse flies and malaria carrying mosquitoes. This makes it clear why cattle-keeping was not commonly undertaken in the Zambezi valley. The valley discussed above was not densely populated by people both during the war and to date. It has a number of game parks and reserves such as Kariba, Mana Pools National Park, Chewore Game Reserve, Charara and Matusadonha. Most of the Western side of Hurungwe is occupied by the Kariba Dam which is a huge man-made lake. The lake was a major impediment to guerrilla infiltration. Crossing into Zimbabwe was done either through the Southern edges between the Zambezi National Park and Milibizi River or to the extreme North-West. To get to people's homes, guerrillas had to cope with the threat of wild animals, poisonous snakes, debilitating temperatures, critical shortage of water and more dangerously, alert and watchful Rhodesian soldiers and game rangers.

In terms of vegetation, the journey along the valley and the escarpments looks unsuitable for guerrilla warfare. It is largely Mopani savanna woodlands which become bare during the dry season. As such, Bhebe points out that traversing the vast, unpopulated and sparsely populated Zambezi valley and escarpment where they were easily spotted by the enemy and forced to fight battles which they had hoped to avoid



was a serious challenge to guerrilla war effort (Bhebe 1999: 24). Such environmental impediments explain why ZANLA infiltration in the north was made to coincide with the rains 'when green foliage could provide better cover for the guerrillas, when water would be plentiful and when the Rhodesian advantage of mechanized mobility would be reduced by flooded rivers and roads that turned into treacherous quagmires' (Martin & Johnson 1981: 19). The vegetation to the North West was different to that on the Eastern border of Mozambique which was mostly forest and mountainous with good air cover (Nkomo 2001: 32).

Several rivers dissect areas which the ANC and ZAPU guerrillas were supposed to cross along their journey within Rhodesia. Among the major rivers are Tengwe, Musukwi, Badze, Sengwe, Sanyati and not mentioning the Zambezi itself. Zambezi and Sanyati were infested with crocodiles and hippos. Rivers that flow in the northerly direction include Rukomeshi, Chewore, Chavava, Tsororo and Murereshi. To the extreme east outside Hurungwe is Angwa River. When in flood, these rivers did hamper movement particularly in the rainy season. Apparently, the annual rainfall average for Hurungwe is 800mm (School atlas for Zimbabwe 1985). Though dissected by many rivers, Hurungwe has only one major tarred road from Kariba to Chirundu and another shorter one from Makuti to Kariba. The rest are dirt roads connecting major service centres such as Mudzimu, Kazangarare, Kapfunde, Nyamhunga and Tengwe. Until the peak of the Zimbabwean liberation war between 1975 and 1980, Binga was not even connected by a gravel road. The need to curtail guerilla activities led to the construction of the road.

In South Africa, forests cover only 1% of the land mass and they are found on the higher and wetter slopes of the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal Provinces (How Stuff Works: Geography of South Africa). Otherwise, at lower elevations and in the Limpopo Province, there are large tracts of tropical savannas. Grass covers much of the plateau. Further, in the Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces is the Kruger National Park which occupies more than 19 000 square kilometers. Animals here include lions, leopards, elephants, buffaloes, rhinos and others. The streams in the park are infested with crocodiles and hippopotami. South Africa sprawls across 1 221 030 square kilometers. Its West coast is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and its East Coast by the Indian Ocean. North West along the Atlantic coast stretches the vast Namib Desert (Boehm, Armstrong & Hunkins 2000: 545). From the border of Mozambique right into Namibia, the area is all savanna grasslands. Generally, grasslands cover most of the Republic merging into the thorn veld in the northwestern Cape and into the bushveld in Limpopo Province (Hutchenson 2012: 1133). Tropical savannas exposed guerrillas to both air and ground strikes. In the parks, security was tight. Added to this was the danger of being attacked by wild animals.

## THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE LIBERATION WAR

Environmental challenges led to the failure or defeat of ANC/ZAPU guerrillas who engaged with Smith's soldiers in the Wankie Game Reserve and Sipolilo respectively. Some guerrillas actually got lost while looking for safe water holes because security forces had surrounded the few available (Raeburn 1981: 86). According to Sharp Shooter, who was one of the commanders in the Sipolilo Campaign, once guerrillas had been attacked, walking back to Zambia was a monumental task. He claims that some of the survivors in this attack were eaten by crocodiles in the Zambezi River, bitten by poisonous snakes or succumbed to diseases as they tried to negotiate their way back. This clearly shows that both the ANC and ZAPU had not fully geared their guerrillas for the environmental problems. Raeburn has pointed out that the Wankie Game Reserve through which ANC/ZAPU guerrillas infiltrated from Zambia was depopulated and inhospitable. Furthermore, guerrillas were continually inconvenienced by inadequate maps, lack of food and water. Among the factors raised concerning the failure of ANC/ZAPU guerrillas was recklessness – the heavy figures of 8-boot-patterns left by guerrillas in the uninhabited game reserve made tracking by Rhodesian troops easy. This is in addition to the problem of leaving communication to chance. Referring to the same campaign, Bhebe shows that ZAPU had no bases from which it could launch its campaign. In addition, poor discipline led to one of the ANC guerrillas refusing to walk all the way to Limpopo and instead choosing to travel by lifts which lead not only to his own capture but also of the exposure of his whole group. Bhebe (1999: 27) concludes that traversing the vast and sparsely populated Zambezi valley and escarpments where they were easily spotted by the enemy, was an uphill task for guerrillas. That Rhodesians were aware of the Zambezi impediment is reflected in a hit song mocking guerrillas which was composed in 1977 by a South African artist John Edmond. It went as follows:

I saw a big fat crocodile  
I said I see you eat in style  
But the croc said man it's easy  
I catch the terts as they swim the Zambezi

I saw a big mugandanga  
He set in ambush for a car  
And much to his surprise  
The car was full of RLIs (Rhodesian Light Infantry)

I saw a Hippopotamus  
He was making a lot of fuss  
There was something stuck in his throat  
It was a terr in a blown up boat

Of course, it was not the norm for guerrillas to swim across the Zambezi, but instances of their canoes capsizing having disastrous consequences were a glaring reality. The Zambezi was to the Rhodesians a clear first line of defence and they utilized it effectively. Joshua Nkomo once lamented the challenges that his guerrillas had to face by choosing to operate from Zambia. He summarizes that on average, guerrillas took 30 days, often against strong opposition, to get to the front and then 30 days back, if they used up their weaponry. On the contrary, the border of Mozambique which ZANLA used, provided, an excellent setting for guerrilla operations. In his words, the border is mostly mountainous with good air cover. He concludes that these tactical realities led to different behaviour of the two armies (Nkomo 2001: 166). It is an exaggeration that the journey to the front took as long as 30 days. After all, ammunition dumps also existed outside the Zambezi Valley. Central to the statements is that these environmental changes saw ZIPRA failing to send in enough guerrillas. As a result, it was to be accused by ZANU and even Rhodesians of husbanding its forces outside the country to wait for an opportune moment when ZANLA and Rhodesian forces had tired each other out (Horne 2001: 261). Although ZAPU tried to rebuff the allegation, it stung and stuck. Up to the present day, many ZANLA war veterans still feel so, but in practice, ZIPRA also fought ferociously on its fronts and scored various victories. It is commonplace however, that the winning party normally discredits the loser. For example, many former ZANLA guerrillas interviewed in 2013 are of the opinion that it was them who fought the war and not ZIPRA.

Guerrillas devised strategies for their survival during the long journey to and from Zimbabwe or Zambia. In one encounter, a group of ZAPU guerrillas had to survive on berries, roots and the sour jelly of *malala* fruit and when they were short of water, they sucked the wood of that tree which was abundant in the area (Raeburn 1981: 108). All these are bush crafts which guerrillas had to learn in order to survive in the harsh environments. For those who had some rural orientation this was not too demanding a task.

In mid 1967, ZAPU entered into an agreement with the ANC to undertake joint military operations (Sibanda 2005: 186–187). This culminated in the infiltration of ANC/ZAPU commandos into Wankie and then Sipolilo. In August 1967, 90 ZAPU and ANC guerrillas entered Rhodesia near Victoria Falls. In early 1968, 123 ZAPU/ANC guerrillas again crossed the Zambezi near Chewore and in July, a force of 91 again crossed the Zambezi (Moorcraft & MacLaughlin 2011: 32–33). These became the backbone of the Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns. The Wankie and Sipolilo Campaigns by ANC/ZAPU reveal clearly that the natural environment was a great obstacle to guerrilla penetration. Both the ANC and ZAPU had made their reconnaissance with a view of determining the logic of deploying foot guerrillas across the Zambezi. In 1965 Dumiso Dabengwa and his team were tasked to map and test physically as many crossing points as possible on the Zambezi River from Kazungula in the west to Feira in the east (Bhebe 1999: 27). As soon as these points had been identified, local fishermen were

hired to transport one or two ZIPRA personnel at a time if circumstances would permit. Dumiso Dabengwa (Interview 4 October 2013) himself recalled that he physically mapped the river and was injured by a falling boulder from a cliff as he tried to cross the river during the mapping exercise. Similarly, in 1966, Joe Modise, commander-in-chief of the Umkhonto Wesizwe (MK), based himself in Zambia and with ZAPU military commanders, conducted reconnaissance work in Rhodesia. The result was a decision to operate jointly which was agreed upon in June 1967. Under that arrangement, the main MK column would march to South Africa on foot through the Rhodesian bush while the second and smaller column of MK would be part of a ZAPU unit. They would move east and then set up a base at Lupane inside Rhodesia so that it would be used in future as a transit base for MK (Van Driel 2003). The decision to use Rhodesia was in part influenced by the lack of preparedness on the part of the Botswana government to use their country as a passage for ANC guerrillas. Moreover, Namibia was effectively under South African rule and had the Caprivi Strip as a border being a desert which would pose serious challenges to insurgents.

Crossing the river was in itself a mammoth task. There were deep gorges, currents were swift, and the cliffs themselves were frightening. They all crossed between 31 July and 1 August 1967. The planners had grossly underestimated the number of days ANC guerrillas would require to traverse the whole country. Planners of the march calculated that it would take the marchers 12 days to reach the South African border if they were to head in the direction the crow flies (Van Driel 2003). By the 7th day, the group was already experiencing serious problems having run out of both food and water. The further they moved away from the Zambezi, the drier the land became, the scarcer water became and their desperate situation intensified.

ANC/ZAPU guerrillas and Rhodesians began to fight on 14 August 1967. Guerrilla forces were either killed or captured by the Rhodesians, or interned and later convicted by the Botswana authorities for illegal entry (Lodge 1983: 299). At the end of December 1967, there was yet a second incursion of ANC/ZAPU guerrillas which successfully remained undetected for 3 months inside Rhodesia until fierce fighting with the Rhodesians began in March 1968 and stretched into June. A third incursion attacked a Rhodesian military camp. It would seem to be a gross underestimation that the guerrilla planners were unaware of the challenges which their moves would bring upon the guerrillas, given the fact that they were highly trained. The question at hand was that they were making a statement to the OAU Liberation Committee that their men were actually engaging or fighting the enemy. It was and has normally hardly been the case that military and political leaders go to the front to fight the enemy physically. They deploy the worker and the peasant to go out and die in dangerous environments.

## CONSEQUENCES OF THE BATTLES

The forces which were deployed into Rhodesia were negotiating their way through unfamiliar territory coupled with inadequate maps of the specific routes they were

supposed to take. In the end many ANC/ZAPU guerrillas were killed or captured by the Rhodesians or interned or later convicted for illegal entry by the Botswana authorities. Owing to the absence of maps, most of those who were arrested in Botswana were not even aware that they had crossed the border. Other ANC/ZAPU guerrilla survivors became members of the CIO in Rhodesia or BOSS (Bureau of State Security) in South Africa (Ranilala *et al.* 2014). Only a few were able to find their way into South Africa. The bio-physical threat was realistic and a great impediment to the insurgency war in South Africa. What made the South African case even more unique was the forced relocations and dispossession of land of the African population. This meant that most rural areas were large expanses of sparsely populated land but nevertheless occupied by whites who in most cases were indifferent to the ANC cause. As such, negotiating their way through such lands was suicidal.

One of the consequences of the Wankie and Sipolilo battles was the deployment of the South African Police into Rhodesia (Ranilala *et al.* 2014). The logic was to keep the so-called terrorists north of the Zambezi so that any battles would be fought away from South African soil. In the wake of the ZAPU/ANC incursion, Pretoria sent 2 000 men into the Zambezi Valley. By 1969, 2 700 South African troops were in the valley (Moorcraft & MacLaughlin 2011: 32). As the Rhodesian bush war intensified, fears that ZIPRA would cross many MK guerrillas led to massive deployment of the South African Defence Forces (SADF) as well as military hardware. They made sure that the first line of defence namely the Zambezi River and its environs were well-secured. From 1970 onwards, the entire line from Lake Kariba to Mozambique was manned by South African troops. The Zambezi itself was patrolled by South African boats, jets and helicopters. Military camps had also been erected along the Zambezi River.

Between 1970 and 1975, the ANC changed tactics and began transferring its guerrillas through formal borders using forged documents (Lodge 1983: 299). This was an attempt to circumvent physical challenges posed by crossing armed men through Rhodesia where reaching South Africa would remain a dream. Again and again, once in South Africa, some of the guerrillas were arrested. For example, one of the veterans of the 1967 campaign, James April was arrested in 1971 in Durban. The ANC was not the only liberation movement to experience these problems. The PAC was facing the same challenges in trying to transfer their guerrillas from Zambia. Neither SWAPO of Namibia nor the Botswana government would provide that free passage. PAC guerrillas could not filter through the Caprivi Strip because it was well-defended by SADF while Machel of Mozambique was not quite friendly to the PAC because of its association with UNITA. The PAC tried to rally Swaziland in the 1970s but again this was a failure.

There was great disillusionment among guerrillas over the failure of the ANC leadership to provide a safe route to South Africa. This was despite the restlessness on the part of guerrillas demanding to go to the front after their training. The organization was criticized for abandoning some of its captured cadres who were incarcerated in Rhodesian jails. Such criticisms led to the temporary suspension of Chris Hani who was one of the veterans in the 1967 campaign (Ranilala *et al.* 2014). ZANU praised

the courage of the insurgents, but was quick to point out that the ANC should fight the South African regime in South Africa rather than on Rhodesian soil because by doing so, it was encouraging Pretoria to bolster the northern frontier. By the late 1970s, Thabo Mbeki was realising that if elections were to be held in Rhodesia, it was highly likely that ZANU-PF would win. He thus maintained an informal relationship so that in the event of a ZANU victory, ANC guerrillas would find a safe passage (Gevisser 2009: 300). The decisions by sections in the ANC to endear themselves to ZANU were not as popular with both parties. It appeared that up to 1980, the ANC continued to look at ZANU as *the enemy*. Oliver Tambo once called it the ‘spurious stooge of the imperialists’ (Gevisser 2009: 300). ZANU-PF complained that the ANC only started liking them after they had won the 1980 election. The relationship was worsened by the dissident problems from 1982–1986. Owing to the close association that the ANC and ZAPU had enjoyed, it appeared dangerous to assist ANC guerrillas.

The bio-physical impediments compelled ZIPRA to transfer ANC guerrillas and their arms including heavy weapons such as tanks into Zimbabwe during the ceasefire period and into the beginning of 1980. Technically, these were to appear as ZIPRA arms. The decision was arrived at by ZIPRA leadership with the realization that the ANC would only have one border to cross. According to the former ZIPRA Chief of Intelligence, Dumiso Dabengwa (Interview 4 October 2012), the new Zimbabwe government was compelled under the threat of military action by the apartheid South African regime to ensure that there were no ANC guerrillas on their soil. Resultantly, MK guerrillas were picked up from assembly points and quietly returned north of the Zambezi River. When ZAPU arms caches were eventually discovered, it was difficult for ZAPU to prove that part of the consignment belonged to MK. They had not informed the government of that development when MK cadres were sent back to Zambia. The government had no way of proving that indeed some of the arms were intended for use by MK.

There are many political arguments being advanced in independent Zimbabwe castigating ZIPRA commitment to the war effort. For example, in a foreword to a book by Martin & Johnson (1981: v) the then prime minister Robert Mugabe argued that the pace of the revolution was set by ZANU and ZANLA while credit may be given where it is merited to ZAPU and ZIPRA for their complementary role. This part is developed from the realisation that ZIPRA did not deploy as many guerrillas as ZANLA did during the war. Such arguments ignore the environmental impediments against using Zambia as a rear base. Joshua Nkomo (2001: 166) recalled that Zambia was a difficult base to operate from because

the frontier along the valley of the Zambezi River swelled from the early 1960s onwards by the creation of Lake Kariba behind its huge dam. The river valley was a strong first line of defence for the Rhodesians. Then south of the river lie ravines and high bare hills then a wide expanse of open bush, with semi-desert set with a maze of landmines.



The Zambezi was more of a barrier than a conduit. Often ambush along the river was easy. Carol Thompson (1985: 44) has noted that many men and material never reached the Rhodesian side of the river. In addition, supply lines were more difficult to maintain than one that depended on long marches under the cover of foliage. Crocodiles along the river took a heavy toll on crossing guerrillas. According to Nkiwane (Interview 23 August 2012), hippos also toppled canoes resulting in imminent deaths. Rhodesian soldiers developed a tendency of shooting at hippos to make them angry so that they would not hesitate to attack any human being entering the river. They did the same with buffaloes along certain routes if they had information that guerrillas might pass through the area. Should a guerrilla try to shoot the attacking animal in self-defence, that had a tendency to alert Rhodesian and SADF whose camps were dotted along the Zambezi valley. In addition, poisonous snakes bit guerrillas who often had no medical kit to deal with the challenge. In short, much as the environment might have worked against ZIPRA, it did help ZANLA partly contributing to the latter's victory in 1980. Challenges brought by the physical geography and how it was manipulated by both guerrillas and their enemies had radical consequences. Both MK and ZIPRA began to train their men in urban guerrilla warfare so that if they found their way into towns, they would start their insurgency in areas where the enemy was strongest.

## CONCLUSION

The paper has demonstrated that until 1980, the physical environment greatly impeded ZAPU and MK guerrilla warfare. The Zambezi River and valley in this case was the major source of the problem for guerrillas. Environmental challenges encouraged Pretoria to establish a close military co-operation with Rhodesia so as to prevent the war from being fought on South African soil. ZAPU was plagued by the challenges emanating from the Zambezi River and valley right until the coming of independence in 1980. Owing to environmental problems, ZIPRA could not field as numerous guerrillas as ZANLA did. As such, ZIPRA was accused of keeping the bulk of her forces outside the country waiting for an opportune moment to crush both Rhodesians and ZANLA. The allegation is still hard to shrug off. Environmental factors prolonged the war of liberation in South Africa. All forces fighting against the apartheid regime were headquartered outside the country hence faced similar daunting tasks. MK leadership began to send a few trained guerrillas into the country to organize and win hearts and minds. The ZAPU commissariat was not quite able to do the same. This meant that throughout the war, ZIPRA guerrillas would not be campaigning effectively for their political party. ZAPU's legacy was spoiled by the fact that due to the long distance before they could get to people, many battles were fought in areas which were not inhabited by people. As a result, such battles went unreported meaning that their commitment to the war remained largely unknown. More important, towards the end of the war ZIPRA tried to create a conventional army and confront the enemy directly but they were short changed by the Lancaster House Agreement. Again in both cases, Botswana could not compensate for



the challenges faced by the two forces because it economically depended on Rhodesia and South Africa in addition to her very weak military power.

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# PENTECOSTAL CLERGY AND POLITICS IN ZAMBIA: THE CASE OF PASTOR NEVERS MUMBA, PRESIDENT OF THE MOVEMENT FOR MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY

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## ABSTRACT

There is no contesting the fact that Pentecostal clergy involvement in partisan politics is a relatively new phenomenon in Africa. In Zambia, Pastor Nevers Mumba has not been given serious attention by academic observers as yet. In this article I cite his postulation for leaving televangelism to join politics, which has translated into his becoming the fourth president of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy. I expose the inherent contradiction in practice between Mumba's 'political ethics' and 'politics' as it is played out in real Zambian life. As a 'political pastor' who vilifies corruption, Mumba would be expected to galvanise tremendous support from citizens, the majority of whom claim to be Christian. This, not having been the case, I construct an argument that Mumba seems to have compromised his Christian faith for the rewards of politics of the belly and for a future that has led him into the morass of political duplicity.

**Keywords:** Nevers Mumba, Movement for Multiparty Democracy, Pentecostal, National Citizens' Coalition, politics

## INTRODUCTION

Who is Pastor Nevers Mumba? The answer will be found in his autobiography (1994), his own 84 page book, *Integrity with Fire* – a first person narrative, recounts of testimonies, confessions, anecdotes, reflections and any personal experience in a religious context and in biographical writings of others especially that of Lockhart (2001). The starting point of my efforts to shed some light on Mumba's involvement in politics is the plain truth that religion forms an integral part of the day-to-day life of most black indigenous (*abantu*) Zambian people. It influences the way they deal with misfortune, politics, poverty, disease and failure or disappointment among other issues, that touch their

lives. It is largely through religious ideas that most *abantu* in Zambia think about the world today, and that religious ideas provide them with a means of becoming social and political actors (Ellis & Ter Haar 2004: 2).

It is generally argued that after independence, the Prophetic Christian voice in Zambia went into a slumber (Hastings 1995: 37–46). In the 1980s, however, Father Davoli Umberto, a Catholic priest, broke that silence when he engaged Kenneth Kaunda's one-party state to its comprehensive defeat in the multiparty election of 1991. Mumba began to get involved in the politics of Zambia in 1990 when he 'prophesied' that the country would experience a bloodbath if the leaders of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy, upon forming government, did not declare Zambia a 'Christian Nation' and if they did not restore diplomatic ties with Israel. Frederick Chiluba, the leader of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy was favoured to win the 1991 election and he did so. Mumba, like Chiluba is not only a Christian fundamentalist who believes in the inerrancy of the Bible insisting on a literal understanding thereof, but also believes that the doctrines which emerge from such a literal reading should be applied to all aspects of social economic and political life.

In 1997, Mumba entered the political arena. Among other reasons, I argue, he might have assumed that the followers of his televangelism and members of his church would translate into political supporters. He formed the National Christian Coalition which he later renamed as National Citizens' Coalition and contested the presidency in the 2001 elections but lost. On 27 May 2003, he was appointed Vice President by the then Republican President, the late Mr. Levy Mwanawasa. He had by then dissolved his National Citizens' Coalition. When he was dropped as Vice-President on 4 October 2004, he tried to concentrate on re-organising his Victory Ministries and a theological college, which he hoped to transform into a university. However, politics seemed to have remained his overriding ambition. He formed another party called Reform Party. Another opportunity to contest the presidency presented itself when Mwanawasa died on 9 August 2008. Mumba tried his luck to get adopted as Movement for Multiparty Democracy president and, therefore, national presidential contender. The National Executive Committee of the party had different ideas and appointed Rupiah Bwezani Banda as party president and national presidential candidate instead. Banda went on to win the 2008 election. In 2009, Mumba was appointed Zambia's High Commissioner to Canada. He returned from Canada in 2012 and in a fiercely contested election became the fourth Movement for Multiparty Democracy president when Banda retired from active politics following his defeat in the 2011 national elections.

## EARLY LIFE

Kirbey Lockhart (2001: 4) failed to get the most out of Mumba's life for his biography. 'I have never completely understood, Nevers keeps his thoughts carefully locked in the vault of his heart,' he confessed. In the end, he presented the public persona of Mumba by systematically putting together speeches, excerpts, press releases and articles written

by the Pastor. In this article I explore Mumba's reasons for joining politics to furnish an argument that Mumba threw himself into the country's political arena when the Pentecostal born-again president then, could not reward him with a ministerial portfolio for the support he had rendered to him and the 'Christian Nation' ideology. About his early life, Mumba told my research assistants<sup>1</sup> the following (Mumba, Interview 16, 18 November 2006):

My name is Nevers Sekwila Mumba. I was born on 18 May 1960 and I come from a family of twelve; seven brothers and five sisters. I happen to be the eleventh born in the family. My late father's name was Samuel Peter Mumba. My mother's name is Malita [Martha] Mumba. She comes from Lubwa Mission. My family was a moderate Christian family with my father being a preacher in the United Church of Zambia [UCZ]. My mother was also a committed Christian in the UCZ. My family was quite a religious one but at the same time it was quite permissive. My father was quite strong on the bottle. However, the Church did not find that too much of an issue. They let him do that, as long as he did what they considered to be Christian...

### From a mining student to a preacher

Mumba became a born-again Christian on 17 October 1977 at Hillcrest Secondary School. He was a member of the Scripture Union at Hillcrest School which was to produce future luminaries in Zambia's Pentecostal Movement (Gordon 2012: 178). He went to a good school which sent Form Five school leavers with excellent results to study in some of the United Kingdom's leading universities. Mumba himself noted:

A lot of friends were sponsored to the United Kingdom to do metallurgy and engineering of different sorts. When I left Hillcrest, I was sponsored by the Mining Industry, on the Copperbelt, to study instrumentation. Even during my school days, my friends would fix all kinds of electronic things which I could not. What I enjoyed at that time was preaching. That is why three to four months before graduating, I felt a strong call to go to a Bible School.

Mumba quit the instrumentation course and went round preaching in Kitwe under the aegis of the Assemblies of God. When Pastor Reinhard Bonnke of Christ for All Nations Ministries came to Zambia in 1981, Gary Skinner, a Canadian missionary and Coordinator of the organization in Zambia, asked Mumba to be Bonnke's interpreter in Kitwe. According to Lockhart (2001: 17) 'Pastor Mumba took the interpreting assignment seriously for he not only wanted to please God, but Reinhard too...'

Mumba ended up travelling with Bonnke to places where he held his crusades. Lockhart reported that 'Reinhard had taken note of Mumba's infectious zeal and encouraged him to go to a Bible school for training (2001: 18).' Mumba had already applied to a theological college in the West Indies. This was to be superseded by Bonnke's facilitation of his entry into Christ for the Nations Institute in Dallas, Texas in the USA. While waiting to go to the USA in August 1982, Mumba began to preach Bonnke's message throughout the Copperbelt province, calling all his listeners to repent

and turn to Jesus for healing. With friends he formed the 'Evangelistic Board of Zambia' and invited a Canadian Evangelist, Peter Youngmen to preach at the first crusade.

