A STORY OF RESISTANCE: 'CONCERNED SOCIAL WORKERS'

Jeanette Schmid
Research Fellow, Centre for Social Development in Africa, University of Johannesburg
jeabry@gmail.com

Thérèse Sacco
Research Fellow, International Institute for Studies on Race, Reconciliation and Social Justice, University of the Free State
theresesacco@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The story of Concerned Social Workers (CSW), a progressive South African anti-apartheid social work organisation active in the 1980s and early 1990s, provides important lessons in social work activism in situations of inequality and injustice. This article describes the context in which CSW emerged, the raison d'être *of the organisation, and activities in which the group engaged. Reflected through a qualitative study, members remember their CSW activism as shaping both their personal and professional identities. They suggest that CSW made an important contribution to the South African social work landscape. A record of this social work engagement provides younger social workers with inspiration to become social agents in a time where injustice continues to prevail and prompts older social workers to become energised and confront any complacency.*

INTRODUCTION

This article narrates the South African story of Concerned Social Workers (CSW), a social work organisation active in the 1980s and early 1990s. The group was aligned with the South African United Democratic Front, a coalition of anti-apartheid organisations working towards a democratic society built on social justice, equality and equitable resource distribution (Seekings, 2000).

The purpose of this paper is three fold:

- to document the work undertaken by CSW during a highly repressive time in South Africa
- to encourage young social workers to harness the power of collective action
- to contribute towards developing professional identities of students and novice social workers.

In articulating our journey, we recognise that CSW's narrative forms one piece of South Africa's larger historical welfare landscape. Our hope is that this story of resistance persuades social workers to trust their power to act on the world, and challenges them to engage in critically reflective social work practice. To this end, we provide a brief history of South Africa and South African social work and identify the context in which CSW emerged. We describe our research design and methods, present our findings and end with a reflection on the implications for social work in post-apartheid South Africa.

A BACKGROUND TO SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIAL WORK

To capture the significance of CSW's actions, the historical context of social work is outlined. The colonial era was a critical precursor to apartheid, laying the foundations for racial discrimination and segregation, significantly weakening family structures (Sacco, 2011) and profoundly disrupting most indigenous forms of social welfare (Patel, 2005). For example, the Natives Land Act (1913) destroyed peasant agricultural farming and black African forms of communal life, and produced widespread poverty through prohibiting black land ownership and effectively uprooting masses of black South Africans from their ancestral land (Sacco, 2011; Wilson, 1975). Subsequent legislation entrenching racial segregation included the Colour Bar Act of 1926 (which introduced job reservation), the Native Land and Trust Act of 1936 (which further segregated rural land for the use of white

settlers), and the Natives Urban Areas Act (1923) as amended in 1937 (which segregated urban land and restricted the right of black South Africans to own land in the towns). Social welfare efforts, meanwhile, concentrated exclusively on problems faced by poor white people. The Carnegie Commission of Enquiry of 1934 (Potgieter, 1998) led to the establishment of a social welfare department in 1937 (Patel, 1992), as well as the training of social workers. The seven training institutions drew on European and American models of social work theory and practice (Potgieter, 1998). Social casework became the overriding method of social work practice (Hare and Hoffmann, 1987). This was intensified by government subsidisation of services to individuals and not communities (Potgieter, 1998). Individualised practice, a residual approach to social welfare, and racialised welfare provision were thus firmly in place when the National Party rose to power.

After 1948, the state introduced laws that instituted further controls over people's lives. These laws denied peoples' access to resources such as education, housing, jobs and residence on the basis of race. Forced removals continued in later decades. Families were split, people were forced to move from their homes and communities to overcrowded, under-resourced areas and the majority of South Africans suffered untold psychological harm.

Patel (2005), Loffell (2000) and McKendrick (1990) observed that overall social workers were complicit with discrimination, though such collusion was mostly not deliberate. Social workers supported racial constructions of apartheid by consenting to work in racially segregated offices, programmes and organisations. They accepted boundaries imposed by influx control and forced removals. State subsidy requirements were a primary incentive towards maintaining the cooperation of private welfare agencies. The presence of Broederbond members in senior positions within social welfare structures was also utilised by the state to ensure conformance. Certain workers actively supported the state, informing on colleagues and clients, and aiding security police abuses. Educators reinforced the apartheid agenda by accepting racial quotas, placing students in 'acceptable' field instruction settings and teaching content which did not challenge apartheid ideology and practice (Greater Johannesburg Welfare Social Service and Development Forum, 1999).

Social workers themselves were affected in their personal and professional lives by apartheid policies (Greater Johannesburg Welfare Social Service and Development Forum, 1999). They typically were trained in segregated facilities and were directly impacted by the disparity of salaries (linked to subsidisation) across race groups.

Some welfare agencies attempted to work creatively within apartheid policies to diminish their impact, for example, extending their services and amending their constitutions to include individuals of all race groups. This meant foregoing part of the subsidy (Greater Johannesburg Welfare Social Service and Development Forum, 1999). Some, in isolated instances, formally challenged oppressive practices and/or instituted programmes that disobeyed state directives. Such opposition became less cautious and increasingly vocal from the mid- 1980s. Similarly, there were individual social workers who risked their careers and indeed their lives in acting against apartheid. A number were brought before the Council for Social and Associated Workers for professional misconduct (Chothia, 1989). Others were detained without trial (In Touch, 1989).

South African activism was located primarily within newly emerging civic organisations - an indictment of the profession (Patel, 1992). While the profession as a whole was not playing an activist role, social workers in CSW believed that an incisive anti-apartheid response was needed. They identified with the social justice stream of social work (Ferguson, 2008), the anti-racist and anti-sexist perspectives, Marxist theory, and Paulo Freire's understanding of critical judgment and action. O'Neill (1999), a member of CSW, argued that social justice is a core value of social work and cited Holland (1989), Stoffberg and Gray (1988), Perlman (1986), Cohen (1984), Constable (1983), Schwartz (1976), Konopka (1971), Towle (1969) and Boehm (1959) to support her thesis (Greater Johannesburg Welfare Social Service and Development Forum, 1999). The perspective of radical social work (Fook, 1993; Langan and Lee, 1989; Corrigan and Leonard, 1978; Statham, 1978; Bailey and Brake, 1975) was an inspiration in politicising CSW's social work. These orientations continue to influence us as authors. However, later theoretical frameworks of anti-oppressive practice, critical social work and Foucauldian analysis have also shaped the lens through which we have reconstructed the CSW experience.

The story of CSW potentially provides insights into how social workers can make a meaningful contribution in a post-apartheid South Africa.

BACKGROUND: CONCERNED SOCIAL WORKERS

Concerned Social Workers emerged in the mid-1980s. This small, multiracial group of social workers, including academics and practitioners with links to the University of Witwatersrand, gathered in order to scrutinise their guiding assumptions as well as their practice and to identify alternative, relevant, indigenous social work interventions. In this critical reflection, it was clear

that apartheid welfare practice was detrimental rather than empowering of service users. In addition, these social workers wanted to examine power associated with particular social locations and wished to understand how to democratise social work processes.

Initially, this was seen as a discussion group and a safe place where ideas could be exchanged. However, it soon became evident that social workers, like other professional alliances, needed to take a public stance against apartheid if they were to contribute meaningfully to change. It was also acknowledged that collective protest yielded more than individual voices of dissent. The repression against children became the pivotal impulse for this grouping to move into active advocacy for those made most vulnerable by the apartheid system. At this point, the grouping did not realise that it would morph into a formal organisation and blithely took on the name 'Concerned Social Workers'. These social workers were also inspired by the ways in which Helen Joseph, Ellen Kuzwayo and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, all members of the profession, had stood against oppression and repression.