### The founding of Victory Ministries and Victory Bible College

Upon his return to Zambia, Mumba assumed the title of *Evangelist*. Duplicating the paradigms of Christ for the Nations Institute and Christ for All Nations, he started Victory Bible College in 1985 with four students, who with his colleagues from Evangelistic Board of Zambia, formed a crusade team modelled on Bonnke's Christ for All Nations. In 1985, Bonnke purchased a brand new Toyota Land Cruiser and a mobile sound system capable of reaching out to 20 000 people for the crusade team. In addition, Freda Lindsay, President of Christ for the Nations Institute encouraged Mumba to continue training full time Christian evangelists. In 1989, she paid US \$130 000 for a 15 hectare farm with 13 buildings on it on the Kafue River in the town of Kitwe, for Mumba's Victory Ministries. Additionally, a wealthy expatriate widow also donated a house in an affluent area along Jambo drive worth US \$20 000 to Mumba's family, before leaving Zambia (Lockhart, 2001). In 1987, the wealthy Mumba initiated the first national Christian broadcast called 'Zambia Shall be Saved' a replication of Bonnke's 'Africa Shall be Saved' on Zambia Broadcasting Corporation television channel. It was the first instance of televangelism by a Zambian preacher.

### Mumba's role in the re-introduction of multiparty politics

In the late 1980s, Mumba began to hold crusades in the midlands. In Lusaka a crusade was planned for September 1990 at a time when Zambians were demanding multiparty politics and an end to Kenneth Kaunda's one party rule. When Mumba finally came to Lusaka, he claimed that he was invited to State House by Kaunda. He narrated the following:

A call came in telling me I had to be at the State House at eight hours the next morning. One of my associates (Jeston Katebe) drove with me to meet the President. We were welcomed warmly by everyone and were whisked into a waiting room. On the way we asked God silently for supernatural wisdom. When we were called in, the thick double doors were closed behind us. After we were seated, God's miracle began. The anointing of God came upon me and I could feel it. As I studied the President I saw that he looked thin and weary. Things were taking their toll on him and it was showing. I saw he was a lonely man. Breaking the short silence, he started by saying, 'I have been wishing to meet with you since you began the crusade early this week, but I have been extremely busy.' Looking at him I knew he wanted to be open and freely share his hurts and fears, so I began with what God had given me early that morning during my prayer time. It was the story of the 'Rich Young Ruler'. I responded to him by saying, Sir, God is not able to help you until you surrender your life and give up any fetishes that could be around the State House. I said to the president, 'Jesus will help you by saving you because of your trust only in Jesus, for salvation.' He knelt down in front of me to honour and receive Jesus Christ into his heart. We joined hands and had a glorious time of prayer. He repeated the sinner's prayer after

me just like in the crusades. My associate was watching all this, amazed at my boldness and the President's response and the presence of the Holy Spirit in the room. Little did I know that in two hours time the President was going to address the nation on radio and television to diffuse a political time bomb, one that could have brought untold bloodshed to Zambia. He [Kaunda] declared Zambia a multi-party state. (Mumba, Interview 16, 18 November 2006)

This episode is crucial to understanding Mumba's efforts to become President of Zambia at one time or another. I argue that he saw, as he perhaps still sees himself today, as the man who influenced Kaunda to abandon the referendum on multiparty politics and use his executive powers to amend the constitution to reintroduce multiparty politics. How can such a man be forgotten by Zambians? How can such a man be sidelined by the ruling political elite?

## MUMBA'S INVOLVEMENT IN MULTIPARTY POLITICS

Mumba's political involvement is based on Proverbs 29: 2, which says: 'Show me a righteous ruler and I will show you a happy people. Show me a wicked ruler and I will show you a miserable people.' In this article I shed some light on Mumba's politicking in the context of an exuberant flourishing of Pentecostal and Charismatic varieties of Christianity in Zambia (Ellis & Ter Haar 2004: 1). When asked about his Christianity, Mumba had this lengthy answer:

It is interesting to reflect on my brand of Christianity because, quite frankly, it is one topic I have never addressed. In fact, you are the first to ask me about this. Somehow I have always assumed that everybody understands. I think that I am a casualty of what God can do. I believe that God is God and so, there is nothing he can fail to do...I do have enough faith in God so that when I see a crippled person, I do not hesitate to lay hands to pray for him or her. The psychology of saying 'it cannot happen' does not work with me because the God I believe in is the God who is just restricted to only making me feel spiritually good. If He created man, then He must be more creative than just making your spirit or soul going to heaven. He must be interested in my physical situation and in my financial condition. If you are broke, God feels with you. I would rather have a God who feels with me when I am broke, and that is where I am coming from. My involvement in politics then can be traced from this type of faith...I may not be understood but I believe in a God who cannot be restricted...When I became a preacher, a lot of friends from Bible Colleges went out and started churches so that they could develop a congregation and get an offering to sustain themselves to have their ministry stable [financially]. When I got into the Ministry, I felt that everybody was doing that. Instead, I felt very strongly pulled to become an evangelist. So, I started a team of young men and women who travelled with me. Politics were so dark that, it was even a known fact that politics were a dirty game. They [people] actually told me in my face that politics are a dirty game. 'Politicians are cheats, corrupt, immoral' and that they steal. By telling me this, they thought that they were scaring me but that is when I was getting attracted to politics...This was going to be a new mission field which required the gospel. To this effect, I began to mobilise Christians to get into politics by starting a Christian Coalition, the National Christian Coalition (NCC) in 1997. When we started NCC, there was no intention of it ever becoming a political party because I was not decided. I never even thought



that one day I would even become a politician to run for an office. What we wanted to do was to tell Christians that they could prepare to begin taking positions of authority at civic level, local government level and cabinet level. It was time Christians took up influential positions such as Solicitor General, Chief Justice or Chief of Police. I wanted to encourage people with Christian values to begin taking those positions of authority with prayer and hope that these people of morality could influence good policy formulation sensitive to the needs of the poor. (Mumba, Interview 16, 18 November 2006)

Mumba's argument is that there is a need for political ethics in the ruling elite although in 1999, two years after the formation of his political party, he admitted that politics was a dirty game. Addressing his party's Kabwe District Executive, he made a statement in which he disclosed his cessation to trusting the sole changing power of prayer in politics. He was quoted as having said: 'In 2001, I will change my gimmick and the MMD will tumble. While we campaigned in the day peacefully [in local by-election in Mbala], the MMD used dirty tactics and money, destroying us in the night (Mitanni 1999: 5).'

## THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL CHRISTIAN COALITION AND NATIONAL CITIZENS COALITION

It is one of my arguments in this article that Mumba had become a cadre in the Movement for Multiparty Democracy expecting some reward from the Pentecostal 'big man' in State House. When no reward was forthcoming, he along with colleagues, Florence Chola, Simataa Simataa, Emmanuel Shikaputo and Eva Sanderson, created the National Christian Coalition on 4 September 1997. At the inauguration of the party, which I attended, Mumba announced:

The goal of the new NCC is to be the strongest party in the land, run for elections and form the next government and transform Zambia. The NCC will aim at inculcating values into political leaders so that Zambia can qualify to be a Christian nation. The party is going to work with every person who accepts its manifesto. The NCC is going to be a mass party not restricted to one ethnic group of the population.

As soon as Mumba announced his presidential ambitions, the remark of 'don't mix religion with politics' was heard from the ruling political party. Archbishop Desmond Tutu aptly pointed out, in a different context, that:

It is a remark which is made not because a politician in his election campaign introduces a moral or religious element. No, we almost always hear it when a particular political, social or economic fact of life is criticized as being inconsistent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ as most Christians understand it (Tutu 1984: 36).

## MUMBA AS A VICTIM OF DIRTY-POLITICS

My starting point here is Mumba's widely remembered and unmistakable remark in an interview on the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation television in the late 1990s that he would not consider running for political office, as doing so would be tantamount to demoting himself from his noble ministry of proclaiming the gospel. He argued in 2012:

When I gave that answer it was a very honest answer, the true answer. I had no desire for politics, absolutely no intention to ever get involved in politics. So, the answer I gave was definitely from my heart as I understood it at that time. Of course, time is the greatest gift God gives to man. From the time one is 24 years old and the time one is 40 years old, there are certain things one does not believe at 45 (Chanda 2012: 1).

Mumba was the youngest of the eleven candidates in the 2001 elections and he considered himself bearer of a most critical, necessary and most appealing message to the nation at that time, because it was about creating a moral society and enhancing developmental programmes. However, his was one of the most spectacular flops, when he polled only two per cent of the total vote cast.

## JOINING THE MOVEMENT FOR MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY AND APPOINTMENT AS VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

In May of 2003, Mumba announced his resignation from his own party to join the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy. In the interview with my research assistants, his reasons conflated into the idea of 'to strengthen the fight against corruption.' He summarised his reasons in this statement:

Mwanawasa's fight against corruption, his inclusive government and many other steps already taken by his administration had given me hope that, for once, we could close the chapter of the past rivalry and open a new political order of tolerance, inclusiveness and prosperity for Zambia.

Mumba argued that his action was that of a true religious leader who would work with the state when he or she sees that the welfare of the people was being taken care of.

Arising from Mumba's decision, most Pentecostals felt that the Pastor had made a wrong decision. Those disappointed with Mumba were not short of expressions such as this one: 'What a shameful boot-licking show, Reverend Mumba! And how blasphemous to claim God's will and blessing on your cunning and selfish plot (Chola 2003: 5).' Mumba is reported to have lost a large number of his church followers because they felt betrayed in that in his sermons, he had said that he had been called to be a prophet of Zambia, a calling higher than that of a president of a country, yet he founded a party, became a presidential candidate and eventually Vice-President (Phiri 2003: 414).

## Dismissed as Vice-President

After serving for sixteen months as Republican Vice-President, Mumba was dismissed for announcing to the nation that some opposition political parties were receiving funding through the Democratic Republic of Congo. When asked whether he could accept another position if President Mwanawasa asked him to return, Mumba answered, 'I would, because I want to serve the people of Zambia with integrity and Christian values.'

## After the dismissal

The media reported Mumba's apology to Mwanawasa in writing. In any case, he went back to his preaching job and visited the United States of America. Some critics said that he had gone there to source financial support to enable him to contest the 2006 presidential election. Unashamedly, he vowed to remain in the party that had expelled him to contest the party presidency at the 2005 convention despite his suspension. When he came back he was reported to be in 'full gear' to campaign. He was nevertheless stopped from standing against President Mwanawasa at the National Convention on trumped-up charges. Mumba was subsequently expelled from the Movement for Multiparty Democracy on Tuesday, June 1, 2006 by the National Executive Committee of the party. This ended Mumba's ambition to join the presidential race on the Movement for Multiparty Democracy platform in the 2006 general elections.

## NATIONAL CITIZENS' COALITION TRANSFORMED INTO REFORM PARTY

During meetings with supporters and sympathisers on the Copperbelt, Mumba was advised to form another party. With this renewed assurance, he came up with the Reform Party. Twelve years after the formation and demise of this party, he volunteered additional information about the formation of the Reform Party:

One thing that a lot of people who criticise us forget is that I was not suspended or fired alone. Provincial chairmen, secretaries of branches, including constituencies and districts – those that were known to have supported my candidature were all of them expelled. Their cry was, 'Dr. Mumba you have made us expelled, where do we go? We are political animals and we want to continue to contribute to the political process.' Without exaggeration they were thousands of people who were expelled throughout the country. So, it was with those people we decided to form the Reform Party. We tried to reform the politics of MMD at that time... So, Reform Party was a protest party for the type of politics that looked like they were excluding democracy... And once we felt that there was an acceptance now coming from MMD that we can get back to our party, we had to return to MMD (Chanda 2012: 1).

In the bid to unseat the Movement for Multiparty Democracy presidential candidate in the 2006 elections, five political parties formed an alliance namely, National Democratic

Front; Reform Party; All Peoples Congress; the Party for Unity, Democracy and Development; Zambia Republican Party; Patriotic Front and the Zambia Development Congress. There was to be an election for the leader of the alliance. Michael Sata of the Patriotic Front pulled out of the alliance. When the convention took place on 12 June 2006 with a delegation of 55 members selected country wide, Ben Mwila of the Zambia Republican Party was elected as the alliance's presidential candidate for the 2006 presidential elections. Mumba refused to accept the results and cited corruption at the convention, and consequently pulled out of the alliance.

## WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL 2006 ELECTIONS

Finally, Mumba announced his new course of action, that he would not participate in the September tripartite elections of 2006. Zambia's electoral laws guiding the September 2006 tripartite elections, among other things, had a clause which demanded payment of what the majority of people considered a huge sum of money – twenty million Kwacha (K20 000 000), which is an equivalent of US \$4 000 for presidential candidates. Critics insinuated that the withdrawal of Mumba from the presidential race was due to his failure to raise the set amount since he had sold his property on the Copperbelt; coupled with the absence of support for his Reform Party across the country. His attempt to contest the Chinsali constituency where he hails from on the Patriotic Front platform, as a parliamentary candidate, was stopped by residents of that area.

Mumba may have lost his bid to contest the presidency in the September 2006 general elections, but his conviction was that temporary setbacks could not make him leave politics, until Zambian politics translated into prosperity for Zambians. The death of President Mwanawasa seems to have presented an opportunity for Mumba to try and return to the Movement for Multiparty Democracy and become Presidential candidate. After all, he had, he claimed, met President Mwanawasa in 2007, at State House for reconciliation. When the campaigns of potential successors began, Mumba resurfaced despite his dismissal from Mwanawasa's party. He was emasculated, snubbed and ridiculed and told to keep away from the Movement for Multiparty Democracy. Mwanawasa's Vice-President, Rupiah Bwezani Banda was nominated to stand for the republican presidency and won the election in 2008.

## UNDERSTANDING MUMBA'S POLITICAL AMBITION

In my attempt to make sense of Mumba's use of Christianity in politics, I am guided by the question:

Is there a sense in Africa that belief in the irrational is manipulated by the elite for their own purposes? Or, conversely, is it the case that African elites, though often fully Westernised, share with the rest of the population a faith in the irrational which matters deeply to politics (Chabal & Daloz 1999: 64)?

The answer to the question either way is, in my opinion, ‘yes’. It is asserted that: ‘African Christians, who often interpret the Bible literally, may believe that they are required to work with any incumbent government (Ellis & Ter Haar 2004: 157).’ This, seems, I argue, to have been the reason for the initial self positioning of Mumba’s NCC – to gain co-option into the MMD which had come to stand for ‘*Mwalya Mweka Dad*’ (you are eating alone dad) – implying that the ruling elite was not redistributing the spoils of being in politics.

If it is Pentecostalism that had made Mumba engage in politics, then I could argue that his desire to exercise his agency was of a different kind because ‘Pentecostalism advocates a decidedly “modern” and individualistic notion of (economic and political) agency of which personal self-improvement and internationalism are perhaps the two most significant (Chabal 2009: 102).’ My other contention is that Mumba exemplified the tendency by political opponents in Africa to challenge their exclusion from the state in the hope that their agitation will earn them co-optation (Chabal & Daloz 1999: 26).

‘Leadership’ seems to have been, from the very beginning, key to Mumba, his interpretation of ‘leadership’ being *integrity*. That is why he had begun to train ‘leaders’ on the Copperbelt and when he was dismissed as Vice-President, he made some efforts to open a university that would, among other things, train Christian leaders. Undoubtedly, Pastor Mensah Otabil of Ghana is an inspiration to Mumba.

Otabil has a public and social commitment that others lack. He is driven by the idea of providing leadership for Ghana, Africa, and the third world. This is evident in the church’s self-understanding: ‘A Bible believing charismatic church with a commitment to bring leadership and vision to our generation and also influence society with the principles of the Word of God.’ He had begun to build a Pan African Centre for Christian Leadership (Gifford 1994: 260).

There is no contesting that Mumba is a man driven as much by his deep religious conviction as his boundless ambition. Trying to bring ethics into politics is not as easy as making fiery statements about it.

Different Pentecostal pastors have adopted different stances towards politics and government in Zambia. As I have indicated, Mumba only became a fiery critic of Chiluba when he was sidelined. The question though, is, would he have accepted co-option at the time Chiluba’s government had become thoroughly corrupt between (1996 and 2001)? Ellis & Ter Haar (2004: 102) argue that:

There is nothing new in religious leaders associating themselves with politics and even accepting formal office, sometimes in government known for their corruption or repression. Reverend Canaan Banana, a Methodist church minister, was no less than the first president of independent Zimbabwe. He retained his position throughout the 1980s while the government of Prime Minister Robert Mugabe was organising the systematic killing of thousands of people in the west of the country.

## FROM HIGH COMMISSIONER TO PRESIDENT OF MOVEMENT FOR MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY

The death of President Mwanawasa left the Movement for Multiparty Democracy saddled with an unpopular leader (Cheeseman & Hinfelaar 2009: 27). On 29 September 2011, the party suffered a setback when after twenty years of rule it lost the national leadership to the Patriotic Front of Sata, who embarked on replacing former ruling party's cadres from various positions of administration with his own cadres. Among the many people recalled from diplomatic missions, was Mumba. On 16 November 2011 Sata made news headlines in the print and electronic media reporting they had recalled Zambia's High Commissioner to Canada. Nevers Mumba, was resisting coming back and could be probed for financial irregularities at the High Commissioner's office in Toronto. Mumba denied the accusations and astutely understood Sata as vindictive because of statements by some members of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy to the effect that Mumba is trying to take over the presidency of the party.

The President works with information and not slander. I am sure the President is reacting to some calls in the media that I contest the MMD presidency...I have never even responded or announced my candidature. That kind of attack will never deter me from pursuing what I believe to be God's Will in my life. I think that the president should have waited until I made indication of my political direction. I am ready to fight politically (Chanda & Chimpinde 2011: 4).

### Eventual return of the high commissioner

On Thursday 8 December 2011 Mumba arrived from Canada. At the airport, the Drug Enforcement Commission officers detained him close to an hour, from 10h15 to 11h07. As he emerged from the VIP lounge, he was lifted shoulder high amid chanting of 'our president has come'. Some placards hoisted high read 'We don't want corrupt leaders' (in reference to Situmbeko Musokotwane) and 'We don't want womanisers' (in reference to Felix Mutati who had been reported in the press of having extra marital affairs). Was Mumba assured of victory already while in Canada? Why Mumba? One plausible explanation is that he was not a Member of Parliament and therefore freer to organise the party and mobilise the electorate throughout the country. Additionally, other potential candidates were seen as not capable of standing up to Sata. Felix Mutati slated as the successor of Banda was, apart from accusations of 'womaniser' rumoured to be too friendly to Sata. It is true, however, that he had contemplated joining the PF in 2011. A Member of Parliament in the Patriotic Front told me: 'Felix should have resigned from the MMD when Judith Kapijimpanga resigned, but he grew cold feet.'

## THE CAMPAIGN AND VICTORY OF MUMBA

Mumba's campaign message was organised around the notion of 'reform'. In a televised interview with Muvi Television 'Assignment Programme' on 18 December 2011, the usual question of 'why did you go into politics?' was asked and Mumba answered:

Whatever I do, I am informed by my faith. I was upset by corruption and political intimidation... Zambia could do more with people like me who bring their faith to their work, God has led me to politics because 'I am supposed to be the salt of the earth'.

On 25 May 2012, Mumba was elected leader of the MMD, becoming the fourth president of the party from its inception in 1991. The Foundation for Democratic Process monitored the election. There were seven candidates in all, but the contest was between Mumba and Mutati. In the first round, the 51% threshold as stipulated in the Movement for Multiparty Democracy constitution was not attained by the two leading candidates, because Mumba polled 557 representing 42.36% while Mutati received 336 translating into 27.83% of the total 1, 317 votes cast. In the run-off, Mumba polled 870 votes translating into 67.34% and Mutati polled 422 representing 32.66% of the total 1, 317 votes cast.

At his inauguration on 1 June 2012 the new Movement for Multiparty Democracy President announced a 'punch to punch' ideology, which is not surprising as in his biography, Mumba is reported to be a fan of boxing (Lockhart 2001). 'When Mr. Sata punches [says something wrong – that is not in the interest of Movement for Multiparty Democracy], at seven o'clock in the morning, I will punch back at eight o'clock,' he explained (Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation television's 19h00 prime time news of 1 June 2012). By December 2013, Mumba had learnt the art of dirty politics and was facing charges of slandering the Republican President and embezzling public funds.

## CONCLUSION

It has been my special concern in this article to preserve the texture of some of Mumba's statements. I also hope that the failings of my narrative will not obscure the rich personal story of a man who has puzzled many Zambians. Many people ask: what kind of a man is Pastor Mumba who courageously, freely and openly contradicts himself even without thinking much about clarifications and apologies? My argument in this article is that the Pastor had hoped that Chiluba would offer him a job after he lobbied for the declaration of Zambia as a 'Christian Nation' in 1990. He was hugely disappointed when his only tangible benefit was the diplomatic passport which was swiftly withdrawn from him when he entered the political arena. For some evangelicals, the disappointed hope of a career boost is compounded by a theology of hierocracy: that God's agents on earth are basically church leaders and that the government of the nations by the people of God, promised in the Old Testament, is to be exercised through the direct political power



– whether by holding government posts in person or through proxies of evangelical church leaders (Freston 2001: 162).

The underlying fact that cannot blithely be dismissed is that, ‘politics in Africa today appears to many people as the ultimate form of individual activity, in which power and wealth are conjured out of nothing and used for selfish purposes’ (Ellis & Ter Haar 2004: 154). This situation goes with changing party allegiance. Of particular importance among the works of Jean Francois-Bayart is no doubt the notion of ‘politics of the belly’ (Bayart 2009). Sometimes politicians bereft of a clear ideology, jump from one political party to another for self aggrandisement and treat the public to contradictory narratives about their capabilities. This fickle political behaviour has not been peculiar to Mumba alone.

I argue that Mumba’s actions can best be described as ‘politics of the belly’. Those who play into this politics in Zambia are often referred to in ordinary conversations and social media as con-men and con-women and the country has an abundant supply of such people; they include politicians who claim to be in politics because their Christianity requires them to do so while exhibiting a Machiavellian talent for political manoeuvre (Ellis & Ter Haar 2004). Overall, Mumba is, as Lewis Dzimbiri (1998: 87–101) said about some Malawian politicians, a ‘chameleon-like leader’, which I argue is a result of politics of the belly. The frequent changing colours of the political elite do not create a positive image of politics as the basis of government business. The absence of firm principles in the political elites can in fact hamper the development of political consciousness and the emergence of an informed and committed citizenry (Dzimbiri 1998: 101).

## ENDNOTE

- 1 Mumba agreed to be interviewed by my research assistants on 16 and 18 November 2006 at his Roma Township office in Lusaka. Some of his responses to different questions have been reproduced in the article.

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# FRIAR AMARAL BERNARDO AMARAL'S TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE INTO GITONGA (MOZAMBIQUE 1984-2014)

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## ABSTRACT

Even if Mozambique has only Portuguese as the official language, there are many languages spoken in the country. That is the case of *Gitonga* spoken in the Inhambane region about 470 km north of Maputo (Briggs 2011: 155). The Bible Society of Mozambique has supported the bible translation to serve the Tonga people in their own language *Gitonga*. This task has been undertaken by Franciscan friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral since 1984 and is still on its course.

This article will address the case of the historical episode by the son of a Methodist pastor, converted to Catholicism who is translating the bible into *Gitonga* with the support auspices of the Mozambican Bible Society.

As regards the methodology of this article, data was collected from interviews held with Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral during his work with his team to translate the Bible. Further research was conducted surveying a few online portals. Furthermore some telephonic interviews were conducted to verify some of the facts.

**Keywords:** Mozambican Colonial War; Christian Council of Mozambique (CCM); Bishop Dinis Sengulane; Mozambican Civil War; Swiss Mission

## INTRODUCTION

The historical issue of the bible translation into *Gitonga* has not yet been reported; therefore, it is my duty to provide historical data on it. I met Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral for the first time on 7 March 2014, while in the ceremonial of my welcoming message to the students in my capacity as the Rector of the Universidade Mussa Bin Bique in Inhambane, Mozambique. Further contacts have been made that led to an interview covering his efforts to translate the bible into *Gitonga*. So, we will address the following topics: Historical reflection on the Tonga people and their language; Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral, his vision, and the efforts to translate the bible in *Gitonga*; and the bible translation into *Gitonga* with the support of the Bible Society.

## HISTORICAL REFLECTION ON THE TONGA PEOPLE AND THEIR LANGUAGE

This section highlights the historical framework of the Tonga people and their language. This will provide the grounds to understand the need for the translation of the Bible into *Gitonga*.

### Brief historical framework of the Tonga people

Colloquially known as *Bitonga*,<sup>3</sup> the people have their origin in the Province of Inhambane in Mozambique; to be more precise from the region of the districts of Inhambane, Maxixe, Morrumbene, and Jangamo. Their estimated number is about 200 000 (Wikipédia [Portuguese], s.v. '*Bitonga*'); or, more precisely, as Orville B. Jenkins has stated in his article entitled *The Tonga people of Mozambique*, their population is 237,780 (Jenkins n.p.) – at least by 2 June 2014. According to a telephonic interview (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 31 May 2014) conducted to inform this article Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral has explained the singular to be 'Tonga', referring to the tribe of the 'Tongas' (cf. *Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa*), while the plural is '*VaTonga*' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral 2007). An article published in the *Wikipedia* entitled *BiTonga*, informs the Tonga people speak *GiTonga*, a language from the Bantu family (*Wikipédia*, s.v. '*BiTonga*').

### Vasco da Gama called it the 'land of the good people'

Vasco da Gama 'anchored his four ships off the Inhambane Bay while on his way to India' for the first time on 10 January 1498; but the first mass held in the lands of Mozambique was only on 11 March of the same year in the Ilha de São Vicente, close to the Ilha de Moçambique (John 2014). Da Gama's crew was sick due to lack of fresh water, vegetables and fruit. Instead of running away, scared, the Tonga populations welcomed the strange white sailers from the massive boats to their huts and cared for them. Vasco da Gama was so impressed that he called the area 'the land of the good people', a label, which is still used today (Adrobat 2011). Corroboratively, an article entitled *Inhambane (cidade) – História*, states:

Established by swahili merchants Inhambane was visited the first time by the Portuguese in January 1498. Landing to refuel Vasco da Gama was welcomed by the population whom he called 'The land of the good people'. The Portuguese built a fortified trading post in 1546, but the region was only definitively occupied by Portugal in 1731. (*Wikipédia*, '*Inhambane (cidade) – História*')

The land is beautiful with its thousands of palm trees and clean, white sandy beaches. Fruit abounds in the region, and the vegetables cultivated without pesticides or fertilizers serve to cook delicious plates of food.

Even if we do not know what the historical relationship with the other Tonga of Zimbabwe and Zambia might be, or even further away the Kingdom of Tonga in Oceania, the Tonga of Inhambane are industrious. According to Jenkins, they are well known by their ‘great variety of design in the creative, attractive strip patterns of colours, called *gipatsi* (*sipatsi* plural). So far, artisan scholars have discovered 494 unique *sipatsi* patterns!’ (Jenkins 2014). With natural beauty, favourable weather and wonderful, good people, it could only be ‘the land of the good people’.

## The development of the Tonga and their need for written materials

Inhambane became an important base for the Portuguese and so Christianity was introduced. The preaching of the gospel was done mainly in Portuguese, and the development of the Tonga language was left almost without literary materials. However, the Tonga culture can only be understood within what Amaral Bernardo Amaral labels as ‘traditional African culture’<sup>4</sup> (Amaral Bernardo Amaral 2007: 35), according to his article entitled *Matriz Estruturante da Cultura Tradicional Africana*. Amaral has argued that Western Christianity needs to listen to the African heart beat with respect if it wants to truly evangelize Africa. The traditional African culture is open to the penetration of the Gospel, more than any other civilization. Nevertheless, as Amaral has pointed out:

The Gospel of Christ and the Christian message have a deep echo and favorable ground in the heart of African Traditional Culture and its core values. But, the evangelization of Africans continue to be cosmetic and superficial, if we do not take seriously the dynamics of enculturation, the incarnation of the Word of God (Gospel) must take place within the existing authentic values in African culture (Amaral Bernardo Amaral 2007: 35).

Amaral has also argued that the Gospel has to penetrate into the depths and roots of the African culture to illuminate it, challenge it, and purify it; ‘...elevating and dignifying what’s positive in religious and cultural traditions of these people. Only as Africans are able to assimilate the essentials of the Christian message and to express it faithfully in their own tongue, their own character, their own way of thinking and living, will they be able to feel Christianity as “their own thing”, as part of their own nature’ (Amaral Bernardo Amaral 2007: 35).

With Portuguese being the official language of the country the development of the Tonga language has not had the possibility to prosper. Only in recent decades has the language received some development with the publication of a dictionary and a grammar guide. It should not be surprising, then, that only 0.72% of the Tonga in Inhambane are Christian. According to Jenkins, in 2006 there were only 1 680 Christian individuals in a country of 235,000 people (Jenkins 2014).

Evangelistic efforts have been taken by some missionaries such as Gustavo and Beatriz Fuentes who left the United States to evangelise this African tribe, the Tonga.

They have worked some years in Inhambane with Young Life Mozambique, but are now stationed in Beira (Fuentes 2014). Jenkins has also informed '*The Jesus Film*'<sup>5</sup> is available in *Gitonga*, the language of the Mozambique Tonga' (Jenkins 2014). Some portions of the *New Testament* were translated in 1890 (Jenkins 2014). But, in recent decades a Catholic priest, native of the Tonga tribe, has decided to translate the whole bible into '*guiTonga*' as the Tonga spell their Tonga language.

## FRIAR AMARAL BERNARDO AMARAL, HIS VISION, AND EFFORTS TO TRANSLATE THE BIBLE INTO GITONGA

### Historical framework of the ministry of Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral

Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral has played an important role in the translation of the *Bible* into his Tonga language. On 4 July 1952 Frei Amaral Bernardo Amaral was born in Nhabanba, nearby the city of Maxixe in the Province of Inhambane. His father was Bernardo Amaral and his mother Josefa António Remane, they were a pious family. His mother had been a Muslim who converted to Christianity to get married to Mr. Bernardo Amaral, a Methodist pastor. As Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral has stated in a telephonic interview: 'When I was born, my father was already a Methodist minister' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 3 June 2014). And, as Amaral has further informed me:

Surely the faith and conduct of my father marked the first years of my life. Up to 10 years of age I attended the Methodist church my father pastored. In my house nobody smoked and drank alcohol. Even today I do not smoke or drink. My father was a singer and I learned many things through his music and his sermons (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 3 June 2014).

At the age of 10 Amaral Bernardo Amaral made an important decision, which guided his entire life, to study in the Catholic Seminary, the Seminário Franciscano de Amatongas in Chimoio (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 3 June 2014). His mother opposed his desire to study there, but as he has put it, 'When I asked him, my father did not oppose me' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 3 June 2014). The local Catholic mission was São José de Mongué the first Catholic mission in the region where he was born (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 3 June 2014). The Franciscan friars showed pictures of students at the Seminary in Chimoio and he was 'fascinated' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 3 June 2014). Although Chimoio was far away, Amaral Bernardo Amaral ended up studying in the Catholic Seminary.

In 1977 Amaral Bernardo Amaral headed to Brazil having decided he wanted to be a Catholic priest. His father warned him of the fact that he could not be married, but he replied that he was ready to serve God as a Catholic priest. In 1982 Amaral Bernardo Amaral achieved a Bachelor of Theology at the Universidade Católica de São Salvador (UCSAL). He then went to further his theological studies at the Pontificia

Universitas Anthonianum in Rome from which he got his Honors Degree in Philosophy and Theology (1982–1984).

Returning to his country in 1984 he was ordained priest and served in the Xai-Xai Cathedral where he remained until 1987. From 1987 until 1992 Amaral Bernardo Amaral served ministering in the Cathedral of Inhambane. He then moved to Jangamo to be involved with Christian education until 2002. Between 2002 and 2003 he served as an educator in Lusaka, Zambia, and then became the Councilor of the General Minister of the Franciscan Order in Rome from 2003 until 2009. He was responsible for Africa and the Middle East. He returned to Mozambique to serve as a priest in the Parish of Polana in Maputo (2009–2013). From September 2013, until now he has served in support of the Priest of Jangamo.

## The inspiration to become a bible translator into the Gitonga language

When Amaral Bernardo Amaral initiated his ministry by being ordained as priest in Xai-Xai, back in 1984, he served under another Franciscan Priest Frederico Samuel Hnanala. Hnanala was also native to the same region as Amaral – Maxixe – and so he became interested in producing literary works in his mother tongue, *Gitonga*. In 1974 Hnanala initiated the translation of the *New Testament*, allied with a Presbyterian minister by the name of Geremias Cossa. These Christian ministers worked together on the project from 1975 until 1983, using pen and paper. They translated some books of the *New Testament*, however, as Amaral has informed, ‘At that time there were some areas in which they did not agree’ (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014).

Just some months after Amaral Bernardo Amaral arrived in Xai-Xai on 26 November, 1984, Priest Frederico Samuel Nhanala was travelling to Maputo and was ambushed in Maluane (Manhiça), and mortally wounded. As Amaral Bernardo Amaral says, ‘I eventually replaced him as pastor within one month of being ordained’ (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014). It was at the burial of Priest Frederico Samuel Nhanala that Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral again made a very important decision; as he has stated, ‘At the time of his burial I recalled that he began this work of translating the bible into *Gitonga* and publicly promised that I would continue his work, leading the project’ (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014).

## THE BIBLE TRANSLATION INTO GITONGA WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY

The process of translating the Bible is tedious. It requires much patience and perseverance. But, Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral demonstrated he was determined to serve the Tonga people with the Word of God in their language. However, there was a need for help. So, some important aspects are to be discussed in this section of the article: The Mozambican



Bible Society and the Sociedades Bíblicas Lusófonas; the process of Bible translation into *Gitonga*; and the support of the Mozambican Bible Society.

## The Mozambican Bible Society and the Sociedades Bíblicas Lusófonas

The Bible Society has been operating in Mozambique since 1976, according to Lázaro Eusébio Chivite (Lázaro Eusébio Chivite, Interview 3 June 2014). On the other hand, the online portal of the Portuguese Sociedade Bíblica also informs that the Grupo Lusófono das Sociedades Bíblicas Unidas was constituted in 1998 (Estêvão 2014). This organisation has the goal to internationally cooperate with Portuguese speaking countries and regions. The Mozambican Bible Society is a member of this organisation. The online portal of the Portuguese Bible Society further informs that the world fraternity of the Bible Societies<sup>6</sup>

...has a fully interfaith nature cooperating globally with churches and church organizations and para-churches of various Christian denominations (Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox) (Estêvão 2014).

The United Bible Societies are the global entity covering all 145 national Bible Societies, including Mozambique. The common budget of the United Bible Societies is used to finance the translation of the bible into new language groups including Gitonga. As the online portal of the Portuguese Bible Society informs:

Their common budget (which does not include own funds of each of the national Bible Societies) is around EUR 35 million, and is used for the development of new Bible translations and outreach initiatives throughout the world. There are currently about 700 Bible translation projects around the world in which the Bible Societies are involved (Estêvão 2014).

## The process of *Bible* translation into Gitonga

The workload as the Priest of Xai-Xai was heavy. Notwithstanding, Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral served his flock during the day and worked as a bible translator until late every night. As he says, 'I organized a working group and they helped with the text' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014). Meanwhile, in 1987 he was transferred to the Cathedral of Inhambane, close to the Tonga people.

On arriving, he found almost no literature published in Gitonga out there. So, Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral started translating and printing all biblical texts to be read in *Gitonga* each Sunday in Church. For instance, he translated the *Lexionário Dominical*, which uses one passage of the Old Testament, one of the New Testament, and one of the Gospels. As Friar Amaral has stated, 'I used a duplicator to copy; began on Monday and

on Thursday had everything translated, printed and distributed by all parishes' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014). The *Lexionário Dominical* is a Catholic book planned for the reading of the entire Bible in three years (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014). Then, as Friar Amaral has explained, 'The major holidays such as Christmas, Easter and Pentecost are used to explain the Gospel of St. John' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014).

As Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral has further stated, 'I made the *Lexionário [Dominical]* to be used on Sunday from 1987 to 1992. It was complete to be used every Sunday for an entire three year period. And, this was work contributing to Bible translation' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014).

The first Bible book to be published was the Gospel of Matthew in 1993. Peter Renju – a Tanzanian – worked in the United Bible Societies in Nairobi. As Friar Amaral has explained, 'When the Biblical text was translated I would send it to Nairobi to be digitalized, and, then, it would be sent back to me already in this format' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014).

In 1996 the entire *New Testament* was published in Gitonga; and in the same year also the *Missal Popular Dominical*. As a result, Friar Amaral has stated:

The ecclesiastical communities matured tremendously from the biblical texts in their mother tongue. Church attendees fared spiritual dualism for greater vividness and Christian moral maturity. Here, we emphasize that faith must be rooted in the Word of God (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014).

In 1992 Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral began the translation of *Psalms*, and, in 1998 he began to translate the Pentateuch, which was published in 2008 (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014). Then, as Friar Amaral has mentioned, 'From here I started to think more about the publication of the entire bible. In 2010 I had all the books of the bible translated. The computer greatly facilitated the work' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014).

## The support of the Mozambican Bible Society

The ministerial duties of Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral required him to be transferred to Zambia and then to Europe. Therefore, he feared the project would unexpectedly come to an end without being completed. Therefore, as Friar Amaral has stated:

In 2003 I was transferred to Zambia and then to Europe. And, as I feared that the project could be terminated, I presented two colleagues – José Joaquim (coordinator) and Amílcar João – to the Mozambican Bible Society, which financed them; this was because they worked full-time. Some books of the Old Testament were translated by them with my supervision (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014).

Having returned to the country, but now to the Polana Parish in Maputo, the Bible Society put pressure on him for the publication of the work done. Friar Amaral was too

busy to be able to finish the work. He had to apply for another position to enable him to complete his beloved Bible translation into *Gitonga*. As he has put it,

I was the priest of the parish of Polana, so, I could do nothing. I had to ask my superiors that released me from the parish to be able to deliver the texts on the deadline of May 2014. It is important that the biblical text is as accurate as possible. Eighty percent will be delivered and the remaining twenty percent will be delivered afterwards (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014).

The process of Bible translation into *Gitonga* will require some more months to be finished. It entails three levels of work, as Friar Amaral has explained:

Revising [Biblical] translation requires working at three levels: Firstly each translator has a particular job; secondly a special computer program provided by the Bible Society called *Paratext 7* is used to process the translation work done by each member and that text is shared with each other for review; and, thirdly the three translators held a meeting for final verification of the biblical text (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014).

The final revision procedures require a very ecumenical effort. As Friar Amaral has added, 'Regarding reviewers we involve all in an ecumenical way as comprehensive as possible on Mondays and Wednesdays' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014) Then, after the revisions have been done, the translating group organizes workshops '...involving those who want to participate ecumenically. This is the work that has been done' (Amaral Bernardo Amaral, Interview 9 April 2014).

Finally, according to Lázaro Eusébio Chivite, 'The Bible Society of Mozambique supports any Christian confession. Therefore Bible translation will be published as follows: One version to the Catholic Church including the Deuterocanon; and another for the Evangelicals' (Lázaro Eusébio Chivite, Interview 3 June 2014).

## CONCLUSION

A few thoughts may be mentioned in conclusion. Firstly, the process of conversion of Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral to Catholicism from his prior Methodist upbringing, and the fact that his father accepted it, is notable. As notable is the fact that he went on to educate himself overseas, cutting his ties with the common habits of the young people of his age, to stay around their families. He prepared himself very well in Philosophy, Theology, and Ministry, having acquired the taste for producing literature as demonstrated by the various books and articles published.

Secondly, as any other people the Tonga wanted the bible in their own Tonga language. But, to translate the entire Bible is a tedious and monotonous task that has taken more than thirty years of Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral's life to be accomplished. This demonstrates the tenacity of Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral in fulfilling the promise made at the funeral of his predecessor, Franciscan Priest Frederico Samuel Hnanala, concerning the work of translating the bible into *Gitonga*. Moreover, one of

the most striking things I found in Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral's determination to translate the Bible into *Gitonga* is the fact that it was not due to economic ambition or possible gain. Most of his labour was done at his own expense and, he did not receive any compensation. Further, those who will read the Bible in this language are relatively few, compared to many other languages of the world. Most of the Tonga people do not know how to read or write. He has given away the copyright process of this translation to the Bible Society.

Thirdly, I was impressed by the leadership that Friar Amaral Bernardo Amaral has demonstrated, especially having chosen teams to work with him, a practice he has been following for decades. The teams kept on translating the Bible even when he was absent for several years. This was accomplished when computers were not yet available and phone calls were very expensive. In any case, the bible is in the final stages of being translated and many biblical texts are already being used in the Tonga language. Patient labour through the years pursuing this translation effort, is now bearing fruit.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 The author of this article is a D.Th. student working on a thesis entitled: 'The impact of the 1974 revolution on religious freedom in Portugal (1974–2006)' to be submitted at the Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History, and Missiology, Faculty of Theology, College of Human Sciences, University of South Africa in 2014 under the supervision of Prof M. H. Mogashoa. This article is further research, as a contribution in the field of Church History.
- 2 fcdasilva@gmail.com
- 3 As centuries ago the Portuguese interacted with the Tonga people and heard them say they spoke *GiTonga*, they understood it as *BiTonga*, concluding the people should be called *BiTonga*. Therefore, this is the name by which the Tonga are colloquially known by the Portuguese speaking people in Mozambique.
- 4 Original text in Portuguese: '*Cultura Tradicional Africana*'.
- 5 Note: "See information online at <http://media.inspirationalfilms.com/?id=toh00>".
- 6 Author's own translation from Portuguese.

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# ON HISTORICAL INJUSTICE AND THE ART OF FORGETTING<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

This article asks whether it is responsible to introduce and/or cultivate the language of forgetting against the backdrop of South Africa's colonial and apartheid past. In writings originating from contexts permeated by memories of historical injustice, the call, and more specifically the duty, to remember and the implied need to fight against forgetting are rightfully emphasised. But how are we to evaluate what some scholars see as a discursive shift from 'memory' to 'forgetting' in memory studies? With this question in mind, this article first considers some possible arguments for giving greater prominence to the notion of forgetting in our memory discourse. This is followed by a section that reiterates the 'critique of forgetting', drawing also on some examples from 20th century South African political and church history. In the final section, the article considers, in conversation with Paul Ricoeur, whether we should view the relationship between an art of memory and an art of forgetting as symmetrical or asymmetrical.

**Keywords:** memory, forgetting, justice, Ricoeur

## THE ART OF MEMORY

Around 500 B.C.E. in Greece, or so the story goes, a celebration was held to honour a boxer named Skopas. The poet Simonides of Keos was asked to deliver an ode to commemorate the athlete's victory. Skopas was not pleased with Simonides' speech, though, since he only devoted one third of the speech to praising him, while the other two thirds celebrated the twin divinities Castor and Pollux. Skopas therefore felt that Simonides deserved only one third of the honorarium. After delivering his song of praise, Simonides was unexpectedly called outside by a messenger, who said that two young men were waiting for him there. At the moment when Simonides exited the banquet hall, the roof of the building suddenly collapsed and the host and all his guests were killed and buried in the rubble.

The Latin rhetoricians Cicero and Quintilian offer a continuation of this story by noting that after the catastrophe the relatives tried to identify their loved ones, but without any success, as the corpses had been disfigured beyond recognition. Simonides, however, was able to reconstruct the building in his mind and remembered the places

where everybody sat. Because of Simonides' pictorial memory he was able to identify the victims on the basis of their location in the banquet hall. Hence the name of Simonides is often associated – together with this founding myth that links memory to 'places' (Greek *topoi*, Latin *loci*) – with the so-called art of memory (*ars memoriae*). As Harald Weinrich, on whose account of the story I draw here, has noted in his impressive book *Lethe: The art and critique of forgetting*: 'In the ancient and medieval art of memory... memory is fundamentally spatialized' (Weinrich 2004: 10).

This 'art of memory' has captivated people throughout the ages and we have fascinating descriptions of how it has functioned from, for instance, the time of the ancient Greeks until the Renaissance. Francis Yates's book *The art of memory* is a classic work in this regard, and it traces how a memory system (that linked memory to 'places') passed from the Greeks and the Romans into the European tradition, and particularly how it took form during the Renaissance in the thought of Giordano Bruno (Yates 1992; cf. Samuel 1994: xii–xi). And a recent bestselling book by Joshua Foer entitled *Moonwalking with Einstein: The art and science of remembering everything* offers a modern-day investigation into our capacity to remember (Foer 2011).

We also find vestiges of the spatialised art of memory in Augustine's famous engagement with memory in *The confessions* (10.8.12). Augustine writes, for instance, about the 'vast mansions of memory, where are treasured innumerable images',<sup>2</sup> as well as about the ability of memory to bring things to the surface when they are summoned: 'The huge repository of the memory, with its secret and unimaginable caverns, welcomes and keeps all these things, to be recalled and brought out for use when needed' (Augustine 1997: 244, 245). Therefore Augustine marvels: 'This faculty of memory is a great one, O my God, exceedingly great, a vast, infinite recess. Who can plumb its depth?' (Augustine 1997: 246). Augustine even marvels at the fact that one can remember that one has forgotten something.

In Augustine, therefore, something of the spirit of the ancient art of memory is recognisable, albeit that he develops his views on memory in theological language. In this article I would like to focus not so much on the art of memory (*ars memoriae*), but rather ask heuristically with scholars like Harald Weinrich and Paul Ricoeur whether we can or should also speak of an art of forgetting (*ars oblivionis*).<sup>3</sup> At the outset of such an undertaking I want to emphasise the importance of not placing this question, and the discursive world that it opens up, merely on an abstract level where it is dislocated from specific historical and social contexts. Therefore this article will consider the question of whether it is responsible to introduce and/or cultivate the language of forgetting against the backdrop of the discourses on what a responsible engagement with South Africa's colonial and apartheid past entails.

Any attempt to create space for positive claims regarding the art of forgetting should also take into account the moral and religious significance of memory. In writings originating from contexts permeated by memories of historical injustice, the call, and more specifically the duty, to remember and the implied need to fight against forgetting are rightfully emphasised.



The plea for an ‘art of forgetting’ should also take into account that memory is a powerful religious concept, and religions like Judaism and Christianity are often described as ‘memory religions’ in light of the way these religions are ‘bound by rituals of commemorations’. (cf. Signer 2001: ix). In his classic book *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* Yosef Yerushalmi summarises the centrality of memory for Judaism:

Ancient Israel knows what God has done in history. And if that is so, then memory has become crucial to its faith and, ultimately, to its very existence. Only in Israel and nowhere else is the injunction to remember felt as a religious imperative to an entire people. Its reverberations are everywhere, but they reach a crescendo in the Deuteronomic history and the prophets. ‘Remember the days of old, consider the years of ages past’ (Dt 32:7). ‘Remember these things, O Jacob, for you, O Israel, are my servant; I have fashioned you, you are my servant; O Israel, never forget Me’ (Is 44:21). ‘Remember what Amalek did to you’ (Dt 25:17). ‘O My people remember now what Balak king of Moab plotted against you’ (Mi 6:5). And with hammering insistence: Remember that you were a slave in Egypt...(Yerushalmi 1996: 9, 10).

Or in the words of the Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel: ‘Remember...No other Biblical Commandment is as persistent. Jews live and grow under the sign of memory...To be Jewish is to remember – to claim our right to memory as well as our duty to keep it alive’ (Wiesel 1990: 9, 10).

Given Christianity’s Jewish roots it is not surprising that the concept of memory also lies at the heart of the Christian tradition. In Luke 22: 19 we read that Jesus took a loaf of bread, broke it and gave it to the apostles, saying in the context of this Passover meal on the night that he was betrayed: ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ Throughout the ages Christians have celebrated the Lord’s Supper as a meal of remembrance, recalling the passion of their risen and living Lord. Memory is thus a central theological notion in Christianity, and Christianity too can rightly be described as a memory religion, as is evident in its forms of worship (Cf. Marksches and Wolf 2010: 15).

Given the fact that memory is such a central ethical and religious concept, one might rightly ask whether we can speak – also with theological integrity – of an art or even a duty of forgetting. One reason why it is nevertheless important to consider this question in our academic discourse has to do with the fact that some scholars have called attention to a growing emphasis in memory studies on the notion of forgetting. Anne Whitehead, for instance, mentions how the proliferation of scenes of public repentance, forgiveness, apology, or confession, as well as the institution of a number of Truth Commissions, has led to a growing public interest in restorative justice and the need to promote healing and reconciliation in post-conflict contexts. These developments ‘suggest that a discursive shift is beginning to take place from memory to forgetting’ (Whitehead 2009: 154). Given the possibility of such a discursive shift, the need for a responsible discourse on forgetting – also in the South African context – seems to be of paramount importance. With this in mind, this article first considers some possible arguments for giving greater prominence to the notion of forgetting in our memory discourse. This is followed by

a section that reiterates the ‘critique of forgetting’, drawing also on some examples from twentieth-century South African political and church history. In the final section I consider, in conversation with Paul Ricoeur, whether we should view the relationship between an art of memory and an art of forgetting as symmetrical or asymmetrical.

## THE ART OF FORGETTING?

Given the powerful moral and theological claims that can be made as part of an ode to memory, the odds seem to be against any attempt to speak responsibly of an ‘art of forgetting’.<sup>4</sup> Yet there also exists something like a cultural history of forgetting, outlined so brilliantly by Harald Weinrich in his book *Lethe: The art and critique of forgetting*. Among the Greeks, Lethe is the goddess opposed to the goddess of memory and mother of the muses, Mnemosyne. But above all Lethe is the name of an underworld river that confers forgetfulness on the souls of the dead. In these soft-flowing waters ‘the hard contours of the remembrance of reality are dissolved and, so to speak, *liquidated*’ (Weinrich 2004:6). Forgetting, symbolised by Lethe, the meandering stream of forgetfulness, is the subject of Weinrich’s book and in the genealogy that he offers – which draws on a wide array of poets, writers and scholars – the close proximity of the concepts of memory and forgetting is clear from the outset.

In some sense one can say that the plea for memory is only possible because of the reality of forgetting. Forgetting is inevitable and therefore memory and forgetting are tightly interwoven. The novelist Milan Kundera even writes: ‘Remembering is not the negative of forgetting. Remembering is a form of forgetting’ (Kundera 1995: 128). And in his impressive and extensive book *Memory, history, forgetting* Paul Ricoeur not only discusses the intricate relation between memory and history, but also places this discussion within the broader context of the need for hermeneutical reflection on our vulnerable historical condition, a condition that includes the reality of forgetting (cf. Ricoeur 2004). Because we are ‘timeful’ beings, we forget. This is part of what Ricoeur calls elsewhere ‘the sorrow of finitude’ (Ricoeur 1966: 447–448; 2004: 440). With the passage of time and the reality of aging, our memories fade or become distorted. Forgetting therefore challenges the reliability of memory,<sup>5</sup> albeit that the significant role of memory (and history) should not be disregarded in the light of the vulnerability of our historical condition. The important point is that the phenomenon of forgetting is part and parcel of any engagement with the equivocal and slippery notion of memory, and that ‘memory defines itself, at least in the first instance, as a struggle against forgetting’ (Ricoeur 2004: 413). But one can also further ask whether forgetting is in every aspect the enemy of memory, and whether memory must not enter into some kind of negotiation process with forgetting, ‘groping to find the right measure in its balance with forgetting’ (Ricoeur 2004: 413).

If we do not view forgetting merely as the enemy of memory, can and should we make a plea for a positive affirmation of the notion of forgetting in our moral and theological discourse? And if so, in what way can we speak of an art of forgetting

alongside an art of memory? Can we even speak of a duty to forget in a similar way that we speak of a duty to remember?

Several arguments, I think, can be put forward in defence of ‘an art of forgetting’. A first possible response against a total demonisation of forgetting could be to call attention to the fact that our lives would be unbearable if we were to remember everything. We know the stories of persons who have lost their memory and how they had to painfully reconstruct everything, or of people who remembered selectively, like the book dealer from Milan who only remembered what he read in books in Umberto Eco’s wonderful novel *The mysterious flame of Queen Loana* (Eco 2005). But the literary imagination also produced works such as Jorge Luis Borges’ enigmatic short story ‘Funes the Memoriosus’ (*Funes el memorioso*). Funes’ problem was not that he forgot things, but rather that he did not forget anything; his memory was infallible, storing everything. Hence Funes’s remark: ‘My memory, sir, is like a garbage heap’ (Borges 1962: 92). It was therefore very difficult for him to sleep, given all the memories in his head. Towards the end of the story, we read the following about Funes:

With no effort, he had learned English, French, Portuguese and Latin. I suspect, however, that he was not very capable of thought. To think is to forget differences, generalize, make abstractions. In the teeming world of Funes, there were only details, almost immediate in their presence (Borges 1962: 94).

To remember everything will indeed make life unbearable and one can rightly argue that there is some grace in forgetting. Therefore one can argue that forgetting is not only unavoidable, but also, in some sense at least, desirable. In his famous essay *On the uses and disadvantages of history for life* (1874) Friedrich Nietzsche too considers the extreme example of a man who did not possess the power of forgetting. Such a man, argues Nietzsche, would lose himself in the stream of becoming and will not be able to act. Therefore Nietzsche remarks: ‘Forgetting is essential to action of any kind, just as not only light but also darkness too is essential for the life of anything organic’ (1983: 62). In this essay Nietzsche targets the historicism of his day, and makes a claim for the value of living ‘unhistorically’, that is, unburdened by the pressures of the past: ‘Man... braces himself against the great and ever greater pressure of the past: it pushes him down or bends him sideways, it encumbers his step as a dark, invisible burden’ (1983: 61). For Nietzsche it is possible to live almost without memory (he uses the example of grazing cattle in this regard), but that it is impossible to live without forgetting. Therefore his claim: ‘there is a degree of sleeplessness, of rumination, of historical sense, which is harmful and ultimately fatal to the living thing, whether this living thing be a man or a people or a culture’ (1983: 62). For Nietzsche the unhistorical and the historical are necessary in equal measure to ensure the health (and happiness) of an individual, a people, and a culture.