Once it became clear that it was functioning as a professional body, CSW took pains to clarify its vision and mission. Three national professional associations existed at the time. The Social Workers Association of South Africa (SWASA) admitted only white social workers, while the South African Black Social Work Association (SABSWA) eponymously organised around black workers. A third organisation, the Society for Social Workers (the Society), though having a predominantly white membership was explicitly open to persons of all backgrounds. CSW distinguished itself from these organisations on three grounds: first, it saw its primary purpose as advocating alongside disenfranchised poor people rather than advancing the professional standing of social work; second, it was actively and vociferously anti-apartheid, a position these professional associations had largely avoided; and third, it consciously chose to be a non-racial organisation. Vitus (Greater Johannesburg Welfare Social Service and Development Forum, 1999) emphasised that the Society challenged the state, for example, through publishing a provocative newsletter. However, these actions were less explicit than those undertaken by CSW. CSW was also a regional rather than national grouping. The Society and SABSWA became increasingly politicised and CSW found itself forging close links with both organisations, as well as with other progressive social work groupings such as the Social Workers Forum in the Western Cape and the Welfare Policy Committee in Natal as KwaZulu-Natal was then known.

Working non-racially was both a commitment and a challenge to CSW. CSW struggled to become a truly racially representative organisation, though close attention was paid to the privilege held by white members, ensuring that democratic processes were instituted and finding accessible meeting venues.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This inquiry took a qualitative approach in designing a descriptive case study (Creswell, 1998) of Concerned Social Workers by embracing lived, individual memories of available members. The intervening years undoubtedly influenced recollections of participating social workers. For this reason, individual memories were supplemented by a focus group (Krueger and Casey, 2000) as well as accessible, although limited, documentation.

As no formal membership lists remain, an electronic set of questions was sent to social workers who had been CSW members and with whom the researchers had contact. Participating social workers were asked to forward the questionnaire to others who had been members of CSW. Using snowball sampling 30 CSW members were reached. Thirteen responses were received. A carefully drafted set of questions invited CSW members to recall their memories, answer what they could remember and give as full an account as possible.

A focus group was arranged for CSW members still living in Johannesburg to stimulate memories through dialogue, discussion and debate. The focus group was structured around the same questions raised in the questionnaire. Four participants attended the focus group of which two also completed the questionnaire.

To facilitate rigour, all study participants were invited to review the findings. To supplement individual and focus group responses CSW documentation was analysed, including CSW's journal 'In Touch', conference proceedings and minutes of meetings. These minutes were often spartan, not including names of participants as identifying members could have endangered them. Information gathered through questionnaires, the focus group and CSW documents was analysed thematically, using content analysis (Ezzy, 2002).

The sample on which this study is based is limited and thus the views reflected may not represent the experience of all who were members of CSW. The researchers may also have introduced their own biases in the process of analysing the content.

FINDINGS

Eleven respondents joined CSW at or close to the launch of the organisation in 1984, one joining in approximately 1986 and another in 1987. Of the thirteen respondents, one was involved until 1988, three left in 1989, one could not remember the length of his/her participation and the remaining eight participated until the organisation was 'put on ice' in the early 1990s. Participants can on the whole be considered as having been long term members of CSW. Most respondents commented that they could not properly remember details, such as precisely when they joined, what specific role they played, or the programme of activities undertaken by CSW.

Motivation for joining Concerned Social Workers

Respondents gave a range of reasons for becoming part of CSW. Political reasons were most frequently cited. Some of the motivations listed include:

"CSW provided me with a platform to participate in the struggle against apartheid."

"It helped me place in context my sense of the injustice."

"The imperative to usher a developmental, just and equitable social welfare system."

"The socio political era of states of emergency, children in detention, apparent inability to effect change through individual case work, the lack of institution ability to respond or lead, Maxine's expulsion from the social workers professional body, my own detention."