A first possible argument in favour of forgetting thus relates to the fact that too much memory of the past will make life unbearable, and that it will have an unhealthy impact

on our life and happiness. A second possible argument in defence of a more positive assessment of forgetting relates to some abuses of memory in the light of experiences of trauma. Much has been written on the relationship between memory and trauma, and on the need to work through what Ricoeur has called blocked or wounded memory.<sup>6</sup> Through a healthy therapeutic engagement with our memories, we can experience some healing of our memories. In addition, one can also argue that memory protects victims from further violence. In his book *The end of memory: Remembering rightly in a violent world* Miroslav Volf quotes the remark by Elie Wiesel that the memory of evil will serve as a shield against evil, and that the memory of death will serve as a shield against death. By exposing evil (through memory) one can deter its perpetration. But Volf also highlights that even this protective function of memory can become problematic:

As victims seek to protect themselves they are not immune to becoming perpetrators...The memory of their own persecution makes them see dangers lurking even where there are none; it leads them to exaggerate dangers that do exist and overreact with excessive violence or inappropriate preventive measures so as to ensure their own safety. Victims will often *become* perpetrators *on account of* their memories. It is *because they remember* past victimization that they feel justified in committing present violence...So easily does the protective shield of memory morph into the sword of violence (Volf 2006: 32, 33).

The memories of trauma and pain, one can therefore say, are not always on the side of peace and protection, but can also motivate aggressive and violent acts of retaliation and release new oppressive forces. Some may argue that this possibility points towards the need for some form of forgetting to counter destructive memory.

A third possible argument in defence of forgetting relates specifically to the abuses of memory that have created manipulative forms of commemoration and memorialisation, leading some theorists to bemoan that fact that we are not only suffering from too little memory but also from too much memory. In the *Preface to Memory, history, forgetting* Ricoeur noted that one of his reasons for writing the book had to do with the fact that he was troubled 'by the unsettling spectacle offered by an excess of memory here, and an excess of forgetting elsewhere, to say nothing of the influence of commemorations and abuses of memory – and of forgetting' (2004: xv). And indeed it seems to be the case that we are suffering in our modern world from either too much memory or too little memory. Maybe we can say more accurately that the problem is not simply that there is too much memory, 'but that there is too much memory of the wrong sort' (Bluhstein 2008: 17). Memory is not only selective, but it is often manipulated in the light of projects of identity construction and power consolidation or accumulation, often without the necessary sensitivity to ideological distortions. Memorials and commemorations are also often highly contested events and spaces. It can be argued that these expressions of memory fuel polarisation and should therefore have been minimised. In addition, the argument can also be put forward that our current cultural capitalistic consumer-driven context is more conducive to amnesia than memory. As Paul Connerton has argued persuasively in his book *How modernity forgets*:

The increased scale of human settlement, the production of speed, and the repeated intentional destruction of the built environment, generated a diffuse yet all-encompassing and powerful cultural amnesia and they are in their turn generated by the capitalist process of production. Modernity...produces cultural amnesia not by accident but intrinsically and necessarily. Forgetting is built into the capitalist process of production itself, incorporated in the bodily experience of life-spaces (2009: 125).

The cultural air that we breathe, one can say, strengthens habits of forgetting, and perhaps, some might say, it is better to embrace this reality in order to prosper in our fast-paced consumerist society, and not allow habits of memory to slow us down and leave us less relevant and effective in the present world with its specific demands and opportunities.

One can also argue, fourthly, that it is possible to construct a theological argument as part of the plea for a more affirmative attitude towards forgetting. What about ‘forgive and forget’? Don’t we read in the Bible, in Jeremiah 31: 34, that the Lord declares: ‘For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more’? And one can indeed recall many examples from the Jewish and Christian tradition that seem to affirm that complete forgiveness involves some sense of forgetting.<sup>7</sup> It should be noted, though, that attempts to draw on the Jewish and Christian tradition to make some sort of link between forgiveness and forgetting is not unproblematic and that the statement ‘forgive and forget’ is often contested (cf. Hauerwas 2000: 139–144).

## THE CRITIQUE OF FORGETTING

It is possible, therefore, to make an argument (even a moral and theological argument) for the notion of forgetting in our discourse about a responsible engagement with the past. However, these attempts will, and – in my view – should, always be heard against the backdrop of the voices that critique the language of forgetting.

I have already referred to the strong appeal that we have a duty to remember in the light of experiences of historical injustices. Within the context of, for instance, the horror of the Holocaust or the brutality of apartheid, the language of forgetting seems to be irresponsible and dangerous. Forgetting is equated not with healing, but with death. Therefore Elie Wiesel writes in his autobiography *All rivers run to the sea*:

Memory is a passion no less powerful than love. What does it mean to remember? It is to live in more than one world, to prevent the past from fading and to call upon the future to illuminate it. It is to revive fragments of existence, to rescue lost beings, to cast harsh light on faces and events, to drive back the sands that cover the surface of things, to combat oblivion and to reject death (1994: 150).

In post-apartheid South Africa there is also a proliferation of works that engage directly or indirectly with the notion of memory, often with reference to the work of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Again the plea is often, though not always exclusively, on the duty or imperative to remember the past.

The duty to remember, and even not to ‘forgive and forget’, also resonates in some Afrikaner literature, sermons and speeches that took shape in the aftermath of the Anglo-Boer War (or the South African War). One is reminded in this regard of the Afrikaans poet Totius’ famous poem *Vergewe en vergeet* (‘Forgive and forget’). Or let me quote from a sermon by Reverend C. R. Kotzé, a ‘liberation *volk*-theologian’ who was wounded during the war and was a prisoner of war on St. Helena. Some of his sermons have been collected in a book entitled *Die Bybel en ons volkstryd* (*The Bible and our people’s struggle*). A title of one of these sermons even has a post-colonial ring to it: ‘*God maak die nasies en die Duiwel die empire*’ (‘God creates the nations, and the Devil creates the empire’). And in 1946, in the context of the growing Afrikaner nationalism, he delivered a sermon that was also broadcast on the radio, with the title *Vra na die ou paaie* (‘Ask for the ancient paths’), with Jeremiah 6: 16 as focus text. In this context he makes a plea for memory:

But exactly because we want to look forward, we ought sometimes to look back! The highest building must have its foundations. The tree cannot live without its roots. The nation cannot exist without its history. To forgive and forget is folly. It is pagan language. God is love and he does not forgive if there is no remorse and confession. And no people (*volk*), no Christian, dare to forget, ever... If you want to go forward in a healthy and strong way, then you must look back into history. Ask for the ancient paths (Kotzé 1955: 78, 79, my translation).

In a collection of sermons of Reverend G. J. J. Boshoff (published in 1959) we find similar ideas. One of the sermons is on *Die Afrikaner mag nooit vergeet nie!* (‘The Afrikaner may never forget’). This sermon was preached on 10 October 1957 at the Turffonteinse Konsentrasiekampkerkhof after Oumatjie Stofberg unveiled the restored monument after it had been vandalised:

On this place we forget nothing or nobody. Not our God. Not our friend. Not our enemy... A people (*volk*) that has had concentration camps may never forget. On these graves the grass of forgetfulness never grows. Sadly, however, there are Afrikaners who want to forget so easily that they replace the grass with khaki bush (Boshoff 1959: 107, 108, my translation).

These sermons illustrate the resistance to the language of ‘forgive and forget’ in some Afrikaner church circles. In addition, we see how the South African War and the concentration camps functioned as ‘sites of memory’ (*lieux de mémoire*),<sup>8</sup> and that these acts of memory became part of specific constructions of the past.

These few sermon illustrations remind us that the call to remember (and the critique of forgetting) is not just about reconstructing the past faithfully, but that it functions in a certain way to construct identity in the present. Also in more recent discourse on memory, in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, attention is often called to the way in which memory is negotiated and produced in South Africa.<sup>9</sup> On the one hand, there is a critique of forgetting (especially of forgetting the pain and suffering caused to the victims), while on the other hand, there is also a sense, in some circles at



least, of the complexity and contestation involved in claiming or reclaiming memory. Verne Harris puts it well in a chapter on ‘Contesting, remembering and forgetting: The archive of South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission’, republished in his book *Archives and justice: A South African perspective*:

Memory is never a faithful reflection of process, of ‘reality’. It is shaped, reshaped, figured, configured by the dance of imagination. So that beyond the dynamics of remembering and forgetting, a more profound characterization of struggles represented in social memory is one of narrative against narrative, story against story (Harris 2007: 289).<sup>10</sup>

The important point is that we should be aware of the complex dynamics of processes of remembering and forgetting, and that we should even guard against treating memory and forgetting as binary oppositions. Yet, the questions still linger: How are we to view the relationship between memory and forgetting? Is this relationship symmetrical or asymmetrical? And can we speak with integrity of a duty to forget?

## TOWARDS A CULTURE OF JUST MEMORY

In the Introduction to this article I referred to the ‘art of memory’ (*ars memoriae*) and asked the question whether one can also speak of a comparable art of forgetting (*ars oblivionis*). If one takes the art of forgetting in its strict sense, as a type of (letha) technique, this art would have to rest, as Paul Ricoeur has noted, ‘on a rhetoric of extinction...the contrary of making an archive’ (2004: 504). But this would be a barbarous dream. Ricoeur, makes, however, some space for forgetting, but for him an *ars oblivionis* (understood in a broader sense) could not constitute an order distinct from memory. ‘It can only arrange itself under the optative mood of a happy memory. It would simply add a gracious note to the work of memory and the work of mourning’ (2004: 505). This emphasis is, in my view, very important. Put differently: an art of forgetting – if it is to find its rightful place in our discourse – *can only find its place on the other side of a critique of forgetting and in close proximity to memory*. It is therefore the argument of this article that the language of forgetting should be used with the necessary reserve. Yet one should also be attentive to the possible harmful ideological impulses that can hide in a categorical rejection of any attempt to carve out space for a qualified defence of forgetting in all its ambiguity and complexity. Dirkie Smit, writing from a theological perspective with the Christian tradition in mind, puts it well:

And perhaps the Christian tradition can remind societies that ‘*forgetting*’ is an ambiguous matter. There is indeed a *Christian instruction not to forget*. The Christian church depends upon this, for many reasons. One is that we must learn from the past, so that it ‘will never happen again’. Yet there is *also a Christian instruction to forget*. Forgetting can also be a moral activity. The wonder of the message of the gospel for Christians is precisely that God removes our sins from us as far as the east is removed from the west and never thinks of them. It is one thing to say: we forgive, but we cannot forget. It is another to say: we forgive, but we shall never, we may never, we never wish to, we will never forget. The Christian tradition is ultimately based on



the trust that God-in-Christ does not speak to the world like that, and calls us to speak and live accordingly (Smit 1996: 116).

We should indeed affirm that forgetting can be a moral activity and that we should guard against a fanatical anti-forgetting stance that keep us captives of the past and robs memory of a future. This notwithstanding, I would nevertheless like to argue, with Paul Ricoeur, that there is not strict symmetry between the art of memory and the art of forgetting, and that the duty to remember and the duty to forget are not comparable, since ‘the duty to remember is a duty to teach, whereas the duty to forget is the duty to go beyond anger and hatred’ (Kearney & Dooley 199: 5–11). The challenge is to find a way between witnessing to the past through memory and some form of reconciling forgetting.<sup>11</sup>

Ricoeur does leave some space for forgetting, but in the process he not only affirms the inseparable tie between memory and forgetting, but also the bond between these notions and justice:

Both memory and forgetting do, however, contribute in their respective ways to what Hannah Arendt called the continuation of action. It is necessary for the continuation of action that we retain the traces of events, that we be reconciled with the past, and that we divest ourselves of anger and hatred. Once again, justice is the horizon of both processes. Let us conclude by saying that at this point in our history we have to deal with the problem of evolving a culture of just memory (Kearney & Dooley 1999: 11).

In a culture of ‘just memory’ the emphasis should be on the duty to remember. The rhetoric of forgetting can have harmful consequences in contexts permeated with memories of historical injustice, and it might be more prudent to opt against the use of ‘forgetting’ in our discourse, or when we use it, to use it with the necessary nuance and differentiation. The language of ‘forgetting’ cannot be used as an alibi to forget or erase the past, since the past remains in the present; it can only be used and claimed with the healing motive of lifting the weight or the burden of the past.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Versions of this article was read at the Joint Conference of Academic Societies in the Fields of Religion and Theology held from 18–22 June 2012 in Pietermaritzburg, as well as at a conference that took place from 18–22 June 2013 at the Humboldt University in Berlin.
- 2 Quotations from Augustine are taken from the translation of Mary Boulding (1997).
- 3 Weinrich also calls attention to an anecdote, recounted by Cicero (*De Oratore* 2.86.352–354), of a meeting between Simonides and Themistocles in which the former offered to teach the latter the art of memory so that he might be able to remember everything. According to one version of the story, Themistocles replied ‘that he was not interested in the art of memory (*ars memoriae*) but rather was interested in the art of forgetting (*ars oblivionis*)’ (Weinrich 2004: 11).
- 4 For the sake of greater conceptual clarity, I can mention that this article uses the concept ‘the art of forgetting’ not merely in its narrow sense as a strict corollary to ‘an art of memory’ understood as a memory technique. The notion of an *ars memoriae* is often situated within the context of

- memorialisation (or what some scholars call artificial memory). We train our memories through techniques (such as linking memory to ‘places’) to remember things. This ‘art of memory’ suggests something of a voluntary control over our memory, but memory (as a multifaceted concept) is of course about more than this form of technique. In this article I will use the notion of an ‘art of memory’, as well as the concomitant notion of an ‘art of forgetting’, often more broadly than just in this technical sense. This paper also uses the notion of an ‘art of forgetting’ in a wider metaphorical sense as shorthand for a responsible integration of the notion of forgetting into our memory discourse.
- 5 Ricoeur writes: ‘Forgetting is the challenge par excellence put to memory’s aim of reliability’ (2004:414). However, Ricoeur also notes that ‘many memories, perhaps among the most precious, childhood memories, have not been definitely erased but simply rendered inaccessible, unavailable, which makes us say that one forgets less than one thinks or fears’ (2004: 416).
  - 6 Cf. Ricoeur 2004: 69–80. For some important perspectives on the relationship between memory and trauma engaging South African contexts, see also the essays by an interdisciplinary team of scholars collected in Goboda-Madikizela and Van der Merwe (2009). As the Preface notes, this collection ‘explores the relation between trauma and memory, and the complex, interconnected issues of trauma and narrative (testimonial and literary). It examines transgenerational trauma, memory as the basis for dialogue and reconciliation in divided societies, memorialisation and the changing role of memory in the aftermath of mass trauma, mourning and the potential of forgiveness to heal the enduring effects of mass trauma’ (2009: xi).
  - 7 Miroslav Volf (2006: 132–135) offers a sampling from the Jewish and Christian tradition in this regard, drawing in the process on Bible texts such as Jeremiah 31:34 and Psalm 51:9, as well as statements from Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, John Calvin, Karl Rahner and Karl Barth.
  - 8 See Nora (1984–1992). For a translated text that gives a good description of Nora’s project, see Nora (1989).
  - 9 See, for instance, Nuttall and Coetzee (1998); Botman and Peterson (1996) and Diawara, Lategan & Rösen (2010).
  - 10 Harris writes further about the TRC archive: ‘This space, as with all archives, is always already one in which dynamics of remembering, forgetting, and imagining are at play. My argument is that this space should be made hospitable to contestation and that we should all be vigilant against impulses in it and around it to amnesia, erasure, secreting, and control’ (2007: 291).
  - 11 Cf. Liebsch (2010). See especially Liebsch’s essay ‘Bezeugte Vergangenheit oder versöhnendes Vergessen? Fruchtbarkeit und Fragwürdigkeit von Ricoeurs Rehabilitierung eines philosophischen Geschichtsdenkens’ (2010: 23–58), as well as Inga Römer’s essay ‘Eskapistisches Vergessen? Der Optativ des glücklichen Gedächtnisses bei Paul Ricoeur’ (2010: 292–310).

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# FREE BUT FRAGILE: HUMAN RELATIONS AMIDST POVERTY AND HIV IN DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA

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## ABSTRACT

Dullstroom-Emnotweni is the highest town in South Africa. Cold and misty, it is situated in the eastern Highveld, halfway between the capital Pretoria/Tswane and the Mozambique border. Alongside the main road of the white town, 27 restaurants provide entertainment to tourists on their way to Mozambique or the Kruger National Park. The inhabitants of the black township, Sakhelwe, are remnants of the Southern Ndebele who have lost their land a century ago in wars against the whites. They are mainly dependent on employment as cleaners and waitresses in the still predominantly white town. Three white people from the white town and three black people from the township have been interviewed on their views whether democracy has brought changes to this society during the past twenty years. Answers cover a wide range of views. Gratitude is expressed that women are now safer and HIV treatment available. However, unemployment and poverty persist in a community that nevertheless shows resilience and feeds on hope. While the first part of this article relates the interviews, the final part identifies from them the discourses that keep the black and white communities from forming a group identity that is based on equality and human dignity as core values of democracy.

**Keywords:** democracy; Oral History interviews; Dullstroom-Emnotweni; South African current history; Southern Ndebele

## INTRODUCTION: AIM, BACKGROUND, CONTENTS AND METHOD

### Aim

The aim of this article is to retrieve a variety of voices – three white and three black – from the rural town of Dullstroom-Emnotweni, in order to establish if and how relationships between people have changed during the past 20 years of democracy. From these albeit

small number of interviews, the social discourses will be identified that embody the values of democracy, namely equality and human dignity, or keep them from being fully realised in a society that was previously deeply divided along racial lines. Finally, it will be argued that, because equality and human dignity as the main tenets of democracy are not present in the discourses of the community of Dullstroom-Emnotweni, people here are politically free, but remain fragile in terms both of self-realisation and societal relations.

## Background

A majority of the people living in Sakhelwe, the impoverished and underdeveloped black township of Dullstroom-Emnotweni in rural Mpumalanga in eastern South Africa, are remnants of the Southern Ndebeles who until a century ago lived on their ancestral land 40 kilometers to the east of what is today known as ‘Mapoch’s caves’. After losing their land in wars against the whites the Ndebeles were reduced to working on white farms, that is, on land they themselves previously owned. Eventually their children and grandchildren came to Dullstroom to work on the railways and as domestic workers in white households. The people of Sakhelwe tell the stories of their forebears who went from being landowners to farmworkers to unskilled labourers... and how they themselves landed up being unemployed and impoverished. Sakhelwe has an unemployment rate of 70% and an HIV infection rate of 75% (Landman 2013a: 45–57).

The white town of Dullstroom consists almost exclusively of restaurants, guest houses and holiday homes for week-end breakaways and halfway stay-overs between Johannesburg and Mozambique or the Kruger National Park. There have always been strong class differences between the still predominantly white town and the poor people of the township. Also, a majority of the town people vote for the Democratic Alliance (DA) which they consider to at least protect white interests, while the township almost exclusively vote for the African National Congress (ANC) (Lello, Interview 1 July 2014).

## Contents

The paper will relate stories on human relationships in Dullstroom-Emnotweni (which includes the township Sakhelwe) after the coming of democracy in South Africa in 1994. The stories indicate to what extent democracy – and its secular constitution based on equality and human rights – have influenced the power relations in this community between the powerful and the powerless, between men and women, between the youth and people with cultural seniority, between people employed in highly paid government and municipal positions and the unemployed, and between people in the township and those in the town itself.

The interviews will speak for themselves on the issue of the changing or non-changing of relations. They will be analysed solely in terms of the social discourses

they display, and the effect of these discourses on the change and non-change towards the democratic values of equality and human dignity in this society.

Therefore, after the role-players have been introduced and their interviews related and summarised, the discourses supporting their views on change or non-change will be identified. Finally, a short conclusion on why this community is moving towards or away from forming a group identity will be presented.

## INTERVIEWS

Professor Mashilo Molobi, a colleague at the Research Institute for Theology and Religion at Unisa, reacted as follows to my complaint that people in Sakhelwe ‘do not reveal their real feelings about 20 years of democracy when I interview them’: ‘The people in the rural areas are strongly attached to tradition. They are very secretive about their real feelings. They honour their government. They will not open up, not even to a black person’ (Molobi, Interview 26 May 2014).

Keeping the limitations of this research in mind, I present summaries of the interviews I had (with consent) with six people staying in the rural town of Dullstroom-Emnotweni in the week before the general elections of 7 May 2014.

Three of the interviewees are white and live in the (previously) white town of Dullstroom (or neighbouring Belfast). The other three are black and live in Dullstroom’s township, Sakhelwe, a name they no longer favour since it reminds them of the time they have been forcefully removed to ‘the place which we have built for you’, a paternalistic sentiment reflected in the name ‘Sakhelwe’. Although these interviewees are small in sample, they represent a wide variety of views, from outspokenly anti-government to admittedly committed to the ANC tradition, that is, to the liberation struggle of the African National Congress that has reigned South Africa since the coming of democracy in 1994.

The interviewees are as follows:

1. Joost Tryhou, a white man critical of government, living in the white town of Dullstroom.
2. Marianne Holzhauzen, a white woman in sympathy with the old and new problems experienced by the black community of Sakhelwe.
3. Sannelie Kruger, a younger white woman torn between white losses and persistent black poverty.
4. Paulos Mnisi, a black man born on Kareekraal, a (white) farm near Dullstroom, critical of current president Jacob Zuma but an ANC supporter.
5. Iris Mphuthi, a black woman living in Sakhelwe and previous counsellor in the ANC led eMakhazeni Municipality.
6. Rose Nomadlozi, a black woman of the ‘human rights generation’, critical of traditional gender relations and employed by the ANC government.



## Democracy in South Africa is better than autocracy but not what we dreamt of...

Joost Tryhou (65) has come to retire in Dullstroom, now living in the (previously) white town (Tryhou, Interview 5 May 2014). He speaks passionately – but without racist bitterness – about his journey locally with democracy after 20 years. We have idealised democracy, he says, but we are now suffering because of its bad fruits. Education has moved backwards. Administration, in local and national governments, is totally corrupt. Mother languages have been undermined so that all people now speak bad English and consider themselves as being learned. Votes are bought with promises that are not supported by facts. The consequence of ‘democracy’ is that products of inferior quality are tolerated and even promoted by government on all levels, from service delivery to education to physical products that are put up for sale in shops. Tryhou concludes by saying: ‘Democracy as we have it now is slightly better than autocracy – but it is not what we have dreamt about.’

## Empowerment should come with life skills development

Marianne Holzhausen (70) is the CEO of the Mpumalanga branch of Epileptic South Africa which houses 86 people who, apart from suffering from epilepsy, are also intellectually challenged (Holzhausen, Interview 5 May 2014). She has been living in Dullstroom for the past 34 years with a strong civil involvement both in the black and white community. ‘How have things changed in Dullstroom the past 20 years?’ she is asked.

The white people in Dullstroom are not necessarily worse off than 20 years ago, she says, apart from having to make a special effort to keep things together...like everybody else in South Africa. And for the black people there are more job opportunities. However, she feels strongly that job creation should be accompanied by life skills development and good work ethics. The newly employed should be taught not to buy things on credit, and that a job comes with responsibilities and not only with cash. She herself engages in life skills training for people living with disabilities, but feels that an after-school centre should teach learners life skills and that the church should offer workshops in this regard.

She explains that the black community of Dullstroom has grown tremendously the past 20 years, especially in comparison to the white community. In 1994 there were 250 white people residing in Dullstroom, with 2500 black people in Sakhelwe. Now, in 2014, there are 480 white and 15 000 black people living in Dullstroom-Emnotweni.

However, not all things have changed for the better, she says. Many more people are affected by HIV and AIDS than 20 years ago. Openness about HIV infection has not grown, and many people from Dullstroom go to Belfast for ARV treatment. Service delivery has deteriorated. The roads are full of potholes; the water is undrinkable and often completely cut off; corruption reigns at the eMakhazeni Municipality.

As far as relationships in Dullstroom-Emnotweni are concerned, Holzhausen experiences no discrimination against women in her daily contact with local people. She herself feels respected by men and has entered into many trusted working relationships with them. She also testifies to good relations between black and white locally, but points out that the youth feel excluded from the employment market and opportunities – in spite of the fact that Dullstroom’s economy has grown extensively because of an expanding tourist market. ‘Twenty years ago, if it was misty, you would drive through Dullstroom and miss it completely. Today everybody wants to stop over. However, the blacks and especially the youth have not gained from this.’

### The youth is indestructible

Sannelie Kruger (45) is a Pam Golding estate agent working in Dullstroom and living in Belfast, 33 km to the west of Dullstroom-Emnotweni (Kruger, Interview 5 May 2014). She points to the resilience and hope of the black youth in a rather hopeless situation. The eMakhazeni Municipality is bankrupt and in spite of the fact that individual residents pay their electricity bills, Eskom (the national electricity provider) is on the brink of cutting off all electricity in the municipality, including that of the black townships who had suffered from the lack of electricity in the long decades before democracy came, twenty years ago. Although Dullstroom remains the playground of the rich from Gauteng, Sakhelwe is peaceful with the youth not engaging in criminal acts such as stealing. ‘The youth is indestructible. They always bounce back. They live with hope. I have been involved with a school for six years now and in this time there was not one single racial incident.’ According to Kruger, it is the hope that democracy brings, and the good relations amongst the upcoming generation, that need to be acknowledged and not the corruption and lack of infra-structure that usually get the most attention.

### Voting for the ANC for what Mandela has done for us

Paulos Mnisi (63) was born on Kareekraal, a farm 20 kilometers to the southeast of Dullstroom. He grew up in Madala, the ‘old location’ which was relocated to Sakhelwe in 1980 when the white town wanted to build a sewerage where Madala was. Mnisi’s father was the evangelist of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) in this area. Today Mnisi is retired from Eskom and the leading elder of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa, as the DRCA is now called.

Mnisi (Interview 5 May 2014) is from Swazi descent and traditional in his ways. He is critical of some forms of women’s liberation. He feels that women do not respect their husbands anymore, do not look after them when they are ill, and drink too much. ‘They just go their own way.’ However, Mnisi also reverts to the language of equality when needed as is expected from men today: ‘A man must not sit on a woman. They must agree on things.’

The young people too, he says, do not respect the older people. The old people in Sakhelwe suffer a lot while the young ones do not look after them. The young people

drink a lot. Even children walk in the street with bottles of beer. The young men show affection to their girlfriends right in front of the older people.

Mnisi is angry towards the white people in town who exploit black workers and pay them R800 (\$70) per month. White people come from the cities and open businesses in town. They are willing to pay their employees well, but the local white people convince them to pay them badly at the going rate. 'Black workers are not treated as equals,' Mnisi says. 'However, black people must work on their own and should not always look for work at the white people's places.'

Mnisi is critical of the corruption, extravagance and a lack of service delivery attributed to the eMakhazeni Municipality. Municipality workers do not receive overalls. The roads are dangerous with potholes. They have built 550 RDP houses (state-funded houses according to the Reconstruction and Development Programme of the government) which are, however, without electricity and water. The houses are 'skeef en krom' (crooked) with no tarred roads. The counsellors 'eat the money' and entertain themselves with huge parties. He is critical of the ANC government as well. The past 20 years have been a little better for blacks, but Nkandla (the house of president Zuma costing R256 million/\$25 million) was an eye-opener, he says. The EFF (Economic Freedom Fighters) of Julius Malema will take over. 'However, I shall vote ANC for the rest of my life because Mandela has helped us. If it was not for Mandela, I would not have voted.'

## Things are better but poverty is huge

Iris Mphuthi (Interview 5 May 2014) has been a counsellor for the ANC led eMakhazeni Municipality for two terms during the past 20 years. She feels that, during this time, things have dramatically changed for the better. Domestic violence is under control. And this is because of government policy and the police. If the wife lays a charge of assault, the law takes its course. There is no more domestic violence in Sakhelwe. There is respect for women now.

The youth too respect their parents, and even share their salary with their parents. They even share with other youngsters who are unemployed. However, the young people are fond of going to the shebeen (the informal drinking place). There are no drugs in the township, and no prostitution. There was a time when young women could be picked up in front of 'La Bamba' (the cafe in the town till two years ago), but that has stopped.

You also see that employers treat their employees well. The clinic also works well, although people prefer to go to Belfast for their HIV treatment because of the stigma. Also, the relationship between black and white in Dullstroom-Emnotweni is much better than 20 years ago. 'We now work together.'

It is just the churches that do not mix. For instance, the Elohim Bible Church (a large independent church in Sakhelwe) do not like people from other churches. It is only when there are funerals that the people mix.

‘But, yes, things are much better than 20 years ago. Much better. It is just the poverty that is big.’

### **Everyone is free, and everything is transparent**

Rose Nomadlozi (39) is from the ‘human rights generation’. She is informed and empowered through human rights discourses, especially discourses on women’s rights. She is working in a state department.

During the past 20 years everything changed, she says. Everyone is free now. At the police in Dullstroom-Emnotweni no rape or abuse is reported. Everything is transparent. We are taught about our human dignity everywhere, on the television, at the schools – it is even preached in the church. The women are definitely better off.

The young people, also, are more patient with the older ones. They used to ask us ‘Did you really live like that in the old days?!’ But now they are trying to understand why older people do not go on strikes or participate in protests like they do. They also recognise that the older people do not use the same technology like cell phones and computers.

The relationship between employers and employees in Dullstroom-Emnotweni is one hundred percent, she says, but unemployment amongst the youth and the men is very high. And the youth does not have money to go and study after matric.

The HIV situation is also better than 20 years ago. We used to bury the children of parents who were HIV positive, but today the children are negative. We all grow in knowledge about HIV every day, she says.

The churches in Sakhelwe are a problem, though. The Elohim Bible Church does not want anything to do with the other churches, especially the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA). There is a lot of tension, she says.

But in summary, according to Sindani, Dullstroom-Emnotweni today, after 20 years, is a free community.

### **IN SUMMARY**

The six interviews related in the above represent a wide variety of views on the gains and failures of democracy in the rural town of Dullstroom-Emnotweni which is still very much geographically divided into the white town catering for an upper class tourist market en route to the Kruger National Park, and the black township, Sakhelwe, where unemployment reigns supreme.

Here then follows a summary of the views expressed in terms of the interview schedule presented:

**1. How are relations in Dullstroom-Emnotweni between men and women?**

Answers varied between women being too free and disrespectful towards their husbands and roles, to women now being truly free and protected against violence.

**2. How are relations in Dullstroom-Emnotweni between young and old?**

On the one hand the youth is being accused of drinking too much and being disrespectful and radical; on the other hand, the youth is commented for assisting the older people who are not as politically conscious as they are, who are unemployed and not skilled at using internet technology. Drugs and prostitution do not seem to be a(n acknowledged) problem amongst the youth. However, professional training and life skills are lacking amongst them.

**3. How are relations in Dullstroom-Emnotweni between the employed and the unemployed?**

Unemployment is identified as a massive problem by all the interviewees, independent of their political views and their views on the gains of the 20 year old government.

**4. How are relations in Dullstroom-Emnotweni between employers and employees?**

All acknowledge that employees are vulnerable because of limited job opportunities and a lack of access to post-school training.

**5. How are relations in Dullstroom-Emnotweni between those affected by HIV and AIDS and those who are not infected?**

Anti-Retroviral treatment is available from the (one room) clinic in Sakhelwe, but most of the infected go to Belfast for treatment because of a fear of stigmatisation. However, conscientisation and advocacy programmes are successfully presented in Sakhelwe.

**6. How are relations in Dullstroom-Emnotweni between blacks and whites?**

The existence of racial tension was not admitted by any of the interviewees.

**7. How are things in Dullstroom-Emnotweni between the churches?**

In spite of all the good relations reported, tension between churches seems to be rife in the township itself where mainline and independent churches compete for members. Historically there are 20 Muslims in Dullstroom-Emnotweni, who have built their own mosque and support a full-time imam (religious leader). The Muslim population has grown extensively over the past year with the take-over of businesses in the white town as well as in the township by immigrants from Pakistan and other African countries. However, no tension between Christians and Muslims has been reported. Although there are no churches where white and black attendance is integrated, this has not been mentioned as an example of failed democratic relations.

## THE DOMINANT DISCOURSES ON DEMOCRACY IN DULLSTROOM-EMNOTWENI

According to Social Construction Theory, people are constructed by the social discourses that are dominant in their society, ‘discourse’ referring to a grand narrative that is regarded by society as ‘truthful’ and in return dominates the minds and behaviour of those who believe in it.

The dominant discourse during apartheid times was that ‘people are equal but different’. However, the different ways in which people of colour were treated during these times, made a mockery of them being seen as equal.

What, now, are the discourses in Dullstroom-Emnotweni twenty years after democracy?

Interestingly, democracy discourses do not seem to be divided along racial lines in Dullstroom-Emnotweni, with whites believing that democracy has failed and blacks pointing only to the gains of democracy. ‘Democracy has failed because of bad education, corruption and unfulfilled promises’ is no doubt a dominant discourse in white circles, but so is ‘Democracy works because it gives people hope in a hopeless situation’, and ‘Democracy lets the youth grow up in new and good relations with one another’. Reigning discourses amongst whites are ‘however-discourses’, such as ‘Democracy is enhancing opportunities and good relations, but has failed in sustainability’ and ‘Democracy has good intentions but has not created equal opportunities.’

Dominant discourses on democracy amongst the black interviewees from Dullstroom-Emnotweni oscillate between being outright positive, such as ‘Democracy brings good human relations’, to acknowledging the disparity between the dream and reality: ‘Democracy should be about people being paid equality’ (sic), ‘Democracy should be about human dignity’, ‘Democracy is not protecting us from HIV infection’ and ‘Democracy brings good relations, but cannot alleviate poverty.’

Why, then, in spite of shared views on democracy, on its gains and failures, does Dullstroom-Emnotweni remain a society deeply divided along class and racial lines, as is the experience of this author (Landman 2013a: 45–57)?

Democracy made laws that gave people freedom and equality in the eyes of the law. Nobody may discriminate against women or blacks, otherwise the law will take its course. The surface structure of society, also that of Dullstroom-Emnotweni, has changed. However, in the deep structure where laws do not rule but discourses do, things have not changed much. Discourses that keep strong women isolated and black youth unemployed still dominate this society.

Ultimately the apartheid discourse of ‘equal but different’ has not been deconstructed. Black youth are still differently employed, people are still exposed to HIV infection, and women are still vulnerable in intimate relationships (Landman 2013b: 171–185).

## IN CONCLUSION

Six interviews were held with three black and three white people from Dullstroom-Emnotweni, a rural town divided into a prosperous tourist town and a poor township. The interviews focused on the changes in relations in this still deeply divided town brought about by democracy that dawned in South Africa 20 years ago. From the interviews it is deduced that democracy brought laws that freed people from political oppression, public abuse and unnatural social divides. However, in the deep structure of this society, discourses still rule that hold people captive in poverty, HIV infection and vulnerability.

The reason for this is that equality and human dignity as the core values of democracy, have not become part of the dominant discourses of society.

Democracy as equality and human dignity are missing in the dominant discourses of this rural society, both in the 'white' discourses of privileged people and in the 'black' discourses of people who are not afforded the self-realisation of people who are really equal and possess human dignity.

And therefore a majority of people in Dullstroom-Emnotweni are free...but remain fragile.

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# OUTSMARTING APARTHEID: AN ORAL HISTORY OF UNITED STATES-SOUTH AFRICA CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE, 1960–1999

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## ABSTRACT

*Outsmarting Apartheid* is an oral history of educational and cultural exchange programs conducted by the United States Government with citizens of South Africa during the apartheid period. The 'OA' collection, published in one volume by the University Press of the State University of New York in April of 2014, conveys the stories of those who administered the programs, as well as those who benefitted, during three troubled decades of South African history. The exchanges involved some 2 000–3 000 participants during a dark period of social unrest and institutionalized injustices. Quietly in the background, U.S. diplomats and their South African colleagues bent rules and stretched limits imposed by the apartheid regime. Collectively they played cat-and-mouse games to outsmart the regime through conniving and bravado.

The author's year as executive director of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (Arlington, Virginia), 2006–2007, provided a methodology and archiving structure forming the basis of the interviews, conducted over a two-year period in the United States and South Africa.

There was little optimism at the time for South Africa's political or social future during the 1960–1990 period. After Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1990 and during his presidency of 1995–1999, the country discovered rich cadres from within, of intellectuals, artists, journalists, scientists, and political leaders prepared to take on the task of constructing the New South Africa. In no small measure, these exchange programs contributed to the quick and sudden realization of suppressed wishes and aspirations for a majority of South Africa's citizens – of all ethnic and racial backgrounds.

**Keywords:** U.S. Government; apartheid; diplomacy; public diplomacy; training; social transformation

## INTRODUCTION

The 1960s–1990s were a Golden Age for public diplomacy of the United States Government, achieving quiet and solid advances for civil society in many countries

in a Cold War context. In the period 1995–1999 I had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to live and work in South Africa during the Mandela presidency, a period of dramatic transformation. During this four-year period, my admiration grew for those who preceded me in conducting and benefiting from U.S. government-funded exchanges. Their adroit practice of ‘public diplomacy’ in bringing the two countries together through academic and cultural exchange was transformative. I sensed that their stories might fade from memory lest someone assure their survival, so I decided in 2001 to record as many interviews as I could, and anchor these efforts as lessons learned and as valuable instances of oral history.

Through a very lucky break in 2006, I learned an oral history methodology when I became executive director of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training in Arlington, Virginia. Under the tutelage of Charles Stuart Kennedy, I mimicked a technique for interviewing individuals so as to get a full picture of their backgrounds and achievements. Kennedy refined his trial-and-error approach over a 30-year period interviewing retired U.S. Foreign Service Officers. More than 1 600 transcripts of the Frontline Diplomacy collection he initiated are fully accessible to the public on the site of the U.S. Library of Congress, American Memory collection, and also at the website of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training.<sup>1</sup>

After twenty years of trial and error, Charles Stuart Kennedy wrote a brief document sketching his personal methodology of oral interviews: ‘The strength of the Foreign Affairs Oral History Collection is its thoroughness; the average interview runs about ten hours, done in two-hour sessions. The interviewers are themselves retired senior Foreign Service officers, who know the subject matter and are able to elicit frank accounts of diplomatic and bureaucratic life.’

The ‘Kennedy Methodology’ requires close attention to individuals’ personal narratives, while showing an ability to set these stories in the context of United State foreign policy. The process embeds a loose structure based on general knowledge of the context of the interviewee’s professional and personal background, while allowing liberal departures in the interview process in order to capture the spontaneity and sometimes undetected jewels in the individual’s narrative. A Kennedy interview is more a free conversation than a set of prescribed questions aiming for specific interview outcomes. The results yield valuable anecdotes which could otherwise be lost in a more ‘structured’ interview process.

Putting together my sense of the urgency of getting the stories of U.S.-South Africa exchanges during the apartheid period, and the tools and methods I learned at ADST, I ventured out in 2009 to get as many interviews as I could from every facet of South African society, and of some Americans who get credit for keeping a flame of hope alive during a dark period of South Africa’s history. I kept at it for a couple of years.

Veteran diplomat Bob Gosende got me in the door with SUNY press. Shortening these compelling stories was painful, but with the help of Foreign Service Officer Kari Jaksa, I was able to make the difficult cuts reducing a couple of thousand pages into 400 for publication.

I first met South African visitors to the United States in the summer of 1978. As interpreter for francophone Africans visiting the United States with Operation Crossroads Africa, I found them mixed in with groups of young African leaders brought in from 20–30 countries at a time.

Traveling across the wilds of northern New Jersey from JFK airport to the Princeton campus for orientation, one collared South African clergyman made quick eye contact with me in the airport shuttle and undertook to explain his bizarre country: ‘Brother!’ he said with deep belly laughs. ‘You can’t imagine how strange my country is. So strange, that the penalty for a black man sleeping with a white woman is a year in prison!’

I knew apartheid South Africa had peculiar rules and restrictions, but wasn’t yet versed in the particulars.

‘Well, Brother, let me tell you’, the clergyman continued, ‘It was worth it, every minute of it!’ He laughed even harder.

There was something exceptional about the South African visitors to the United States in the 1970s and 80s – most but not all of them ‘black’ and ‘colored’, to use the South African nomenclature. Cloistered but worldly, committed to social and political changes that seemed unlikely at the time, they persevered through minefields of distrust laid by Africans of other Sub-Saharan countries. Surely, if they were allowed by the apartheid regime to travel to international fora, they must be stooges, or worse: spies.

I attended the tense and arduous, hastily arranged meetings long into the night in the Princeton dorms. I tried to keep a neutral tone since as French interpreter, I was the uninvited but necessary guest to get the messages across. I tried to convey them without interpretative body language or innuendo, as Malians, Nigerians, Ivoirians, Liberians, and others subjected South Africans to harsh scrutiny. Opponents at home to their own system at personal risk and cost, the South Africans weathered the suspicions of the others, in tranquil Princeton, that they were in fact the regime’s patsies. Eventually they gained the others’ trust. It wasn’t easy.

Profound change in South Africa was imminent, but no one knew it then. Coinciding in time with events and efforts that corroded communist dictatorships in Eastern Europe to the breaking point, similar patterns played out in South Africa. Along with others, the United States Embassy pushed the envelope of transformation, hastening a painful process and short-circuiting the violence everyone expected. U.S. diplomats and their South African local employees in Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, and Pretoria engaged daily in brinkmanship with police, ministry officials, and educators of the apartheid regime. They managed to get ‘majority’ South African students and professionals to the United States in significant numbers, cracking open the seemingly unshakable clouded glass ceilings. In effect they outsmarted apartheid every day for a twenty-year period.

The work of U.S. officials and their employees during that period richly deserves recognition for their contribution to the outcome two decades later. Their story is largely untold outside their own circles. *Outsmarting Apartheid* gives voice to a number of the witnesses: officials, local employees, and South African ‘grantees’ of all races who made

it to the United States during turbulent times and later took up the reins of leadership in the new South Africa of the 1990s.

The U.S. Embassy staff – Americans and South Africans – engaged local publics of all stripes and identified South Africa's likely future leaders. They visited townships 'illegally', testing the limits and bending the rules of diplomatic engagement. The Fulbright, Humphrey, and International Visitors' programs spirited out perhaps 2 000 to 3 000 individuals from South Africa's majority and other communities, broadening their horizons and preparing them for the leadership roles they would eventually inherit.

The work required tact and skill. The regime resisted allowing travel for many of those chosen for exchanges and sought to impose limits on their contacts with the outside. The USIS staff meanwhile went ahead making travel arrangements. Seeking to avoid deeper pariah status, the regime often 'blinked', and allowed USIS programs to proceed over the impediments they'd established through exit visas, police monitoring, and sometimes prison.

Apartheid adversely affected all social and ethnic groups, including the supposed beneficiaries. This is not to say that all suffered equally.

Soft power served in South Africa, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere to energize and empower future leaders, while tempering the perceptions of previous and incumbent leaders. When unexpected changes opened in the society – especially after Nelson Mandela's dramatic release from prison in February 1990 – the cadres were already formed and ready to take up the reins of political, economic, and social direction of the country.

The content from these interviews holds a mirror to South Africa's recent past, present, and future. It also evokes unlikely achievements of bold individuals who did 'public diplomacy' before it even had the name. Their tales show U.S. diplomacy at its most effective. Close parallels exist with the work of U.S. embassies in Eastern Europe in the two decades before the dramatic transitions there.

American officials and their South African colleagues sustained patient, even plodding efforts, cat-and-mouse games, improved South Africa's human condition by drawing on modest resources combined with rich grey matter and stamina. Pride and honor to those on the ground who ran these programs during their country's darkest times.

The Outsmarting Apartheid collection, published by SUNY and available on the website of the Association of Diplomatic Studies and Training, is divided into five sections:

## Arts

The five interviews here touch on music, poetry, theater, and dance and contain a tale of diplomacy's role in breaking the cultural boycott against the country. The speakers span skin pigments, genders, and nationalities. They include Franklin Larey, pianist; Sindiwe

Magone, poet; Malcolm Purkey, theater director; Adrienne Sichel, arts critic, Brooks Spector, U.S. cultural envoy.

## Education

South Africans touched by United States academics later emerged as a core of the New South Africa's leadership structure. Interviewees include Professor David Coplan, teacher Mary Beth Gosende, (the late) U.S. Embassy Cultural Assistant Gill Jacot Guillarmod, Fulbright Commission Director Monica Joyi, Professor Edna van Harte, education advisor Carol Wilson.

## Law and parliament

The apartheid system had a flourishing legal system and a sophisticated version of something called 'Dutch Roman' law, similar to Continental Europe's codified system. It was often used to undermine, not protect, individual liberties.

In these interviews, we see current South African structures of prosecution, defense, private practice, magistrature, and, in two cases, MPs. They include Judge Siraj Desai, prosecutor Willem Heath, former political officer Steve McDonald, journalist and MP Sejamothopo Motau, (the late) advocate Dan Nesor and (the late) civil rights activist Jenny Nesor, public defender Eshaam Palmer.

## Public service

These interviewees bridged the ramparts, averted and outsmarted the system, and employed cleverness put to the cause of social transformation. The six are U.S. embassy employee Sheila Goodgall, U.S. diplomat Bob Gosende, Cape Town consulate cultural advisor Frank Sassman, Pretoria cultural advisor Klaas Skosana. The late Jerry Vogel served as president of Operation Crossroads Africa during its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s.

## Science and research

The rigors of science, too, incorporated social change in the New South Africa. Demographic shifts changed the face and character of research benefiting global citizens. Participants include medical doctor Gilbert Lawrence; scientist and teacher Shirley Motaung, and Karel Nel, artist, collector and scientist.

## Social engagement and community empowerment

Social engagement, the trellis of a climbing vine, withers after the growth is achieved, yet its construction permits the growth to occur. Social change and community empowerment form the enabling environment to transform theory to realization.

Represented here are U.S. diplomat's spouse Bonnie Brown, Ambassador Tim Carney, social worker Victor Daniels, cultural officer Bob Heath, city manager Wallace Mgoqi, social reformer Virginia Petersen, spouse Ruth Spector.

A couple of excerpts from the SUNY book form of the interviews follow – one from a U.S. diplomat, the other from a South African who worked at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria during the Mandela period:

## INTERVIEW WITH U.S. CULTURAL ENVOY J. BROOKS SPECTOR<sup>2</sup>

Spector: January '75. The plane landed in Johannesburg at the old Jan Smuts Airport. It landed around midnight. I had been in the air for about 28 hours. I was sort of past caring where I was. If the plane had landed in Antarctica, I would have said, 'Fine, that's enough. I have had it.' I was taken to the house I was going to live in, in the middle of the night, by two FSNs who just dropped me there. I was so tired that even that didn't seem extraordinary. I sort of vaguely unpacked, found the bed, and went to sleep.

In true South African fashion, I woke up, put my hands out for the night table to find my glasses, and I put my hand in a cup of hot coffee, which had been placed there by the housekeeper who worked in that house. I had heard all the tales about South Africa, and I was reasonably well attuned to what I thought to be the social circumstances. I would be lying if I didn't say my first thought was that the social circumstances in South Africa, the political regime, would be extraordinarily different if all the housekeepers were doing that all over the country, bringing in a cup of coffee or tea the first thing in the morning while you were [still] asleep [in bed] – if they didn't rise up and do away with all the oppressors.

Because that does not happen or did not happen, it forced me almost immediately to start thinking, 'This is a more complicated place than I thought. This is not simple straightforward good guys, bad guys, end of story, finished.' The dynamic of the place had some subtleties that I wasn't ready for. That is not an apology for anything; it is just that little things like this cup of coffee – brought to you unseen – make you reexamine what you think you know about a place.

[Over a 14-month period in 1991–1992, Spector negotiated the visit of the Dance Theater of Harlem, in effect breaking the cultural boycott imposed on South Africa.]

Spector: Why the Dance Theatre of Harlem? It was an iconic American performing group. It had its origins in the civil rights struggle and precisely the death of Martin Luther King. Arthur Mitchell, who was the co-founder and artistic director,

had broken the racial barriers of the New York City Ballet in Balanchine's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the late '50s, early '60s. Perhaps 1962.

Okay, now that is the easy part. Who is going to pay for this? It ended up costing about \$600,000 in 1992, so that was a lot of money. Dr. Ivan May was the group manager for this kind of thing at Nedbank. Now Ivan and I we put our heads together and he says, 'Well, maybe the bank can be persuaded to do this. But they have to be persuaded that A, there's a place to perform it, B, it is not going to rebound politically to our deep distress, and C, the changing nature of this country is going to be well represented in the way this is put together.' Now we have yet to talk to the Dance Theatre of Harlem about this.

DW: *You are asking a mixed race group in New York virtually to break a de facto cultural boycott.*

Spector: The iconic high art, primarily African American cultural group in America with a national and international profile. Truly if you mess it up it is banner headline in the New York Times. This goes bad, they have trouble. All of their fans, in fact the entirety of black America for all I know, will rise up and be upset.

DW: *Those who are politically involved in the boycott might expect bad behavior of the embassy, but hold the Dance Theatre of Harlem to the highest cultural standards.*

Spector: Correct. So we ask a friend if he could intercede with the company manager and Arthur Mitchell to at least entertain the question. If we can get all the things right, would they be interested, do they have time in their schedule next year to make the trip? Now the next question is, who in the world is going to be the sponsor for this? Now just visualize. This is like a large game of 'Whack-a-Mole' because every time you get one thing solved, something else goes haywire. Who could possibly sponsor such a thing? Well, there is really only one institution in the country that you can go to for this, and that is the Market Theatre.

So we go now across the street effectively to the City of Johannesburg, which has the Civic Theatre, which has been under renovation and reconstruction for five years in a curiously mismanaged process. Now up until they closed, although it wasn't absolutely segregated, it was effectively so. Nobody in the leading edge of the cultural movements wanted to have anything to do with the thing. Curiously the Civic Theatre was having major problems. They wanted to open soon, early 1992 or '93. But they have no show they can put on, because *Les Miz* and Cameron Mackintosh just told them, 'I have been deluged by telegrams. I have received letters and phone calls from cultural groups around the world and especially within South Africa telling me, 'Don't do it,' so I won't.'

So now they don't have *Les Miz*. They have nothing. And they are going to open. They decide at their board meeting that maybe they will just go with



a variety show, which is kind of dumb, to open their brand new renovated theater. It is going to be ready three months after the Dance Theatre of Harlem is available to come. So Christopher Till, who was then director for arts and culture for the City of Johannesburg, takes it upon himself because he has now got religion on this too. He goes and gets the city to revise the renovation schedule. They all work 24 hours a day to advance it so that it will be ready in September, just minutes before the company schedule looks like it would happen.

He gets the money from the city. I don't know who he beat up to get it. Eventually they commit themselves to paying for it. The cultural groups have now gotten wind of it locally, and 'The Civic Theatre? What are you people, crazy?' The Civic Theatre is part of the old regime. So we have to cut a deal with all of the cultural groups supportive of the boycott that there will be an interim new management committee of the new Civic Theatre to which they get to appoint a majority of the members. Now the board of the Civic Theatre is up in arms over this, that this is a bunch of old greybeards from the city and just taking away their candy store, let alone their candy.

So there we are. Now I start having routine lunches with Barbara Masekela, who is the speaker for arts and culture for the ANC. I am having a lunch with her as often as I can possibly arrange it, because she has just given a speech at the Grahamstown National Arts Festival indicating a new willingness on the part of the ANC that change is beginning to come, to be flexible within certain limits, and to support certain kinds of programs as long as they are consistent with the greater goal of national liberation.

I was in the position of giving them, 'Here is a real live honest-to-goodness concrete example. Now what are you going to do?' After a while, I finally get the gold standard. I get a letter from Nelson Mandela saying, 'We support this. This is the right thing to do now.'

Ah, but there is still yet another wrinkle. Unless the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid says it is okay... 'Whack-a-Mole' is the right image because every time I get something nailed down, something else becomes unglued a little bit.

DW: *Well the suspense builds. Then what?*

Spector: There is a meeting at the UN between the Dance Theatre of Harlem representatives and the UN committee, and they succeed in convincing the UN that this is an okay plan. The bank then comes forward and says, 'We are into it for X amount of dollars.' The city, in the meantime, has managed to get the Civic Theatre renovation rescheduled so that it is ready on September 10, through who knows how many dust-ups. The Market Theatre officially signs on as the sponsor of record, putting their neck in the noose because they are signing a binding document saying they are supporting this and the money will show up; don't worry. There is no U.S. government money in any of this.

You have to give the dance group enormous credit for taking the risk because this thing might still have gone badly even after they arrived.

The Dance Theatre of Harlem advance team shows up in August [1992], and my only problem is that I have to be transferred back to Washington because my tour is over. I have kids that have to go to school and all the rest of this. We can't just hang around. So I am there for the advance team from the theater. I am there for the arrival of Arthur Mitchell. But I miss the opening night by four days.

DW: *It is very frustrating to not see the fruits of your labors.*

Spector: Yeah, in one sense it is. I was so pleased that it actually happened that one little tiny corner of me was saying, 'Boy am I glad you will be out of here when it goes to hell in a hand basket.'