Some joined CSW as part of an anti-apartheid struggle, while for others it was more broadly about working towards peace and social justice. There were respondents for whom participation in CSW was a continuation of previous or an extension of other activism. For example:

"I had been involved in student political organisations, more specifically the women's movement."

"Was supporting UDF, and CSW was a natural organisation to join as a social work student."

All respondents reported being connected to other structures. This ranged from peripheral to active engagement in such organisations as Detainees Parents Support Committee (DPSC), Organisation for Alternative Social Services in South Africa (OASSSA), Johannesburg Democratic Action Committee

(JODAC), Free the Children, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Conscription Advice Service, End Conscription Campaign (ECC), Detainees Counselling Service (DCS), Black Sash, Concerned Citizens, Consultative Business Movement (CBM), and South African Health Workers Congress (SAHWCO).

A question arises as to why respondents participated in CSW when they already were activists. The motivation seems to have been in finding a progressive *social work* organisation. For example, one member observed:

"For me CSW provided me with a base where I felt incredibly comfortable, especially in sharing my socio-political views with like-minded folk."

It was not just that respondents wanted a forum with which to identify, but they also wanted a platform through which they could engage actively politically. As noted by one respondent:

"CSW also provided me with a tangible (concrete) way of expressing my beliefs – through the campaigns, conferences or work that we did in CSW."

For one person CSW offered support.

"I think initially I just went along to listen – times were so bleak and there was so little space to speak out." One stated that *"… meeting in Soweto was significant! So few other organisations made this important but significant and symbolic decision."*

Activities of Concerned Social Workers

Bearing in mind the size of the organisation (typically including around 10 active members and up to another 40 supporters) CSW engaged in a remarkable number of activities. These constituted mainly advocacy and service, the one reinforcing and enhancing the other. Many programmes were run independently by CSW, although the organisation also worked in concert with other compatible organisations. CSW activities were clearly anti-apartheid, however, not underground. Extra-legal activities were also undertaken, for example, in various conferences hosted by CSW, topics challenging state hegemony were openly addressed. At all times, CSW endeavoured to work in ways that were supported by evidence rather than popular rhetoric.

The following are examples of services delivered by CSW:

- Holiday camps for children living in disadvantaged areas, providing not only recreation but developing the children's skills, for example, conflict resolution.
- Post-detention counselling of political prisoners in partnership with the Detainees Counselling Service. Newly-released detainees were encouraged to have a check-up with a National Medical and Dental Association (NAMDA) doctor and participate in at least one session with counsellors from either CSW or OASSSA, a professional body organising mainly psychologists.
- Support of parents and relatives of detainees. Because a gathering of more than three people required the permission of the state, relatives of detainees were invited to 'tea parties'. In the 'informal' discussion that took place, social workers facilitated the exploration of the emotional burden carried by family members, linked them with resources and provided legal information.
- Support of relatives of prisoners on death row. Here the critical part of the visit was the conversations that took place in the transport to and from prisons, covering similar topics as at DPSC's tea parties. These efforts were connected with campaigns against the death penalty.
- Support of family members at funerals. Family members who had lost a loved one through political violence frequently experienced high profile funerals as traumatic as they were cast into a very public role at the height of their grieving. CSW members would prepare family members for the funeral and be available as support to the relatives and to some degree acted as protection from the public eye.
- Group-work programmes for traumatised youth. Young people had opportunities to name and explore the impact of violence on themselves and on their family's lives.
- Capacity-building for emerging Community-based Organisations. CSW offered training in administrative tasks (such as filing and letter writing) and managerial tasks (such as chairing meetings, drafting funding proposals, and developing job descriptions).
- Skills Training. CSW members trained Red Cross Workers in community work skills.
- Organisation of conferences. With the tacit, invaluable support of the School of Social Work, University of Witwatersrand, and with strategic partnerships, conferences promoted information-sharing, network-building, and advocacy. Examples include a Conference in 1988 on the rights of children 1988 and another entitled 'Towards a Democratic Welfare System' in 1989.