I was disappointed, but I was so profoundly pleased that it went off almost without a hitch. The end result was that almost 11,000 people came to a month's worth of performances. 25,000 people participated in master classes, workshops, lectures, and meetings. You just had to be happy that it all worked.

You know, you figure you earned everything you got because the ANC bought one night as a special commemorative gala. Mandela was quoted as saying, 'At least for one night, I have forgotten all of my troubles.'

## INTERVIEW WITH KLAAS SKOSANA, U.S. EMBASSY<sup>3</sup> –

Skosana: If there is any one thing that I brought back from my visit of the United States, it was to just be aware of the possibilities. When I went to the U.S., I had no clue of what a foreign country and a wealthy country looked like. I was mesmerized by the metro system, the subway. I had never seen it in my life. You know the subway and how it works and all that. I had never flown for 13.5 hours in a plane. The slogan for South Africa right now is 'Alive with possibilities.' That is the slogan the country uses to market itself internationally. But what I learned when I was in the United States was the possibilities and what was possible in this world.

I went to the Martin Luther King museum and then I saw his shoes. I concluded that his shoe size was smaller than mine; my feet are bigger than his actually. But he made the greatest impact in the world through his ideas, and I was greatly motivated. Then I went to the Jimmy Carter Center and read about his involvement in the Middle East peace process. I then remembered my international relations studies at Wits University.

I was humbled by the Carter Center. I was humbled by the simplicity. I saw a picture of Jimmy Carter wearing a cardigan, and he was sitting with some people, on an African camp with a fire. I thought, 'You know what? We take our blessings for granted, and we should be living our lives with an attitude of gratitude all the time and know that all people of this world elevate

us to higher pedestals. We are also capable of coming down to the very level of where poverty stricken people are. When we are higher, we must not be oblivious to the plight of the people.'

DW: *Let's go back chronologically, back to 1994, when you joined USIS at the U.S Embassy in Pretoria. Tell me some of the things you did there, and something about your work with the Gore-Mbeki Binational Commission starting a year later.*

Skosana: I didn't understand why the U.S was involved in this thing until we had an exhibition—it related to the Black History Month—which was called *Song of My People*. It was a photographic exhibition and I said, 'This does change your attitude, when you look at the pictures of a black American lady giving birth to her child, and her husband crying because he had never witnessed a child's birth.' So whether he thought his wife was dying or what, the nerve was flashing over his head in the picture watching his wife giving birth and he was crying. It had a great impact.

The embassy did a very good job of talking to people. Once we got them in the workshops for conflict resolution, for negotiations, when there were points of disputes between students and university administrators who were predominately white, black students would just burn the tires and trash the campuses, all of that. But the idea of USIS was to teach them negotiation skills as well. When black students were protesting about accommodations, the white students were complaining about lack of enough parking on campus. They were just in opposite directions. I mean, the white student is worried about where to park his car, but we don't even have cars, let alone accommodations.

These were indeed future leaders. It was interesting to listen to them on the issues, because the struggle which we were facing in the country was not only the struggle for accommodation and exclusion, but we were also using universities as terrains for political struggle. So it was not only about university issues, but it was also about the emancipation of the country as a whole.

David Makhura was one of the people we sent to the United States. He is now the provincial secretary for the African National Congress in Gauteng. Very soon he will be the premier of the province. Once he is the premier of the province, he may end up being the president of this country because he was in the education department of the ANC during his student days. Now he is in the movement and in the limelight, growing as a politician for the past 20 years.

Some people that were involved in the drafting of South African laws were sent to the University of Delaware to do the legislation-drafting process. And they came back, and there were statistics of the speed at which the laws in South Africa had to change.

South Africans needed to learn, and learn very fast. Through the Gore-Mbeki Binational Commission, they needed to go and study people. Go to

Wisconsin, and see how the city there was run, and how they could then translate their learning from there to say, running the city of Cape Town or the city of Jo'burg or the city of Tshwane.

It was a big project, and what it did for me personally is that I was able to use my generalist skills to negotiate with the South African government people when I was working on programs on which the U.S and South Africa could collaborate. I think the Americans benefited from the exposure to the South African situation because there were professors that were working with universities. At one point, the deans of the universities from South Africa visited the United States, and people from the United States came to South Africa.

DW: *Do you have any comment about the various programs such as Fulbright, Humphrey, Citizen Exchange, the art expeditions that you referred to?*

Skosana: The people that participated in these programs, many of them came back to contribute quite immensely. I saw a list of people that I sent to the United States and what positions they are occupying today, and I think they all have positive things to say about what they have seen in the U.S. You take what you can take from a country. You cannot focus on everything about a country, but fix your brain on a few aspects, and you will remember them forever, like the things I shared with you earlier. I think that intervention of the United States was commendable, and it did, in many ways, 'outsmart' apartheid because it exposed people to various perspectives.

DW: *Was it a tactical mistake for the apartheid regime to even permit these programs?*

Skosana: Yes. The apartheid experiment, I just believe that it was unworkable from the get-go. How do you give people two types of education systems, for people living in the same society? How do you say, 'You shall not be my neighbor, but you shall cook my food, and not use my plate or utensils to eat?' It just does not work. You are saying, 'You are subhuman. You are dirty,' but you are also saying, 'Come wash my clothes, come clean my house, or come look after my kids when I am not there. But don't be my neighbor, don't live next to me and don't get the same education as myself. When you drink coffee, do not use my cup.' But you are saying, 'Prepare a cup of tea for me.' You are just stupefying yourself.

It was once said that our Bantu education was made for us to be better tools for whites. But when you look at it, how do you expect me to help you when you don't give me enough education to be able to help you? I think they made a mistake all the way; or rather, not a mistake: what they did was unworkable. It was just a matter of time for it to collapse. How do you expose me to some kind of education, and say, 'Read this book, not a book about democracy, but about culture? Because if you read about democracy, it might be a little clever.' How do you control my access to the library? Because I will

read about Martin Luther King. I mean, the person that influenced Mandela, for example, was Jawaharlal Nehru, the politician, and look where he comes from and where he was raised, like Mahatma Gandhi. Mandela was influenced by somebody that was not from South Africa. He read about him. He did not meet him or see him.

It is these ideas that shape our world views, and the U.S. has indeed contributed to the way I view things, from studying the work of Francis Fukuyama, Henry Kissinger, visiting the Martin Luther King Center, Emory University, George Washington University, visiting the Jimmy Carter Center and just seeing the humility of a former president in addressing social issues in the world. I mean, it shapes your world. So the next time you hear the leader coming out of Africa leading the South African society into the next century or whatever, all of those ideas will be calculating in my brain, for me personally.

Talking about the country's future, I believe that South Africans as a nation are very ambitious people. We have had apartheid, and also good things, life, and progress. We believe in ourselves and we do not like failing; we always want to win. Sometimes we are very impatient with our own progress; we think we are moving too slowly. We are very positive people, full of passion and energy, and I think that if the collective mood can be circulated to individual performances, we can go much further.

[Here end two extracts from the printed version of the *Outsmarting Apartheid* collection, reprinted with kind permission of SUNY press, Albany, New York.]

**Outsmarting Apartheid** was released in April of 2014. It draws on an oral history methodology developed at the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training team in Virginia. It conveys individual voices and stories from a cross section of a highly divided society which has since made advances in coalescing socially and politically, if not entirely economically. The refrain of the collection seems summed up in one interviewee's comment which seemed to speak for all: 'When I arrived at Kennedy airport, I saw that everything is possible.'

For further information on *Outsmarting Apartheid*, kindly contact Dan Whitman at [Dwhitman89@yahoo.com](mailto:Dwhitman89@yahoo.com)

## ENDNOTES

- 1 Association for diplomatic studies and training. 2014. Retrieved from [www.adst.org](http://www.adst.org) (accessed 15 December 2014).
- 2 U.S. Cultural Envoy, Johannesburg 1975-76, Pretoria 1989-92, Johannesburg 2001-2003.
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# THE CZECHOSLOVAK POLITICAL TRIALS OF THE 1950S: TRAUMA AND POST-MEMORY IN THE STORY OF A POLITICAL PRISONER'S SON<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The article contributes to the historiography of the Czechoslovak communist dictatorship. The Communist takeover and stabilization of the regime were connected with various kinds of oppression including political trials. The biggest political trial in that time was that of the female politician Milada Horáková and the twelve members of her resistance group. This trial was followed by dozens of smaller local trials around the country, accusing 627 people altogether. While the main trial was carried on publicly and was used extensively in the state's propaganda, the local trials remain almost forgotten and outside the interest of Czech public. This paper will focus on one of them and its impact on my narrator and his family.

Antonín Městecký jr. was a child when his father Antonín Městecký was imprisoned for 11 years after a local show trial in the city of Hradec Králové in East Bohemia. The imprisonment of his father was his strongest childhood experience; when his father returned home, the son was already an adult and they both kept silent about the traumatic past. They never discussed what really happened in the time of the father's imprisonment, creating a severe trauma for the son. How can the turning point in someone's life be remembered if we have only limited information?

Using the methods of oral history, this paper explores how Mr. Městecký tries to deal with this gap in his family's history by extending his childhood memories with information given to him by members of his father's resistance group or found in books and archives. In the methodology, I will also reflect on how sharing his story with me constituted bridging the gap. His narrative contains rich accounts of life and survival as well as interesting moments and silences, revealing the complexities of trauma narratives and their effect on the descendants of former political prisoners.

**Keywords:** Czechoslovak communist dictatorship, memory, trauma, political prisoners

## INTRODUCTION

The end of WWII brought great changes to Czechoslovakia in the political, economic and social sphere. The short transitional period of limited democracy with several allowed political parties (the Communist party was the strongest and got 40% of votes in the 1946 elections) ended in a Communist coup in February 1948. The newly established



dictatorship, subordinated to the Stalinist regime in Moscow, started rebuilding the society in a Soviet fashion and implementing its class war doctrine.<sup>2</sup> The great wheel of various political processes started spinning. This systematic elimination of real or imagined opponents of the Communist regime produced about 250 000 political prisoners and 248 people were executed. There were many people and groups resisting in various ways, including producing anti-communist leaflets, carrying out sabotage or co-operating with western intelligence. On the other hand, a large number of political prisoners were sentenced for espionage and treason in fabricated trials even though they never attempted any real anti-communist action; some simply ‘had bad luck’ (Bouška & Pinerová 2009: 12). The level of violence changed over the years and most political prisoners were jailed between 1948 and 1960. Most of them were conditionally released by a presidential pardon before 1960, yet were stigmatized and technically remained criminals. Former political prisoners started hoping for rehabilitation and attempted to establish an association, the K-231 Club, in the era of the Prague Spring. Their hopes ended with the Soviet occupation (Hoppe 2009). The era known as Normalization had its political prisoners as well, but in a different local and international context. The dissident movement of that time had different roots, structure and demands. Even though the former political prisoners from the 1950s and 1960s did not identify themselves with the regime, they mostly concentrated on leading as normal a life as possible and did not actively come out against the regime during the Normalization era (Louč 2011: 79). They were rehabilitated in the 1990s when the process of dealing with the Communist past started (Ash 2002; Rothschild & Wingfield 2000), shaping the social frameworks of memory and identity of former political prisoners (Mayer 2009) who ‘were not convinced that the political structure of their country had changed dramatically’ (Coetzee & Hulec 1999: 92), and sought the state’s acknowledgement of their suffering and heroism (Kopelentova Rehak 2013).

Former Czechoslovak political prisoners have been in the focus of oral historians and memorial initiatives since the late 1990s (Bouška & Pinerová 2009; Bušková & Hunt 2014; Coetzee & Hulec 1999; Louč 2008 & 2011; Kopelentova Rehak 2013). Czech oral history is still catching up after a delayed start of many years, which means that many of these projects were not well-grounded in theory and were under the influence of a ‘black and white’ perception of these periods, which remains quite dominant in the right-wing field of politics of memory. The question of a more reflexive approach was mostly reduced to corridor talk (Louč 2011: 78) described by Yow as ‘The remarks you made about your reaction to your research while you were standing with a colleague in the corridor. You were about to go into the room where you would discuss the really important matters’ (Yow 2006: 55).

Let me return to Stalinist Czechoslovakia. We find ourselves in June 1950. The Cold War is in full swing and the local Communist Party (KSČ – Komunistická strana Československa) has spent the last two years stabilizing its dictatorship, subordinated to the Stalinist regime in Moscow, eliminating its real or imagined opponents (through the doctrine of class struggle) and preparing for a possible escalation of the Cold War.

Czechoslovak press is full of serious stories. One of the main topics deals with resolutions condemning the ‘American aggression’ in Korea. Propaganda is also mobilizing people to fight against Colorado potato beetles damaging crops. The beetles are even described as a biological weapon used by capitalists to damage the local economy.

Dozens of political trials contributed to the dramatic situation. They were designed after the Soviet model, first presented at the show trial of Milada Horáková et al. It was the largest of several hundred political trials organized in Czechoslovakia in the years 1948–1954 (Kaplan & Paleček 2008: 65) and the only one in which a woman was executed (Kaplan 1996: 193). In 35 subsequent trials, related to the main one, 639 people were indicted, 618 of whom were convicted. The judges delivered ten death sentences, forty-eight life sentences and other imprisonment sentences totaling 7 830 years (Kaplan & Paleček 2008: 69). As historian Karel Kaplan noted:

The design of the process had to fulfil two essential principles: firstly, to show the degree of hostility of the political opposition to the state and the working class. For that reason, the prosecution painted the picture of an extensive network of illegal groups throughout the country, controlled by a central body in which all the main anti-communist political movements were represented. Secondly, objectives and methods of illegal activities had to be presented to the public as a large-scale effort, including espionage, treason, preparing terrorist acts and assassinations, sabotage, cooperation with hostile foreign countries, desire to start a third world war and even preparing for it.’ (Kaplan 1996: 125)

As I mentioned before, most of these accusations were fabricated by the state secret police with no real evidence.

The executed politician Milada Horáková and other members of her main group now stand in the centre of popular memory related to this trial. Conversely, there is not enough space in this memory for hundreds of people convicted in subsequent trials. There are still too many unexplored topics in our past. Therefore, I would like to focus on one of these subsequent trials and its impact on the life and recollection of my narrator Antonín Městecký jr., son of police sergeant Antonín Městecký who was sentenced to life imprisonment and jailed between the years 1949–1960.

## THE RESISTANCE

The turning point in the life of Antonín Městecký was one of the unremembered subsequent political trials with anti-communist resistance groups, ‘Rudolf Bárta et al.’ (this group was operating around Hradec Králové) and ‘Maděra et al.’ (in the area of the city of Nová Paka). Both groups cooperated and were judged together. The public trial took place in Hradec Králové between 26 June and 8 July 1950 (Kaplan 1996: 298). The prosecution accused the group of having ties with foreign intelligence services, of arming themselves, of carrying out sabotage and even of planning the assassination of Prime Minister Antonín Zápotocký. The court served exemplary sentences to members of both groups. There were 72 defendants in total; five of them received life sentences.

The remaining punishments amounted to 1 350 years (Kuříková 2008: 47). Antonín Městecký was one of the five who were sentenced to life imprisonment. He was presented as an exemplary case of a traitor within the ranks of the SNB in the local press; the SNB (Sbor národní bezpečnosti, or National Security Corps) was the name of the state police between 1945 and 1991. His story was told to me by his son Antonín who experienced the trial as a five-year-old child.

We do not have direct eyewitnesses of the activities of Rudolf Bárta and Stanislav Maděra's groups. There are archival documents, including statements of a key person in the whole case, OBZ agent Jan Šmída, code name Baron. The OBZ (Obranné zpravodajství, or Defence Intelligence) was a military intelligence service controlled by the Communist party. There are also the testimonies of group members Vratislav Číla and Ladislav Leiterman published by historian Veronika Kuříková. I will now briefly summarize the history of this group.

Maděra's resistance group was founded in 1948 in Prague. Agent Šmída quickly became its leader and directed the group until the majority of its members were arrested by StB (Státní bezpečnost, or State Security), the Czechoslovak secret police. Only Stanislav Maděra and Ladislav Leiterman escaped arrest and hid in Nová Paka in order to flee to West Germany, yet they still trusted Šmída and contacted him. Šmída came to Nová Paka and tried to get them involved in other anti-communist activities. As Vratislav Číla noted:

It was Šmída from the city of Jilemnice. I knew him from grammar school in Nová Paka. He often visited my family after the antifascist uprising in 1945, especially when my father arranged his admission to the Military Academy in Hranice. He was commander of the guerrilla intelligence group MAMUT in 1945. Šmída tried to get us involved in guerrilla activity similar to that during the Nazi occupation. He said that we must take action against the regime to the extent that it becomes known abroad. He advised us to rob a shop and also proposed to blow up a railway tunnel near Nová Paka. He informed us that in a short time, a train with the Prime Minister Antonín Zápotocký on board will be going through it. He said it would be no problem to obtain explosives and calculated how much was required. (Číla 1994)

But let us return to our case. Both Maděra and Leiterman, even though Šmída forbade them to do so, fled to West Germany in January 1949. While Leiterman continued to the USA, Maděra met with a representative of the U.S. Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) in Munich. He found out that the CIC was more interested in military and economic information than in any form of violent action. Maděra returned to Czechoslovakia with this task in June 1949 and once again hid in Nová Paka. He then made contact with representatives of local resistance in Hradec Králové and Pardubice (they were later judged as the group Rudolf Bárta et al.). Maděra's major problem was obtaining a radio station that he eventually managed to get with the help of Antonín Městecký and the brothers František and Josef Čapek (Kuříková 2008: 41). The former lived in a farmhouse next to the church of St. Procopius in the village of Hoříněves where the radio station was deployed. The first short radio contact with the West was established

on 1 July 1949. The group aired a brief comment on a member of the National Security Corps, unpunished for a murder committed out of jealousy two days earlier. Antonín Městecký was on guard during the broadcast and made sure that no one would 'surprise' the radio operator. Besides that, he among other things provided to several people a copy of a resistance magazine called *The Fight for Freedom and Democracy* and arranged shelter for refugees from a labour camp. The group members were arrested by the StB (with Šmída's assistance) in July and August 1949. The second radio message thus remained the last one.

## THE FATHER

Antonín Městecký was born in 1916 in the village of Všeštery in the Hradec Králové district. He enrolled at the Business Academy in Hořice in 1932 and was accepted as a volunteer at the 4th Infantry Regiment 'Prokop the Great' located in Hradec Králové in 1933. He joined the army to avoid being a burden to his parents during the Great Depression. He became part of the Gendarmerie Corps in 1937 and served as a policeman in several parts of East Bohemia. He met with Mary Richter during his service in Pardubice in 1941 and married her two years later. Their son Antonín was born on 17 November 1943. The family lived in Smiřice nad Labem after the war and Antonín Městecký served at the local police station. His son described his subsequent career for me:

My father was still working with the police after the Communist coup. He, among other things, tried to help people in need the same way he used to during the war. He tried to find sources of income for families who had their breadwinners arrested. He was also in contact with the resistance. Those were the groups of Hradec Králové and Nová Paka...However, they were infiltrated by informers who were trying to provoke their activity in order to get as many people as possible to join in. Other group members did not know anything about that.' (Městecký, Interview 26 March 2009 and 16 July 2009)

Antonín Městecký became involved in the resistance group because of his older brother František in April 1949 (František Městecký was sentenced to 28 years in the same political trial). Antonín was a member of the group until his arrest four months later. He was accused of collecting intelligence against the SNB, distributing an anti-communist magazine and providing weapons and explosives for his group (Security Services Archive, ABS f. 1906/5a). The court sentenced him to life imprisonment in July 1950. He later described the circumstances of the trial in his request for rehabilitation:

The protocol that I read and signed was signed by me because I had been interrogated, blindfolded and handcuffed – I did it to avoid further pressure, violence and threats. Protocols were based on the testimony of two State Security agents who had constructed the entire case. These protocols became the basis for the prosecution and the entire judicial process. Likewise, even at the main state court hearing, at which all members of State Security were present, it was not possible to

bring in the two initiators from State Security Group. (Městecký, Application for rehabilitation, 1969)

Antonín Městecký was imprisoned from 1950 to 1960, three years of which were spent in the prisons of Valdice and Leopoldov. He was working in uranium mines in the Jáchymov and Příbram district for another seven years. He was conditionally released on amnesty with a ten-year probation period in May 1960 and returned home with broken health and bound by confidentiality. He could be jailed again for the slightest offense and as his son told me: ‘He could not deal with it, they took everything, everything! He had nothing and had to start from scratch again’ (Městecký, Interview 26 March 2009 and 16 July 2009). Antonín Městecký had to work as a labourer and warehouseman in the following years. He fell ill with lung cancer in 1979 and died the following year. He was rehabilitated and posthumously promoted to the rank of major in 1990.

## THE SON

I first met Antonín Městecký jr. when I visited the local branch of the Confederation of Political Prisoners (KPV – Konfederace politických vězňů) in Pardubice in 2006.<sup>3</sup> He was not the first member who has offered me his life story. He agreed with the recording only later because I kept visiting the branch in the following years. It had to be a difficult decision for him to trust me and share his traumatic story. Some political prisoners perceive the children of political prisoners as second-class members of the Confederation, so my narrator had reason to try not to stand out in the group. I did not know at the beginning how traumatic the story was for my narrator, so I only followed the basic ethical rules for oral historical research. Later I discussed my work with the psychologist Kristýna Bušková; I was discreet and very careful when informing my narrator about the project, its outcomes and its possible impact on his life.

We recorded two interviews and then had more meetings for a joint reading and editing of the transcripts. The narrator has damaged eyesight, so I read the entire finished transcript to him and wrote down his comments. We also visited an archive together to look for more archival materials. My narrator soon became my link to the KPV. He informed me about important or unexpected events and brought me to meetings and to see other KPV affiliates or members of the association of people who used to work in the Army Convicted Labor Forces (PTP – Pomocné technické prapory, the Auxiliary Technical Battalions). On my part, I assisted him in organizing some small events for local KPV members (usually trips to places somehow related to the anti-Nazi or anti-communist resistance).

It was apparent from the first interview that the narrator was carefully prepared – for example, he had prepared a written short introduction in advance and checked all dates with period documents from his personal archive. I was surprised that he also approached the interview itself very carefully, which, in my experience, is not the case with the majority of my narrators. Surprisingly, the introductory text was not about

my narrator, but all about his imprisoned father. In fact, the father's conviction plays a constitutive role in the plot of my narrator's life story. It provides coherence and meaning to the story because it links individual events and incidents into a coherent chain of events (Hamar 2008: 29). It also represents the backbone of family memory, which he passes on to the next generations.

I consider the concept of post-memory to be very useful in the interpretation of my narrator's way of remembrance. Hirsch understands post-memory as an intergenerational transmission of traumatic memory which is shaped by discontinuity between an event and its memory:

I see it, rather, as a structure of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience. It is a consequence of traumatic recall but (unlike posttraumatic stress disorder) at a generational remove. Postmemory describes the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed cultural and collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experiences that they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and effectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Postmemory's connection to the past is thus not actually mediated by recall but by imaginative investment, projection, and creation. To grow up with such overwhelming inherited memories, to be dominated by narratives that preceded one's birth or one's consciousness, is to risk having one's own stories and experiences displaced, even evacuated, by those of a previous generation. (Hirsch 2008: 106)

To me the whole situation also resembles a combination of trauma and culture trauma. As Clark noted, 'Psychological and physiological trauma events produce very specific emotional, mental, and psychological responses in people who have suffered through them as well as those who listen to their stories' (Clark 2011: 256). He also describes the specific role of the oral historian in dealing with trauma: 'For oral historians – the second witnesses to historic and traumatic events – the challenge is to use the innately supportive and professional context of oral history to facilitate the active process of remembrance' (Clark 2011: 258). Culture trauma, by definition, occurs when 'members of a collective feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways' (Alexander 2004: 1). This effect extends to the present, because trauma is a disruptive experience that disarticulates the self and creates holes in existence (LaCapra 2001: 41). I can mention two aspects of my narrator's culture trauma. Firstly, my narrator felt the lack of recognition of the acts of his father by the society as a whole which (especially in the 1990s) saw former political prisoners as victims but not so much as heroes. This partially changed with the adoption of the Czech law on anti-communist resistance in 2011. Antonín Městecký acquired the status of a member of the anti-communist resistance from the Czech Ministry of Defense in 2014.

Secondly, the Czech public discourse about the Communist past is quite black and white. There are also strong efforts to use history for political purposes (everything leftist is the first step towards a new dictatorship etc.), which are reflected in the various



politics of memory, very often understanding the Communist past only in the terms of good and evil. This prevents a real understanding of the past and stigmatizes many people, for example members of the Communist Party or persons forced to co-operate with the State Security who did not cause any damage to other people. We found out during our collaboration that Antonín Městecký joined the Communist Party after the Communist takeover. He probably did it to keep his job and did not hold any political office but we know very little about that – only that the StB found his membership card. My narrator was embarrassed about this topic but we agreed that we could not judge his father and instead should try to understand what happened in the past. I do not accept any such stigma. I previously mentioned that Antonín Městecký was officially recognized as a member of the Czechoslovak anti-communist resistance. The Ministry of Defense acknowledged in its decision that his work in the resistance outweighs his membership in the Communist Party. Even this, however, does not relieve him of the stigma. Ironically, regardless of his merit in the anti-communist resistance, Antonín Městecký could not be allowed membership in the Confederation of Political Prisoners after the Velvet Revolution, because it is forbidden to all former members of the Communist Party without exceptions (in fact, some KPV members used to be in the Communist Party, but cannot admit it). My narrator is currently the deputy head of one branch of the Confederation of Political Prisoners, but it is likely that no one knows about his father's party membership. It is probably better to not open this topic because the organization (on the level of its leadership) seems to be too strictly anti-communist to inquire about the historical reality in which Antonín Městecký lived.

The trauma also shapes my narrator's family memory. The crack in memory is caused by the missing years of the imprisonment of my narrator's father, understood by the son as an act of injustice and an irreversible disruption of his childhood and family ties. Most families select a group of stories and storytelling of their past, and their tellers, according to Finnegan's notion, 'are not fully conscious that they are crystallizing their family's heritage, telling and retelling stories that express that family's being' (Finnegan 2006: 177). A family identity is strongly evident in the story, as I noticed; the narrator remembers emotionally powerful experiences from the formative period of his youth. He was only five years old when his father was arrested. On the other hand, he has to deal with the fact that he was too young to have a comprehensive understanding of this event and his own memories are relatively uncertain.

The first interview revealed our different thoughts about what should be its content and meaning. I was particularly interested in the story of my narrator as the son of a political prisoner. Instead, my narrator wraps his own story in the shell of his father's destiny which was constantly present in his testimony. The father's story dominates the story of his son due to the transmission of trauma. As Klempler cited Dory Laub, 'trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attained no closure, and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every aspect' (Klempler 2006: 200). My narrator therefore devoted considerable



attention to the fate of his father, but I had to urge him to give a more detailed narrative of his own life. He sometimes pointed out that he talks about a particular subject just because I asked him to and does not consider it important. Often when he returned the corrected transcript of the interview to me, I found that he many times pointed out these ‘unnecessary parts’ of his testimony. In that moment I wondered whether I did not put too much pressure on him during the interview. I later realized that my narrator distinguished between parts of the interview that were more important to me as a researcher and parts that were important to him. He decided to tolerate my different intentions because he was informed about my project quite well and because I gave him as much space as possible for sharing what he considered to be important.

In my opinion, our joint work on the life story gave my narrator an opportunity to rethink and understand this traumatic event, transform it into a meaningful story and return it into the family’s memory. In this context, I would like to mention an interesting concept of re-externalization. Telling the traumatic story trapped inside the narrator’s mind allows a shift in its meaning. As Klempler noted ‘telling the narrative, the traumatic event becomes drained of some of its toxicity’ (Klempler 2006: 201).

He asked me if I could make a small book about his father that he could give to other family members and friends. I think it is important that both sides should benefit from the conversation, so I did make ten books for him, containing interviews, photos and other documents. We even made two ‘trips’ to the places connected to his father’s story (place of birth, place where he was arrested and the court where he was sentenced). While we took the first trip alone, the second time we travelled in a group with the narrator’s wife, daughter and her boyfriend.

Understanding the importance of the interview for my narrator and the importance of his role as a gate-keeper for me allowed me to consider how my work was shaped by our relationship. This problem was very impressively described by Valerie Yow (Yow 2006). Shopes also commented on the risk of ‘liking the narrators too much’ saying the following:

The alternative to ‘liking too much’ is not naïve neutrality or denial of the fact that an interviewer’s posture invariably inflects the interview. Nonetheless, for historians and others engaged in documentary work, there is the ethical problem of, on the one hand, maintaining regard for the people one is interviewing and, on the other, adhering to the disciplinary imperative to tell the truth, not in some essentializing, positivist sense, but by trying to get the whole story, even if following the evidence where it leads undercuts one’s sympathies; by probing hesitations, contradictions, and silences in a narrator’s account; by getting underneath polite glosses; by asking the hard questions, and by resisting the tendency to create one-dimensional heroes out of the people interviewed, for romanticization is its own form of patronization. (Shopes 2007: 147)

I will briefly mention one moment when I reacted in that way. My narrator was talking about his father’s life during the Prague Spring. The Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia disrupted this era and soon after that, the period known as the Normalization started. Many people were asked at work what was their opinion of the invasion, and the only correct answer was that it was a form of ‘fraternal assistance’.

Almost everybody responded with that. My narrator had a completed form that confirms that his father indeed said this in an interview. At first I responded to it very cautiously, thinking that we should not publish something that would put the father in a bad light. Later I decided that this was just another part of our story, but my narrator refused to open this topic again.

I will end this paragraph with a few recommendations suggested by Shopes following up on the previously mentioned article by Yow: ‘As a way of managing problems of over-identification with the narrator, Yow suggests a critical reflexivity when interviewing, monitoring one’s interests and ideological biases, thinking beyond the questions one intends to ask to consider alternative lines of inquiry’ (Shopes 2007: 148).

## THE STORY

Now I would like to present some interesting excerpts from the interview. The narrator described his father’s arrest as one of his first childhood memories. That confirms its emotional power and the fact that the traumatic event dominated the narrative that preceded his own consciousness (Hirsch 2008: 107). Also as Thomson noted: ‘Children of this age create very little long-term memory, though they often have a photographic type of memory’ (Thomson 2011: 82). This episode happened when the policemen came to perform a house search at the home of my narrator’s family. At first the whole family did not know where Antonín Městecký had been taken because he was arrested at night while all of them were sleeping.

The first such memory is that of the second day after my father’s arrest. As a five-year-old boy, I am outside playing with sand and I have an upturned tricycle there with rotating pedals. I was crying and watching what was happening in the house. They came, and it was just like people say that everyone did this – the SS or the Gestapo; these men did all of that. They took everything, starting from shorts, pants, shoes, all the clothes. They shouted at my mother and behaved really awfully, awfully. This is the first thing I remember. (Městecký, Interview 26 March 2009 and 16 July 2009)

This memory captures the shock of a foreign invasion to the previously safe home environment (switching from past to present tense is indicative of a not fully resolved trauma), but also the loss of home itself:

Mother was alarmed by father’s arrest and her first concern was for me. The next day she went to Hradec Králové and, by chance, saw a group of arrested people being led somewhere, my father among them. She turned and ran away crying. She did not know anything, but she feared that they would arrest her as well. That’s what it was like back then. We also could be deported to live in some border region. My mother’s brother helped us move in with their parents so I actually grew up at grandma and grandpa in Pardubice. (Městecký, Interview 26 March 2009 and 16 July 2009)

Antonín Městecký was held in custody in the following months. Nobody was allowed to visit him. My narrator saw him secretly several times from the building opposite the jail. Only during the trial were the father and his son in the same room. Recollecting what went on in the court, the narrator characterized it as a mixture of vague feelings of distress, anxiety and information provided later by his mother:

I was in the court as well. I ran to my father, but had to return because they started yelling that they would clear the courtroom. I cannot remember it exactly. My mother told me that there were comrades from factories who shouted: 'Hang them!' Women spat on the defendants and their relatives there. Even on my mother. Spat!...I could feel the distress and anxiety. But I cannot say anything specific. I was probably too small. Of course, seeing my dad somewhere and not being allowed to go to him, that was wrong in itself. (Městecký, Interview 26 March 2009 and 16 July 2009)

In the following years, my narrator and his father were in contact only through letters and occasional visits in prisons and labour camps. He was an adult when his father returned home and his interests were different:

I remember I wrote letters to my father when he was allowed to receive them...I remember how happy I was when the postman came and brought me a reply. He told me: 'Toniček, your father is sending you a letter.' I really missed my dad...My mom did not want to let me go out anywhere when I was bigger. She was worried about my safety. While other fathers took their boys to ice hockey I was there very rarely as a kid. I just missed my dad, whatever that meant. (Městecký, Interview 26 March 2009 and 16 July 2009)

This shows that he managed to reconcile his memory – coherent, in past tense, showing emotions where appropriate, an integrative memory integrating events with their current interpretation and good self-reflection.

The narrator gave a comprehensive and coherent account of his father's return in 1960. This memory was almost as detailed as a flashbulb memory. Here is only a short excerpt:

Dad came back on 12 May 1960...I remember that I was reading the book of Old Czech Legends at that time. We had it as compulsory reading. I went to the door to welcome him. Imagine what it is, it's your father and yet he's a stranger. (Městecký, Interview 26 March 2009 and 16 July 2009)

The return to society was not easy for Antonín Městecký because of his poor health, discrimination in employment as well as damaged family ties. He, for example, stopped socializing with his brother František who brought him into the resistance group. This in my opinion caused another crack in the family memory. The father's resistance and prison experience were not something that the family could speak about. The efforts to understand were hampered by his silence:

To be honest, dad did not talk about these things. My mother also did not know anything about this part of his life. What I know I found out mostly from the judicial records. I can get a picture from that, even if it is distorted because in these records, they wrote what they needed. I had nobody to confront it with...I realized that he had been afraid. The released political prisoners were not allowed to see each other. They were on probation. He did not want to let it happen again. (Městecký, Interview 26 March 2009 and 16 July 2009)

The narrator's own story was deeply influenced by the traumatic events which were difficult to integrate into his life story and impossible to recover. His own memories were vague, coloured by his young age. Many facts have been obtained indirectly due to the absence of personal experience. It means the trauma is partially vicarious (i.e., his dad's, not originally his). He has made considerable effort to create a coherent and comprehensible story using the other available sources over the years. This may be explained by the concept of post-memory which is defined as 'the relationship that the generation after those who witnessed culture or collective trauma bears to the experiences of those who came before, experience that they "remember" only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up. But these experiences were transmitted to them so deeply and affectively as to seem to constitute memories in their own right' (Hirsch 2008: 107).

Cappelletto reached similar conclusion in his research on the massacre committed by the SS in two Italian villages during WWII. He studied stories told by eyewitnesses and by other people who heard the story told in the years that followed. Cappelletto noted that: 'A web of narrative connections is formed, so that the missing pieces of one's story can be reconstructed and thus a historical memory – the actual act of remembrance – is constructed through the piecing together of these fragments of monofocal experiences' (Cappelletto 2003: 249) My narrator also sought out all living members of his father's resistance group after the Velvet Revolution. He said:

The resistance group from Hradec Králové was linked to another group from Nová Paka. I contacted the living members of both groups in the 1990s. I found seven of them...I found Mr. Číla in Nová Paka and he told me much about my father. (Městecký, Interview 26 March 2009 and 16 July 2009)

It is interesting that despite these efforts he learned very little about the actions of his father. He could integrate many details of memories into his inner memory, use them to make a more comprehensive story and retell it as if the events had been witnessed by him.

The historical documents were another source of missing pieces, and the narrator gathered a considerable number of them. I have already mentioned that at the beginning no one witnessed Antonín Městecký's arrest in 1950. Yet he could describe in detail this event because he read about it in archival documents (especially in his father's request for reviewing his trial from the late 1960s). I compared my narrator's life story with his father's request for review and found almost complete conformity. An interesting point of difference was whether the arresting policemen had been armed with machine

guns. The narrator deleted this detail when editing the interview and told me that this information was missing in the document and that he had probably mixed it up with his own memories of visiting his father at a labour camp where he was forced to work in uranium mines. They were guarded by people holding machine guns there.

## CONCLUSION

The traumatic event of imprisonment of Antonín Městecký caused a discontinuity in the family as well as in the personal history of his descendants. My narrator used the act of sharing his story with me to reconstruct and re-interpret this event, expand it using new information and return it to family history. Our recording allowed him to inform the public about the past injustice done to him, his father and their relatives and to transmit it as a fully comprehensive story to his descendants. The remembering was complicated by the specific constraints of his childhood memories and his father's silence on the subject. He had to supplement the narrative structure of his father's story with fragments acquired from other witnesses or archive materials to make it coherent again. The resulting post-memory of this event does not lose any value for me. While the story became less traumatizing and more coherent, it didn't lose anything of its authenticity.

## ENDNOTES

- 1 This article is based on paper presented at the 17th conference of the International Oral History Association (IOHA) in Buenos Aires in 2012.
- 2 For more about the social/cultural history of Stalinism see Fitzpatrick 2000; Figs 2008.
- 3 For a more detailed description of my research, see Louč 2008; 2011.
- 4 This interview with Městecký is in the archive of the Politicalprisoners.eu project. The edited Czech transcript was published on the website Politictivezni.cz. Retrieveable from [www.politictivezni.cz/antonin-mestecky.html](http://www.politictivezni.cz/antonin-mestecky.html). (accessed 10 September 2014).
- 5 A copy is also stored in the file 1906/5a of Antonín Městecký in the Security Services Archive (ABS), Prague

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# BECOMING BETTER HUMANS IN A WORLD THAT LACKS HUMANITY: WORKING THROUGH TRAUMA IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

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## ABSTRACT

This article shares the work of the Trauma Healing Project in Pietermaritzburg and its surrounding areas in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. In exploring how individuals and families face and work through trauma in post-apartheid South Africa, a pilot project was set up at Pietermaritzburg Agency for Christian Social Awareness (PACSA), which ran from 2009 to 2014. Despite the change from Apartheid to a democratic government, South Africa continues to experience multiple-woundedness through domestic and gender-based violence, injuries, HIV and AIDS, xenophobia and crime. These hamper true political and economic development as so many people have to live with pain. This pain prevents them from making a significant contribution to their communities. This article argues that creating safe spaces, narrating our trauma, writing life narratives and restoring social and religious support systems make significant contribution to the healing of South Africa's multiple-woundedness and empowering of traumatized individuals and communities to restore relationships, recover faith, hope, meaning and dignity. This type of healing is transformative.

**Keywords:** trauma, life narrative, safe spaces, healing, meaning, suffering.

## INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION

This pilot project was linked to my PhD research and its aim was to reach a holistic understanding of the (untold) stories of trauma survivors from communities historically affected by political violence. Several objectives guided the project. The first objective was to create safe space for trauma survivors to tell 'unstoried' parts of their narratives concerning their experiences of trauma. The second objective was to facilitate the process of regaining control over the events of their lives through the search for meaning and invite them to reflect differently on their own identities and the identities of others. Stress and trauma affect the way people think about themselves. For example, in the aftermath of a criminal attack, earthquake, rape, marital abuse, et cetera, victimised

people often take on a 'victim identity' (Bartsch & Bartsch 1996: 11–12). Victims are people who have had terrible things done to them. They are victims of events. They take on a 'victim identity' when they think and feel like victims, long after the events. We lose our God-given dignity and we begin to think that we deserve abuse and sometimes we abuse others. Thus we live under the cloud of the abuse and expect it to continue. We often think we are at fault for it. Healing of 'victim identity' comes when victims recover their dignity and re-integrate into their community with rightful respect from others, for others and with self-respect. This type of healing is transformative. It transforms the way we think about ourselves and the world around us. We begin to think of ourselves as survivors of those events. Survivors are people who have been victims, but who think of themselves as able to manage their lives, hold on to their self-respect and dignity and take on meaningful roles in their families, in their work, in their churches and in their communities (Bartsch & Bartsch 1996: 11–12). The third objective, as a narrative researcher, I wanted to be part of the story development process through which different alternative, more holistic stories of trauma can be explored and re-authored. Re-authoring conversations seek to create the possibility for the generation of alternative, preferred stories of identity (Carey & Russell 2003: 68). This objective was achieved when participants published their stories as book chapters in: *Trees along the riverside: The stories of trauma facilitators in KwaZulu-Natal South Africa*. One participant said, 'At first we never believed that we would be called authors of chapters in the book, we thought publishing belonged to academia'. What a leap from victims to authors!

## THE CONTEXT OF TRAUMA SURVIVORS

This study was located in Pietermaritzburg and Edendale Valley. This area was chosen because it was mostly affected by political violence in the late 1980s to early 1990s culminating in the Seven Day War in 1990 between the African National Congress and Inkatha Freedom Party. The Seven Days War is the collective name given to the events which occurred in the Greater Edendale Valley in the seven days from Sunday 25 March to 31 March 1990 (Levine 1999: 12). During the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings, in the month prior to the hearing, large numbers of Pietermaritzburg residents made statements to the Commission concerning the Seven Day War. From the analysis of the evidence given at the hearing, on Sunday 25th and Monday 26th there was an armed incursion from the Vulindlela area, into some lower areas of the Greater Edendale Valley by Inkatha following provocative events such as youth stoning buses carrying Inkatha members. On 27th March, about three thousand armed men, members of the Inkatha Freedom Party, attacked Caluza (a non-Inkatha area). Some counter attacks were launched by residents of affected areas. Early in the morning, on Wednesday 28th, Inkatha members from the settlements along the main road in Vulindlela began to muster. According to Levine, some marched, others were picked up by trucks and unmarked lorries. Attacks took place which saw many people shot dead, homesteads

destroyed, property looted and livestock driven off. The police made no attempt to break up the groups of men or disarm the attackers (Levine 1999: 14). On Thursday 29th a concerted attack by Inkatha members on kwaNyandu took place. 'People were killed and wounded, and more houses were looted and destroyed by fire.' A large group of Inkatha supporters also attacked Mpophomeni in Howick, another community where participants in this study, came from. The evening of Thursday was riddled with attacks in Imbali Township as well. 30th March was accompanied by sporadic shooting which continued to take place. On 31 March, attacks continued in Imbali and also Mpophomeni. These attacks saw a number of people killed and wounded, and houses burned. Although calls were made to the police to intervene, the police did nothing, they even refused the army permission to deploy in these areas. The police did very little to stop the violence (Levine 1999: 14). Although many isolated incidents were happening during the time of political unrest, the Seven Days War was an event of enormous public significance. 'Over one hundred people were killed, a large number of houses were destroyed by fire and approximately twenty thousand people fled their homes as a result of the violence.' According to Levine (1999: 12) many local residents were internally displaced and became refugees in their own communities. They experienced losses, and many suffered multiple traumatic experiences. For those who were forced to flee their homes and communities, separation from spouses, children, and other family members was common. Even after the first democratic elections in 1994, some people never returned to their original homes for fear of victimisation.

Buckenham (1999: 7–8) states that the history of South Africa is a litany of violent interactions amongst groups and domination of one group over another to ensure its own survival and establish supremacy. This breeding ground for violence and trauma does not only lurk in the history, but even in recent years. South Africa continues to struggle with this brutal legacy. Buckenham (1999: 7–8) asserts that, 'South African society is a deeply traumatised community of women, men and children. Each person has a story to tell about themselves, their friends, their family.' She adds, 'In the struggle for survival and liberation, there was (and, for many, is) little energy, space or time to pay attention to these wounds. Daily survival in an increasingly difficult economic environment is frequently added to already present emotional and psychological trauma and rage.' In a review of specific clinical and epidemiological literature, Edwards (2005) and Bean (2008) demonstrate that posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and its related conditions are a significant public health dilemma in South Africa and Africa at large.

Another research project conducted at a primary health care clinic in Khayelitsha by Carey, Stein, Zungu-Dirwayi, and Seedat, revealed that ninety four percent of adult respondents, ranging in age from fifteen to eighty one years, had experienced at least one severe traumatic event in their lifetime (2003). Hoffman (2003) conducted another study among Pretoria Technikon students, and the results showed a significant number of students had been exposed to traumatising events such as unwanted sexual activity (ten percent of the female students), witnessing serious injury or death (nineteen percent), being victim to violent robbery (thirteen and half percent), and physical assault

(eight percent). Of those who were exposed to trauma, a high proportion reported PTSD symptoms.

Edwards (2005b) concludes that PTSD is a significant public health concern, based not only on the prolific occurrence of PTSD in South Africa, but also on its debilitating effects which have a marked impact on different areas of human functioning. Buckenham (1999: 7–8) states, ‘trauma wreaks its toll in the life of a person emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, in our relationships with ourselves, others and with God’. The depth of pain, damage and hurt in South Africa is so acute. The high levels of domestic violence, poverty, child abuse, HIV and AIDS, as well as the effects of the historic political violence, have left many people in KwaZulu-Natal with limited capacity and strength to engage meaningfully with their lives. They are still carrying the scars. Bartsch & Bartsch (2006: 5) adds that whether people wear out through accumulating stress or sudden traumatic events, the effects are the same. Normal patterns of living are disrupted and people feel disconnected from others, feel helpless to manage the events and often lose faith and hope. The scope of damage to the family trauma causes is often underestimated. Landau, Mittal & Wieling (2008: 194) observe that we tally the number of people killed or injured, number of homes lost, dollars [or Rands] spent on emergency aid. But seldom do we measure the more subtle costs, such as the increase in depression and anxiety, substance abuse and addiction, risky sexual behaviour, child abuse and couple violence. Rarely do we mention the impact of these factors across extended families as their neighbourhoods and urban setting suffer an increase in poverty, street and orphaned children, crime such as bank robberies, rapes, armed assaults, and car robberies. All these effects are rife in the KwaZulu-Natal as a province and South Africa as a nation.

## TRAUMA INTERVENTION PROCESSES

### Recruiting participants

The study began in 2009 as quantitative and involved thirty eight men and women aged between twenty and forty five. The population comprised citizens of Zimbabwe, Malawi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo who were living in Pietermaritzburg at the time and South Africans from local townships like Imbali, Howick, Mpophomeni, Edendale, kwaMpumuza, and Sobantu. These communities were greatly affected by The Seven Days War and political violence in the 1980s and 1990s. Foreign nationals were included in the project because they are not exempted from traumatic experiences in South Africa like xenophobic attacks of 2008 or were living with scars from their countries of origin due to wars, oppressive governments and other sources. They were all invited to attend a Stress and Trauma workshop at Kenosis from 30 October to 1 November 2009. During the workshop, I obtained consent from participants to volunteer to participate in a pilot study for trauma healing. The main criterion for participation was the experience of

a traumatic event or living with possible symptoms of trauma. To make sure that this criterion was met, those who gave consent completed the Harvard Trauma Questionnaire (HTQ). HTQ is designed to assess the mental health functioning of individuals who have experienced traumatic life events (Mollica 2007: 12). Thirty three of the thirty eight participants who completed and returned questionnaire experienced one or multiple traumatic events either directly or indirectly. For example, some experienced torture first-hand or witnessed the torture or killing of someone, family, friend, others were rape survivors, refugees fled war in their countries, suffered neglect, starvation, involved in car accidents, and others were living with HIV and AIDS. After the sample was obtained, the study then proceeded with qualitative methodology, utilizing the narrative approach as a way of working through trauma and to facilitate the telling of the 'unstoried' parts of the narratives of trauma survivors concerning their experiences of trauma. Towards the end of 2011, the PACSA group merged with the Diakonia group of facilitators in the story writing workshop facilitated. Although the group experienced attrition, a focus group of nine participants from PACSA and five from Diakonia continued with the writing of their narratives until the book was published in November 2013 titled: *Trees along the riverside: The stories of trauma facilitators in KwaZulu-Natal South Africa*.

### Workshops and debriefing sessions (group therapy)

The second process was conducting stress and trauma healing workshops and debriefing sessions. There are many approaches to treating trauma survivors from pharmacological to narrative therapy. Our project adopted a group therapy method. Kaminer & Eagle (2010: 105) state that group therapy is usually offered to people suffering from the same kind of trauma, for example, rape, combat stress or terminal illness diagnosis. Our group was different in that participants had experienced different types of traumatic events. Another challenge with groups is that individuals may be at very different stages in the processing of their experiences. However, the benefits of this approach are that treatment is economical and has particular merits. Kaminer & Eagle argue that the main benefits lie in the support that such groups can offer (beyond that of the therapist and existing networks) and the degree to which they aid in the reduction of stigma by facilitating the sharing of common experiences and reactions (2010: 105). They add that normalisation of trauma reactions is very powerful in group therapy, since members find that they can identify with others' accounts. Another benefit in some cases is that 'relational networks are created that are sustained outside of therapy'. For example, in a group for asylum seekers traumatised by the 9/11 attacks in New York City, Kaminer & Eagle (2010: 106) state, 'participants reported that the building of social bonds with others in a similar predicament was one of the most beneficial aspects of group attendance'. Thus group therapy becomes a very effective way to heal and integrate the victim back into the community. To facilitate the process of telling stories, we used the Stress and Trauma Healing approach developed by Diakonia Council of Churches, Vuleka Trust and the Mennonite Central Committee in KwaZulu-Natal. It was developed as early as 1995 as

a tool to respond to the needs of caregivers who were being ravaged by extreme stress and 'burnout'. This approach offers safe space for people to tell their stories of being victims of traumatic and stressful events they have experienced over the years with the aim to restore faith, hope and meaning; and relationships.

The stress and trauma healing workshops are an effective tool for transforming people's lives. This Level 1 enables participants to learn about healing through their own experiences of stress and trauma.

It brings awareness of the stress and trauma people live with, helps them to express their stories and experiences of victimhood, understanding their own and other's experiences of stress and trauma through listening and sharing stories in groups (Bartsch & Bartsch 2006: 3). One significant part in this Level 1 is the trust building exercises which enable participants to come out of their shells and share even the hidden stories which have shame, guilt or fear attached. One participant says:

From 2009 I joined a group on a stress and trauma healing train not knowing the destination. Along the journey I was amazed at the pool of pain, anger and hatred inside of that pool. Through the stress and trauma healing I drained and cleaned the pool. And now I can facilitate. Before the PACSA/Diakonia Stress and Trauma Healing Workshop, I could not share my story with any person, because my story was taken as my own personal life to be kept in my heart due to lack of trust. The result of sharing my story with others brought relief to my miserable life, as I could not breathe well whenever I encountered any situation similar to one of the past events experienced before. I was very much afraid to socialise with unknown people due to my past life after being betrayed several times by my own people.

By reflecting on forgiveness and reconciliation the workshop moves participants towards rebuilding healthy relationships with their various support systems which were disconnected by traumatic experiences.

Twenty-six participants attended Level 2 in February 2010. This Level prepares participants to move on with their lives better equipped to manage their own stress. In addition, participants are motivated to provide a service to their own communities, as well as establish support groups if and when appropriate. Participants explored their own motivation for wanting to become wounded healers, understand themselves as healers and how to take care of themselves as caregivers (Bartsch & Bartsch 2006: 3). Twenty-three attended the Level 3 workshop in June 2010 when they were trained as stress and trauma facilitators. This training inspired the facilitators to start facilitating trauma awareness and Level 1 workshops in their communities. We facilitated four trauma awareness workshops for Springs of Hope, refugee community, Mpophomeni, and Howick West. All participants living with trauma attended Level 1. We ended up facilitating three Level 1 workshops to accommodate everyone.



## PROCESSES THAT FACILITATE HEALING

It is important that the reader understands what I mean by the term ‘healing’. I concur with Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela (2008: viii–ix) that ‘healing’ does not imply an end to all pain and suffering, but rather facing and working through trauma, so that the tragic loss caused by trauma is balanced by a gain in meaning.

Trauma survivors do have a contradictory desire to suppress their trauma as well as to talk about it. To talk about it is the best thing and yet would mean an extremely painful reliving of the event. So in order to survive, a trauma survivor would normally suppress the memory. Yet, paradoxically, it is precisely confrontation of the suppressed memory that is needed for inner healing.

Four main processes facilitated the healing from trauma and re-authoring of narratives shattered by trauma for participants of this pilot Project. These are safe and sacred spaces, the art of storytelling, literary narratives and a sense of belonging to a new family.

### Safe spaces

South Africa continues to experience multiple-woundedness through various sources of trauma. Denis, Houser & Ntsimane (2011: 2) state that the effects of this ‘multiple-woundedness, can be seen everywhere in South Africa. I concur with his argument that true political and economic development is hampered by the pain so many people have to live with. This pain prevents them from making a significant contribution to their communities. Therefore, this project sought to create a safe and sacred space where trauma survivors could share their experiences in a respectful, and non-judgment manner. The goal was to restore people’s dignity and humanity and help them to start personal journeys towards healing and reconciliation, thereby enabling them to develop attitudes and actions that support a just peaceful society (Denis *et al.* 2011: 3).

The experience of safe and sacred space created through the care, love and support from the research team caused participants to break the silence. The tension between silence and disclosure was palpable amongst research participants at the beginning of the project. But the creation of a safe space made them feel safe to talk about their experiences. One participant notes:

Every time I tried to talk to my family about what happened I cried. I could not tell or talk to anyone until I got an invitation by PACSA to attend a Stress and Trauma Healing Workshop held at Kenosis Retreat. I did both level one and two of stress and trauma. During session time, every participant was given a safe space to share their traumatic experiences. I was a shy person who was afraid to share my stories, even the happy ones. This was the first time in my life I shared my stories with people I did not know, and the group that I was part of really helped me because people were open and shared all their stories. Every one of my group was crying during storytelling. I felt comfortable being part of that group, and I asked myself, ‘Why not share mine?’ Although I felt pain, this helped me. I learnt that talking or sharing traumatic experiences with others is an important medicine to cure myself.