- Community service. Together with the End Conscription Campaign CSW built a playground at a centre for children with intellectual disabilities as part of a campaign promoting community service as an alternative to jail for conscientious objectors.
- Lending professional expertise. For example, CSW provided social work input into the 'Free the Children' campaign and took responsibility for hosting 'Free the Children' events. Workbooks for children were also produced.
- Practical assistance. This included crowd control and first aid at rallies, marches and demonstrations.

Another important area of intervention was that of advocacy.

- CSW successfully organised opposition to the Council for Social Workers when this body wanted to discipline social workers who had been detained without charge or charged with criminal activity or whose social work goals were seen as being in conflict with those of the Council. Statements were produced and CSW members attended the hearings.
- CSW participated actively in a number of alliances including the Free the Children campaign, End Conscription Campaign and the Detainees Parents Support Committee. It joined UDF calls for the release of Mandela and troops out of the townships, and protested against apartheid's tokenistic tricameral parliament.
- Members took part in education programmes that critiqued the National Population Development Programme which propagated many myths about black people and infringed on reproductive rights.
- A central activity was the campaign 'Dismantling Apartheid in Welfare'. A delegation approached the Minister of Health and Welfare regarding the impact of Value Added Tax on poverty. CSW met with the NEC of the ANC to discuss the selection of a Minister for Welfare in a post-apartheid society.
- Individuals distributed pamphlets with anti-government information, made their homes available for activists that had to go underground, were part of protests and participated in illegal activities such as promoting a banned organisation.
- CSW members participated in sectoral discussions regarding future health and welfare policy and lobbied for alternatives to the existing welfare policy.
- CSW submitted resolutions to a UN Committee regarding the impact of detention, torture and other forms of repression on South Africans.

Through these novel experiences, a new body of knowledge emerged. The organisation produced its own journal, reflecting new trends and insights. CSW contributed to research regarding the effects of trauma, torture, and imprisonment on children, adults and families as well as the emergence of alternative welfare structures and the implications for a democratic welfare system.

The goal was to use such information to educate. This occurred on three levels. First, CSW members participated in self-awareness programmes (for example, 'Living with Fear Workshop'). Second, members received training in counselling detainees and critical reflection on working in welfare under apartheid. Finally, learning was disseminated more broadly within the social work profession and other professional groupings.

One respondent summarised the activities as follows:

"CSW provided a platform for professional and lay persons' organisation involved in the social work/Social development sector in South Africa in the 1980's and early 1990s. CSW brought together individuals who provided an alternative to the current social service policies and legislation, which at that time were unequally focused on the needs to certain populations in the country. Combined with this CSW provided a platform where the political injustices targeted towards certain people (including children being detained) was exposed. In order to provide this alternative "home" for individuals who did not feel comfortable to actively participate in mainstream social service professional bodies, CSW arranged conferences, facilitated debates and provided support to other organisations who were at that time campaigning around various social issues such as the unfair detention of men, women and children who were involved in campaigning against apartheid, and social injustices at that time. In my mind CSW also provided a forum where likeminded individuals could come together and debate issues around alternative welfare policy for a post-apartheid South Africa."

Members' participation

Respondents' participation in CSW varied. Most could not remember the specific role they played, but recalled that it was a flat structure, encouraging everyone to contribute ideas. Members participated in a range of committees, taking on chairing or secretarial/administrative functions, planning, organisation, and hosting conferences, conducting research, producing conference proceedings and the CSW journal, representing CSW in other alliances and carrying out direct service work described above.

At least five respondents were simultaneously a member of a professional social work association because they felt it was important to facilitate communication between the activist CSW organisation and more traditional professional associations. Some participants decided not to register with the Council for Social Workers - a body seen as upholding the apartheid status quo - despite this being a requirement for practice.