Establishing a listening community brought to an end the feeling of 'alone'. Denis *et al.* (2011: 17) state that wounded people experience loneliness and isolation. They live in confusion. They do not know if they can trust their memories. The space became a confluence in which participants found connection beyond the boundaries of their own comfort. In this, they kept reforming and informing themselves in their relationships with others (Seedat 2001: 116). Van der Merwe points out that healing happens when the crisis of our living finds safe places to occur. Voices declaring the unspeakable within, in the safety of connection, brought healing to all of us involved (Seedat 2001:108). Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela (2008: 25–27) concurs with Seedat and they point out that extreme trauma is, 'unspeakable' precisely because of the inadequacy of language to fully convey victims' experiences. This is why trauma survivors struggle with transforming their experiences into narrative. And yet despite this limitation, speech is necessary not only because of the need to recapture the traumatic event, but also to restore the victim's sense of self and to help him or her regain control over a self that has been shattered by the trauma. Under normal circumstances we know who we are and we know what capacity we have to respond to experiences, but when overwhelmed by trauma we lose this capacity to engage and to interact. Thus trauma becomes a loss of control, a loss of understanding, a loss of identity.

What the Trauma Healing Project did was to give trauma survivors a safe space to reconstruct the trauma into a narrative form hoping that they would shift their identity from a victim to a victor. Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela (2008: 27) contend that reconstructing the trauma into a narrative form is one of the most crucial processes in the journey towards healing of the victim. The reconstruction happens when we feel listened to. The significance of the empathic listener for the trauma narrative is the possibility created for the victim of trauma to externalise the traumatic event. We felt listened to and supported during the trauma project. When we came together to narrate our traumatic experiences, we invited others not only to listen to what we had to say, but to journey with us as we try to 're-find' ourselves and re-find the language that has been lost. The journey of narrating, of being in dialogue concerning our experiences, was a very important one, because we needed an audience – a person, or people, who would listen with compassion, with a desire to understand what has happened to us (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela 2008: 27). As we narrated our traumas with each other, the process provided us with footholds, so that in the words and gestures of those who were listening, we derived encouragement to re-find not just ourselves, but also the language to talk about what has happened to us (Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela 2008: 27). This is what Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela call healing: 'When the tragic loss caused is balanced by a gain in meaning.'

The fact that everyone was given space to participate made people feel acknowledged, respected and dignified. Trauma violates the borders of self-respect, self-esteem and dignity rendering people helpless, and out of control. However, the study invited survivors from isolation to the circle, from the periphery to the centre where they participated in their own healing and liberation.

## Narrating our stories

Narrating our traumas was probably the most effective way that brought us healing. Ingrid Betancourt tells of the importance of sharing your story as a process towards recovery. Betancourt is a Colombian citizen, born in Bogota but raised up in France. At the age of thirty-two, she returned to Colombia to contest for presidency in a country that was ravaged by civil war. While campaigning in 2002, Betancourt was captured at gunpoint by the FARC guerrillas and held hostage for more than six years deep in the jungle (*The Sunday Times*, 11 December 2012). When she was rescued by the army, she vowed to never recount the degradations she endured in the jungle saying ‘once they are out, I will be dirtied even more’. But then she writes in her book *Even silence has an end* that when you live through the trauma of having your most basic rights violated, the experience becomes ingrained in your genetic makeup. What you lived, and how you lived it, is your new identity. She adds that remembering is painful and telling your story involves submerging yourself deeply and intensely in your own past, bringing forth a flood of uncontrolled emotion. But sharing is also your way out because every time you tell your story, you can distance yourself from it, take a step back and you learn to remember without reliving, and begin to recover (*The Sunday Times*, 11 December 2012). She is right, as we narrated our traumas we submerged deep into our subconscious and brought out some of the most horrendous experiences. Unable to control the flood gates of tears, we cried many times. But as we did so, we began to distance ourselves from the experiences and the pain became less with each and every time we talked about them. I agree with Denis *et al.* (2011: 5) that the telling of one’s story of woundedness to a person in a safe environment who cares may open the door to a journey of healing which leads to a better life. The telling itself does not annihilate the painful experiences wounded people have gone through. However, the telling of story does enable people to domesticate their bad memories so that the past remains, but it ceases to haunt them. Emotional wounds need to heal otherwise they can be disturbing. For example, the wound can create distress, kill motivation and leave us with the impression that we are unable to control our life.

Ackermann (2006: 231) adds that storytelling is inherent in professing one’s identity, and subsequently, to finding impulses of hope. She states that one characteristic of storytelling is that it attempts to make sense. Storytelling provided relief for us and at the same time initiated a more collective healing process as participants. Telling one’s story in a face-to-face scenario helps those wounded to elaborate their stories (Denis *et al.* 2011: 11). As they speak, their narrative takes place. When somebody tells a story, the incoherent succession of events, perceptions and feelings that characterised the event is reorganised into a coherent narrative. Storytelling will contribute to healing when it is shared in the right environment and with the right people (Denis *et al.* 2011: 17). The art of narrating our trauma helped us to articulate our memories, to structure them in our minds in such a way that they could be explained. In so doing, we gained control over our painful experiences. Although the past remained and nothing could be done to

change the past, however, our engagement with our narratives changed our present and future. The past became less threatening (Denis *et al.* 2011: 16). Because each one told her or his story to an empathetic audience, we experienced relief. What mainly healed us was the fact that one's story was recognised, revered and acknowledged by a third party.

### Literary narratives

The discovery of meaning, hope and faith through the development of the alternative story gave us a sense of urgency to publish literary narratives. Thus besides the art of storytelling, authoring personal life narratives played a major role in the healing process. Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela (2008: ix) assert that the healing potential of literary narratives can be seen from the point of the writer, who could find a catharsis through the indirect expression of suppressed pain, or from the viewpoint of the reader, who could find some kind of healing through discovering points of identification residing in the narrative. This was another way that brought healing to us. We identified with each other's stories and through that found comfort and confidence to move on with life and make a meaningful contribution to the world we live in.

As the journey of healing continued, it became apparent that there were moments and experiences in our lives we wanted to capture, not on camera but on paper. Ernst van Alphen, (quoted in van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela 2008: ix) asserts that trauma is 'characterized by a loss of plot, the traumatic experience cannot be immediately "translated" into the narrative structures of our mental memory; therefore, trauma signifies a "failed experience"'. When this happens, Van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela (2008: ix) see the necessity of writing down the narratives to unearth or surface the lost plots. They argue, 'Literary narratives can help us to confront our traumas, to bring to light what has been suppressed; it also imagines new possibilities of living meaningfully in a changed world.' They add that literary writing invents new narratives through which the traumatic memory readers can be vicariously expressed, so that they can experience a catharsis. Thus participants were trained to document their own stories which were later published. This in a way has benefited research participants to confront their traumas, to bring to light what van der Merwe & Gobodo-Madikizela (2008: ix) say has been suppressed and imagine new possibilities of living meaningfully in a changed world.

Writing about our traumas enabled us to express things which were impossible with words. They were parts of our narratives that were shrouded with shame, guilt and fear and we could not find expression even in the safest space. Like Ingrid Betancourt who vowed to never recount her experiences of degradations while a hostage in the jungle, we also had things to hide until we began to write. That which was suppressed came to the surface. Thus writing became for us a way to tell our loved ones what we could not articulate by word of mouth. Even Betancourt herself found expression of what she feared to tell her children in writing. Although she vowed never to recount the details,

but then she had to tell her two children what had happened to their mother all those years she was held hostage. She told Porter in an interview in Toronto, Canada (*The Sunday Times*, 11 December 2012) that, ‘There were things they [her two children – Melanie and Lorenzo] wanted to ask but didn’t know how to do it, I needed to tell them many things, but face-to-face, it was impossible.’ So she expressed them in writing and published a memoir: *Even silence has an end*. In this volume she details her experiences for her children and the world to read. Thus literary narrative has become for her a conduit for healing as she put on paper what was suppressed in her memories. In other words, the incoherent succession of events, perceptions and feelings that characterised the event is reorganised into a coherent narrative (Denis *et al.* 2011: 13). This, what Denis calls ‘reorganise’, is what I call ‘re-authoring’ a narrative. Literary narratives helped Betancourt and us to confront our traumas, to bring to light what had been suppressed. We shared Betancourt’s experience of catharsis as we documented our experiences.

The fourteen narratives published in the book: *Trees along the riverside* are true examples of reorganised or re-authored, and coherent narratives. The research team moved from a story of problems to a story of hope. Before the intervention, research participants saw themselves as victims, overpowered by pain, confusion and guilt. Now they have begun re-constructing another storyline of their lives and are symbols of the pain, resilience and endurance of many more survivors of abuse, human rights violations, injuries and injustices of the past, stressful and traumatic experiences, and suffering caused by HIV/AIDS throughout South Africa and the African continent. From their immeasurable loss, suffering, multiple-woundedness, ‘a beautiful, human fortitude has emerged’ (Betancourt quoted in *The Sunday Times*, 11 December 2012). They consented to share their narratives in this project because they felt there is no better way to heal the individual and collective wounds than for them to receive the recognition of equals: to have their neighbours, their employers, their friends, and their families understand what happened. By publishing our stories to be disseminated to a wider community of scholars and those working in the field of trauma and healing, we were not begging for economic support or looking for a hand-out (Betancourt quoted in *The Sunday Times*, 11 December 2012). Instead, we were seeking to transform our ordeal into social wisdom. Thus we offer the intimacy of our pain to enrich our readers’ lives and to make us reflect on it. The men and women who tell their narratives in this book are helping us to become what Betancourt (*The Sunday Times*, 11 December 2012) calls, ‘better humans in a world that lacks humanity’. They stand as tall as monuments of survival, perseverance and courage and should be admired and respected. They are the true heroes and heroines of our time and this book offers them the recognition they need and deserve.

### Emergency of ‘a new family’

As a narrative researcher, my great curiosity was the development of quality relationships between myself and the other research participants (Bell 2003: 100). I agree with

Paul Hart (2002: 150) who argues that the ‘way in which we know’ is tied up in our relationships with our research participants. I wanted not only to develop an insider’s perspective on healing trauma survivors, but also to work towards the sort of research relationship described by Connelly & Clandinin (1990: 4) where participants ‘feel cared for and have a voice with which to tell their stories’. This worked for me because by the end of the study, participants and I had, together, come up with complete narratives that were life-giving in the context of caring and supportive relationships.

Another conduit of healing for the research team was the emergence of ‘a new family’. In Abraham Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, a sense of belonging is a level three human need. You have to meet the physiological and safety needs first before reaching the need for belonging.

Retief (2004: 48) argues that traumatic experiences affect the way the satisfaction of your needs is structured. When trauma strikes, it shatters the bonds of human connections. As a result the wounded person experiences loneliness and isolation (Denis *et al.* 2011: 17). Bernice Meintjies (n.d.: 12) asserts that the impact of trauma extends beyond the individual who was directly involved in the event. When something bad happens, our family, friends, neighbourhoods, communities and even society at large may be affected. This strains relationships and severs the bonds of love, affection and a sense of belonging. These feelings of isolation and loneliness were prevalent at the beginning of the Trauma Project too. For example, Nokwazi the author of *On my strong shoulders* (Chiya 2013: 107–118) abandoned her church community, because her fiancé died. She believed God did not love her anymore. Manda, a Malawian citizen and author of *Fixing my potholes* (Manda 2013: 155–184), says that although he had lived peacefully with South Africans for more than ten years, xenophobic attacks in May 2008 severed his relationships with South Africans. Although he had felt a sense of belonging to the South African society, xenophobia isolated him. He recalls how difficult it was for him to trust and share his story at a Healing of Memories Workshop, and later in the Stress and Trauma Healing workshop, with South Africans present. However, one of the by-products of this project has been the creation of what other authors call a ‘new family’. Those who were lonely and isolated found a family where they feel belonging. For example John, a foreign national from the Democratic Republic of Congo and author of *Why does the sun rise black?* (Kitengie 2013: 140–154) says:

The good news from the workshop on stress and trauma is that all the participants became my family members with whom my life experiences are shared openly and with encouragement. I am not alone in the jungle or the only one having these kinds of situations in life. These workshops opened ways through sharing of my personal life experiences with them and broke barriers of separation and distinction of otherness.

Bonie, a South African and author of *Learning to tell my Story* adds:

One of the tasks we had to do was to draw our traumatic stories on a flip chart using crayons. I divided mine into four periods: my childhood, adolescence, young adulthood and adulthood.

This task brought back memories, and the things that I thought were over came back as if they happened yesterday. I thought the past was over but I was lying to myself... These workshops helped me to find a new family where we heal each other through the grace of God. I moved away from being a victim to wounded healer (Madondo 2013).

All fourteen authors of the book *Trees along the riverside* have something to say about feeling a sense of belonging to the team. Those who were cast out to the margins by trauma have been restored to the centre through the Trauma Healing Project. They felt loved, respected, supported and this gave them a sense of belonging and dignity. Thus although trauma had cast us down from level three of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, through the love, care and support we climbed back up to level three again.

## CONCLUSION

Let me conclude with another voice from the margins, Bongekile Motaung the poet and author of *My Journey is Longer* (Motaung 2013: 78–96) who captures the impact of the Trauma Healing Pilot Project:

## MY FAMILY

I felt it, I experienced it.  
I saw you, I was not sure  
whether should I trust you  
How could I not trust  
after being prepared to trust ?  
I had a burden I wanted to flush away

Today I thank myself for trusting you  
You laid a foundation in my life  
You walked with me. You carried me through  
You never forced me to forget while I could not  
You never imposed advice,  
We worked it through together.

The love you have shown me grew. It's endless.  
Today I call you family and indeed you are my family  
Through the sessions we engaged in,  
I have learnt from you my brothers and sisters.  
Through the process I have learnt  
that forgiving is not about forgetting.  
Forgiving is the process of letting it go and moving on



Letting it go doesn't mean that you are a coward  
it simply means moving on.  
Today I know a wound has healed  
I can touch it without feeling pain.  
But scars remain  
I love you my family

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## BOOK REVIEW

# INTERVIEWS WITH NEVILLE ALEXANDER: THE POWER OF LANGUAGES AGAINST THE LANGUAGE OF POWER

**Brigitta Busch, Lucijan Busch & Karen Press (eds.)**  
**Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2014**  
**pp 342. Softcover. ISBN 978-1-86914-277-3.**

The story of Neville Alexander (1936–2012) has not been told adequately in post-apartheid South Africa. In this book Brigitta Busch tells one of his stories autobiographically, so to speak. The first half of the book, which concerns us as oral historians, is an edited version of interviews with Neville Alexander on his life, conducted over a period of five years, from 2006 to 2010. The focus is on his views on multilingualism, and the second part of the book contains some of his writings in this regards.

Without bitterness and in a non-accusatory way Alexander tells his story of radicalism. It is almost as if Nelson Mandela is talking, with whom Alexander shared prison time on Robben Island between 1964 and 1974, which is also the first ten years of Mandela's 18 years' imprisonment on the Island.

Alexander's grandfather was an Afrikaans-speaking Scotsman and his grandmother a freed slave from Ethiopia, eventually also Afrikaans-speaking. His mother was a primary school teacher and his father a carpenter and he was born in Cradock in the Eastern Cape in a predominantly Afrikaans-speaking environment. He wanted to become a teacher like his mother but because of his 'atheism' he recognised that this would be impossible. He studied at the University of Cape Town where he enhanced his English and German language abilities, after which he completed a Ph.D. in German at the University of Tübingen in Germany with an Alexander von Humboldt Foundation fellowship. At UCT he became politically radicalized, spent ten years at Robben Island where he expanded his speaking knowledge of Xhosa, and after apartheid participated in a variety of initiatives on language planning for the new South Africa. Especially fascinating to read is how Alexander and his co-inmates turned Robben Island into a school and a university where everybody had access to excellent learning.

The book is beautifully written, fascinating to read and very revealing in terms of Alexander's insights into the power of language(s) in an egalitarian society. It is a well-polished publication by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

The book is highly recommended for oral historians all over the world for the beauty of

its method, to libraries for its important contents, and to the casual and serious reader in history for an important and pleasing reading experience.

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Research Institute for Theology and Religion  
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## BOOK REVIEW

### WATER STORIES: ORIGINAL !GARIB NARRATIONS OF THE WATER SNAKE/ WATERSTORIES: OORSPRONKLIKE !GARIB-VERTELLINGE VAN DIE WATERSLANG

Mary E. Lange (ed.)

Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2014.

pp. 54 Softcover. ISBN 978-1-86888-787-3.

Mothers probably told their children stories about the water snake to scare them away from the waters. Eventually these stories became part of the belief system of a community, and remained part thereof even when the community was Christianised.

*Water stories* is a beautifully arranged book containing some of these stories from the !*Garib*. The !*Garib* is the local (Nama) name for the Orange River, a large river that flows through the – often arid – parts of the Northern Cape Province of South Africa that borders on Namibia. !*Garib* then also means a large amount of water.

Situated on the banks of the !*Garib*/Orange River is the town of Upington from where these eleven stories come. They were told to Mary Lange, known for her programmes in cultural education, by five women who were cleaning women in a holiday resort, *Die Eiland*, in Upington. They are Nana de Wee, Mokie Malo, Poppie van Rooi, Girlie Saaiman and Bessa Sixaxa. They are the proud bearers of Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho and Khoisan blood who, in spite of their Christian affiliation, shared the cultural stories of the water snake which catches people who go near the river but may deliver them again on command of the traditional healer.

As oral historians we know that if these stories are not collected and published, they will be lost for posterity. Because of this book, we now have preserved the story of Willem who was sent back from the water by the water snake to testify: I will never go near the water again. We also know the story of the 12 year old girl who was pushed into the water by her friends. Much later she came back one day to show her mother that she is indeed alive, living under the water. We also read of how the water snake can turn itself into a mermaid to lure people to the water. These and other stories are delightfully related as they have been told originally in Afrikaans by the women, with an excellent English translation positioned side to side with the Afrikaans.

The stories are illustrated, or rather expanded, by the art of Betta Steyn whose love for this region is well known.

The stories present numerous research possibilities and are of special interest to the religion researcher because of their constant referrals to sangomas, the traditional healers, and the spaces the latter occupy presently in the minds of believers. The tension experienced by believers between their cultural and religious identities is a further potential field of investigation with these stories as inter-texts.

The book needs to be acquired, worldwide, for its beauty and its heritage.

Christina Landman  
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## BOOK REVIEW

### HAIKU FOR AFRICA

**Marié Heese**

Pretoria: Unisa Press, 2014

pp. 74 plus audio CD. Softcover. ISBN 978-1-86888-724-8.

A *haiku* is a Japanese poem in 17 syllables arranged in three lines that do not rhyme. The content usually draws from nature.

*Haiku for Africa* contains 53 poems, each in 17 syllables and in three lines, combining several cultures: the context is African; the format is Japanese; the expression is English; German, Spanish and other European symbolisms abound. The poems are obviously linked to oral traditions from a variety of cultures.

The author, Marié Heese, is well-known among Afrikaans readers, especially for her classic work *Die uurwerk kantel* (1975). She is lesser known for her English writing, and for her work in education management at the University of South Africa, from which she retired at the age of 57 in 1999. Unisa Press did well to honour her with this publication of her haiku collection.

Some of the poems, indeed, observe nature. *Bushveld afternoon* reads: 'Into the dry cup...of the hot day the rainbird...pours its liquid note' (1). Also, nature is observed to teach wisdom. *Cyclone Demoina* reads: 'A storm stripped the farm. The substratum is pure clay. So now we make bricks' (8).

There are poems on love and motherhood, and on being human, poems that display sadness and irony, also drawing from nature. *A haiku lie* reads: "Summer promised not...to take an autumn lover – ... but she lied, she lied" (12). And *After birth*: 'Nobody told her...she would carry the child for...the rest of her life' (45). And all can identify with *Long live the king*: 'Vultures are circling...Just to frustrate them, I shall...survive one more day' (60).

The book is illustrated with beautiful linocuts by Edith Bukani, and includes a CD on which Natalia Molebatsi reads the haiku.

This is indeed a ‘travel companion’ as advertised on the cover. It can be read simply for the delightful composition of the poems as well as for the wisdom of their contents. It can be presented to a colleague in celebration of collegiality. The poems can be used as prompts for speeches – and even sermons! The book is suitable for a coffee table, but also to be left lying around for its sheer beauty. This is a product for export.

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## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

### Oral History Journal of South Africa

- *Oral History Journal of South Africa* publishes articles in the discipline of Oral History. Articles with an African/South African historical perspective receive priority. Articles should make an original contribution to the field of Oral History and make use of Oral History research methodologies.
- A statement confirming that the article is original research and has not been submitted to or published in another journal, should accompany the article.
- *OHJSA* publishes two issues annually. Deadlines for submissions are 15 March and 15 August of each year.
- Two versions of the article must be submitted by e-mail to the editor in either Rich Text format (RTF) or Microsoft Word 97-2003 (or more recent). One version must contain **the name, institutional affiliation and e-mail address** of the author and the second one must be without any identification. All references that could identify the author, such as an indication where the paper was read, may only appear on the first version.
- After the provisional acceptance of an article by two reviewers, it is returned to the author for corrections. The article must then be resubmitted (two versions once again). The editor retains the right to resubmit the improved copy to reviewers.
- The official language of the *OJHSA* is English. **All articles have to be language edited professionally before submission.** Inclusive language should be used.
- *OHJSA* publishes articles between **5 000 and 7 000** words, based on original research or a reinterpretation of existing research.
- All articles must have an **abstract** of approximately **150** words and no more than **6 key words**.
- Articles must have margins of 2.54cm and be typed 12 pt with 1.5 spacing in Times New Roman.
- Articles should exhibit a clear structure in subtitled paragraphs with no more than three levels per heading.
- Graphics (e.g. tables, illustrations, etc) and photographs may be included with articles. They must then be included with the article at their proper places.
- *OHJSA* requires that the **Harvard Style** be used as method of reference. Minimum Endnotes should be used and the author-date system. A list of alphabetical References is a requirement. A summary thereof is attached at the end of the journal.

## TITLE IN CAPITALS

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## ABSTRACT

Keywords: oral, history, journal, South Africa

## SECTION HEADING (BOLD, CAPITALS AND LEFT ALIGNED)

Authors should keep their language simple and formulate sentences clearly. Leave only one space between sentences. Proper and correct technical terminology should be used throughout. Numbers from one to nine should be written out in the text, except where they are followed by symbols. Where a number is to be used at the beginning of a sentence it must be written out, but best be avoided. The use of personal pronouns is acceptable. Dates are to be written out as follows: 13 June 2008. When giving a monetary value in rand, please also give the US\$ equivalent where appropriate and where the conversion has direct relevance to the text (in brackets). Make use of UK English (Oxford English Dictionary), so use 's' rather than 'z' in words such as organise, recognise etc. Only acknowledged abbreviations and symbols should be used and less well-known abbreviations should be explained. All text and headings should be in 12pt Times New Roman, single spaced and left aligned. The margins should be set at 2.5 cm for the top and 3.0 cm for the bottom, left and right.

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While there is a line space between a section heading and the text, there is no line space between a sub-heading and text. At the end of both a section and a sub-section leave a line space. Try to avoid third tier headings. Where this is absolutely necessary, third tier headings should appear in sentence case and in *italics*. Please note that section and sub-section headings are not numbered.

There is no line space between paragraphs, just a 1.5cm indent at the start of the new paragraph. The exception, of course, is the first sentence of a section or sub-section, which should be set out as shown above, and a paragraph immediately following indented text. Quotations of four lines or longer should be indented at 1.5cm on the left and on the right. Note that the punctuation mark appears after the citation.

Coercion or repression is part of an arsenal of weapons used by the political class to control the movements – to weaken their struggle for change in policy or social transformation. It is the range of powers that defines the relationship of the state to the social movements (Petras and Veltmeyer 2005: 224).

Use only endnotes. They are generally a distraction from the main text and should be used sparingly. The journal editor may recommend that endnote matter be included in the body text if deemed necessary or appropriate. All citations should be included in the text as indicated in this style sheet. This includes quotations from interviews, as in the example that follows. ‘We [wrote] the letter to ... the councillors ... and now they started to put the lights .... It’s very new. It’s the first delivery’ (Makhubela, Interview 28 April 2006). Ellipses are used to indicate omitted text. Square brackets are used when the author changes the original quotation.

When quotations are cited, use a single set of inverted commas. For quoted material inside a quotation, use a double set of inverted commas. Two kinds of references must be used, namely, short references in the text and more detailed references at the end of the manuscript. For references in the text, the surname(s) of the author(s), year of publication and page number(s) must appear in parentheses in the text, e.g. (Benjamin 2004: 32). When referring to an entire publication, the page number/s is/are to be omitted, e.g. (McDonald, Richards and Pape 2002). Quotations from newspaper articles should be cited as follows: ‘Those residing in hotels were more likely to be involved in drug-dealing and prostitution’ (*Sunday Times* 10 November 1997). When citing material from interviews or focus groups in the text, please use the following format: According to Willems (Interview 17 January 2007), the danger is that ‘organisations in the south don’t speak the donor language’, which may jeopardise their chances of receiving funding. Frans argues that many of the issues dealt with by the South African Students Congress (Sasco) ‘stem from the legacy that white people were resourced and black people were not resourced, and these things still affect the black students’ academic lives’ (Focus group 12 December 2003). For information obtained via emails or similar correspondence: (Hemson, Personal communication 29 August 2008).

Additional details about sources referred to in the text must appear at the end of the manuscript (after the notes, if any) under the heading ‘References’. The sources must be arranged alphabetically according to the surnames of the authors. When listing more than one publication by the same author(s), references must be arranged chronologically according to year of publication. If more than one publication of the same author(s) appeared in one year they must be distinguished by a, b, etc., e.g. 1982a, 1982b. The abbreviation ‘Anon.’ should be used when the author of a publication is unknown and ‘n.d.’ when the year of publication is not available. Interviews should be listed in the references and, if not in English, the language in which the interviews were conducted should be indicated. All interviews should have the surname of the person interviewed, or the name of the organisation the interviewee represents at the start of the citation. Distinguish clearly between references by using hanging indents (with a 1.5 cm indent). Please note the use of capitals, punctuation marks and italics in the following examples:

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Tables should be presented on separate pages and grouped together at the end of the manuscript. They should be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals (Table 1) and

First Name Surname

should bear short yet adequate descriptive titles. Their appropriate positions in the text should be indicated [Insert Table 1].

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