Lessons learnt

While three study participants did not comment on what they had learnt through CSW, the remainder were unanimous that they had developed themselves through participating in CSW and had learnt more about the profession of social work. Practically, a diverse range of skills was acquired. These included skills in community work, writing, negotiation, networking and interdisciplinary work. Organisational and mobilisation skills were learnt, a facet of this being democratic decision making, the valuing of diversity and the facilitation of inclusivity. As stated by one respondent:

"I gained a tremendous amount of organisational skills from being involved in CSW. For example organising meetings, conferences, putting together occasional papers... being involved in critical debate also provided me with an opportunity to develop my understanding of social welfare issues."

Participants felt they gained political education and learnt to be committed and courageous in opposing injustice. Understanding that advocacy and challenge of an oppressive regime was *'...a social work duty'*. One commented that *"My greatest learning about the social work profession was through the debates around alternative social welfare policy and about social action and the place for this within the social work profession."*

Professional identity

For nine respondents, CSW influenced the construction of their professional selves, as exemplified in the following quotes:

"I can remember taking discussion and conversation to the core and integrating it into my being. I currently teach Life Orientation and counsel at a school and a lot of what I learnt I try and teach the youth I work with."

"As progressive lecturers, you shaped a Social Work curriculum which was critical of the status quo... CSW also served as a support group for those members who were working in welfare institutions, navigating the inequitable distribution of resources to poor people. As individuals, many members went

on to play crucial roles in different organisations bringing about the change we talked about in CSW."

"I think that being involved in CSW most certainly provided me with a professional identity, and to some extent shaped the direction of my early professional career. I started off my career focusing on the study of welfare options for a post-apartheid South Africa. A lot of the thinking around this topic was initiated in debates within CSW... I also realised … the value of social action within the profession."

CSW was central for members in developing a progressive social work identity and going beyond dominant paradigms. South African education had been authoritarian, suppressing alternative perspectives. In CSW, social workers developed critical thinking skills that were transferable to all aspects of their working lives. Members witnessed and experienced first-hand the power of collective advocacy and tested democratic processes. Skills in using various social work methods were enhanced: both through exposure to these methods, and through informal peer evaluation and support. For example, social workers offering detainee counselling developed single-session intervention competence as many ex-detainees were only able to attend on a once-off basis, and articulated the notion of continuous stress syndrome, describing what occurred when ex-detainees returned to unsafe environ-ments. Social workers developed organisational and event-hosting skills. Further, the members developed a sensibility that social work can be used as a tool to drive diverse agendas, an issue that was quite explicit during the apartheid era but is as true in post-apartheid South Africa. The professional network established was critical.

Personal identity

CSW not only shaped professional identities, but the personal sacrifices made had a profound effect on members themselves. By virtue of their membership, CSW members subjected themselves to state scrutiny: cars were followed, phones were tapped, homes monitored by security police and people close to them were intimidated. Some were arrested and jailed in detention-without-trial. The possibility of losing their jobs because of their extracurricular activities was ever present. Certain members became, as one person put it, '*isolated in their community'*. Participation also meant hearing painful stories and witnessing the trauma of others, often without being able to help. This has left indelible marks on people's lives.

At the same time, being a member of CSW validated social work's contribution in South Africa, whilst also affirming and reinforcing a social justice orientation to the profession. It additionally facilitated building strong friendships and networks that persist to this day. In the focus group a *'sense of solidarity'* was identified. Individuals felt that they had *'created a legacy for our children'*.

A legacy?

Respondents agreed that CSW had at least some impact on the social welfare landscape. In the focus group it was suggested that *'clinicians were increasingly involved in trauma therapy …Counselling had to have an awareness of the political and community level'*. Social work practice increasingly became *'integrated'* and *'rights focused',* with *'social justice as a core value and orientation to practice'*. As pointed out in the focus group, CSW reminded professionals of the *'centrality of human rights and human dignity'*. CSW activities were a key impetus in a national welfare forum and regional fora being launched. The focus group participants highlighted how CSW activities contributed to developing an interdisciplinary movement that included supportive work across professions.

Three respondents believed that the policy position emerging out of CSW actually changed welfare fundamentally post-apartheid, one stating: '*Without a doubt CSW influenced the landscape within South Africa. Welfare policy in South African post 1994 was informed but the thinking/debating that took place over the years in CSW.'*

Respondents were cautious about suggesting that CSW had an impact beyond welfare, though it was affirmed that as one organisation amongst many it *'facilitated awareness'* and *'helped collapse apartheid'*.

Relevance of the Concerned Social Workers' story

Participants felt this history should be recorded as it has current relevance because oppression and injustice persists, though in other forms; it presents and honours particular role models; and provokes thinking about alternatives forms of practice. The focus group concluded that CSW *'politicised welfare and humanised politics',* a legacy that should be passed on to younger social workers.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK TODAY

The critical reflection engaged in by progressive social workers during the 1980s produced a uniquely South African deliberation of social work. Against the background of a national struggle for rights and freedom, these social workers scrutinised their own practice and theories that informed their work. These social workers had a strong alliance with service users, and appreciated that interventions be determined and driven by those that were affected by the issue. They recognised that individual clients, group members or community members brought their own expertise into social work processes, a strengths-based position being adopted. While stressing the necessity of addressing structural issues, CSW members also underlined the value of individual and group counselling to address issues such as trauma and enhance competencies. Inclusion of persons systemically marginalised was another important theme, this, for example, coinciding with the international disability as well as children's rights movements. CSW interrogated the intersection of race, class, and gender and other facets of social location, going beyond the traditional anti-apartheid critique of race alone. They understood that the location of social workers and service users produced complex relations of power, which needed to be considered. Developing indigenous responses was another facet of the CSW orientation to social work. They were aware that much of what they had been taught from English and American textbooks had limited relevance in the South African context. These social workers learnt the value of partnerships, networking and interdisciplinary work, particularly in resource-poor environments. The potential synergies of university-community/academic-practitioner collaborations were highlighted. In responding to peoples' humanity, CSW further created space for spiritual themes such as experiencing compassion, living meaningfully, pursuing social justice and building peace. Most importantly, they recognised that they needed to make choices about the degrees to which their social work lent legitimacy to the apartheid state or challenged it.

CSW social workers understood the complex power dynamics operating in so-called helping relationships, later seeing this reflected in Foucauldian analysis (Foucault, 2000). Anti-oppressive practice and critical social work are increasingly presented as relevant social work frameworks (Baines, 2011; Clifford and Burke, 2009; Thompson, 2006; Dominelli, 2002). CSW members, unaware that they were pioneers, in fact, developed an approach to social work that preceded the formal articulation of critical social work (Fook, 2002), anti-oppressive practice and intersectional analysis but included the essential elements of each of these frameworks.

Post-apartheid, some social workers have struggled with their professional identity (Lombard, 2000) and with what it means to be agents of anti-oppressive practice. While the reorientation encapsulated in the Code of Conduct for social workers, articulated by the Council for Social and Associated Workers, is positive, it has generally been challenging for organisations to reinvent themselves (Patel, Schmid and Hochfeld, 2012) and accordingly difficult for social workers to cast themselves in a new role.

Recording historical moments has value in its own right. However, providing a record of past initiatives is important for the younger generation of social workers. It is our hope that other stories of social work resistance be written up to coalesce into a larger account of South African social work activism, both during and post-apartheid. If younger social workers have access to the history of their predecessors, they will also have traditions of activism to draw from and build upon as we did. Having such references to the past facilitates 'consciousness-raising' among newer social workers. For older social workers, it reminds us of the ways in which we can be intentionally or unintentionally complicit with oppressive systems and may re-energise those of us who have become complacent.

REFERENCES

Bailey, R. and Brake, M. (Eds.). (1975). *Radical Social Work* London: Edward Arnold.

Baines, D. (Ed.). (2011). *Doing Anti-oppressive Practice: Social Justice in Social Work* Nova Scotia: Fernwood Publishing, Second Edition.

Chothia, F. (1989). "Jail Hasn't Broken Apelgren" *The New African* London: IC Publications (June):8.

Clifford, D. and Burke, B. (2009). *Anti-oppressive Ethics and Values in Social Work* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

The Mines and Works Act (Colour Bar Act) of 1926 (Act No. 25 of 1926) [South Africa].

Corrigan, P. and Leonard, P. (1978). *Social Work Practice Under Capitalism: A Marxist Approach* London: Macmillan.

Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dominelli, L. (2002). *Anti-oppressive Social Work Theory and Practice* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ezzy, D. (2002). *Qualitative Analysis* Crows Nest, NSW: Allen and Unwin.

Ferguson, I. (2008). *Reclaiming Social Work: Challenging Neo-liberalism and Promoting Social Justice* Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Fook, J. (2002). *Social Work: Critical Theory and Practice* London: SAGE.

Fook, J. (1993). *Radical Casework* St Leonards, Australia: Allen and Unwin.

Foucault, M. (2000). "Governmentality" in Faubion, J.D. (Ed.). *Power: The Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984* (3):201-222. London: Penguin. Original work published 1978.

Greater Johannesburg Welfare Social Service and Development Forum. (1999). *Submissions from the Welfare Sector to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Unpublished manuscript) Johannesburg, Author.

Hare, I. and Hoffmann, W. (1987). *Social Work Education at Wits 1937-1987* Johannesburg: School of Social Work, University of Witwatersrand.

In Touch. (1989). "A Focus on Repression" *In Touch: Newsletter of Concerned Social Workers* (1):1-11.

Krueger, R.A. and Casey, M.A. (2000). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Third Edition.

Langan, M. and Lee, P. (Eds.). (1989). *Radical Social Work Today* London: Unwin Hyman.

Loffell, J. (2000). "Truth and the Social Services" *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* 36(1):53-68.

Lombard, A. (2000). "The Professional Status of Social Work" *Social Work/Maatskaplike Werk* 36(4):311-331.

McKendrick, B. (1990). "The South African Social Welfare System" in McKendrick, B. (Ed.). *Introduction to Social Work in South Africa* Pretoria: Haum Tertiary, 3-43.

Natives Land Act (Act No. 27 of 1913) [South Africa].

Native Land and Trust Act (Act No. 18 of 1936) [South Africa].

Natives Urban Areas Act (Act No. 21 of 1923) as amended in 1937 [South Africa].

O'Neill, M. (1999). "Social Justice as Core Value of Social Work" in *Submissions from the Welfare Sector to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (Unpublished Document) Greater Johannesburg, Social Service and Development Forum.

Patel, L. (1992). *Restructuring Social Welfare: Options for South Africa* Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Patel, L. (2005). *Social Welfare and Social Development in South Africa* Cape Town: Oxford University Press Southern Africa.

Patel, L., Schmid, J. and Hochfeld, T. (2012). "Transforming Social Services in South Africa: NPO Managers' Perspectives" *Administration in Social Work* 36:212-23. doi:10.1080/03643107.2011.567321.

Potgieter, M.C. (1998). *The Social Work Process: Development to Empower People* Cape Town: Prentice Hall South Africa.

Sacco, T.M. (2011). *Dealing with the Past, Healing for the Future: Conceptualising Reconciliation for Post-apartheid Social Work* (Unpublished Doctorate of Philosophy) St Augustine College, Johannesburg.

Seekings, J. (2000). *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983-1991* Cape Town: David Philip.

Statham, D. (1978). *Radicals in Social Work* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Thompson, N. (2006). *Anti-discriminatory Practice* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, Fourth Edition.

Wilson, F. (1975). "Farming 1866-1966" in Wilson, M. and Thompson, L. (Eds.). *The Oxford History of South Africa Volume 2* London: Oxford University Press, 104-153.