

# TRANS FORM ATION

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SOUTHERN AFRICA

59



## THIS ISSUE:

- CHERRYL WALKER DISCUSSES LAND RESTITUTION ON THE SHORES OF LAKE ST LUCIA
- PATRICK GIDDY AND MARKUS DETTERBECK ON CONTEMPORARY *AMAKWAYA* PRACTICE
- SOFIE GESCHIER ON TRAUMATIC MEMORIES IN SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY MUSEUMS
- SHIREEN ALLY ON OPPOSITIONAL INTELLECTUALISM
- EDWARD WEBSTER REFLECTS ON HIS STUDENT DAYS AT RHODES UNIVERSITY

# **TRANSFORMATION**

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### CONTENTS

#### Articles

- Land of dreams: land restitution on the eastern shores of Lake St Lucia 1  
*Cherryl Walker*
- Questions regarding tradition and modernity in contemporary *Amakwaya* practice 26  
*Patrick Giddy and Markus Detterbeck*
- Beyond experience: the mediation of traumatic memories in South African history museums 45  
*Sofie Geschier*
- Oppositional intellectualism as reflection, not rejection, of power: Wits Sociology, 1975-1989 66  
*Shireen Ally*
- Rebels with a cause of their own: a personal reflection on my student years at Rhodes University, 1961-1965 98  
*Edward Webster*
- Review Essay**
- Living in cloud cuckooland: politics and cricket in white South Africa 109  
*Vishnu Padayachee*
- Reviews**
- Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed (2005) *The Making of a Political Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa* reviewed by *Bill Freund* 122
- Denis Herbstein (2004) *White Lies: Canon Collins and the secret war against apartheid* reviewed by *Mandy Goedhals* 124

## Article

# Land of dreams: land restitution on the eastern shores of Lake St Lucia

Cherryl Walker

From the 1950s to the early 1980s some 1,200 Zulu-speaking households were removed from what is now the Greater St Lucia Wetland Park (GSLWP), a World Heritage Site stretching along the northern reaches of the KwaZulu-Natal coastline. Some lost their land in the name of nature conservation; others were dispossessed to make way for commercial forestry and the establishment of a South African Defence Force (SADF) missile base on the Ndlozi Peninsula in 1968 (Surplus People Project 1983). The claims of the dispossessed to this land first began to receive serious recognition from national policy-makers in the early 1990s, during the hard-fought battle between conservationists and mining interests over an application by Richards Bay Minerals (RBM), a subsidiary of a major multi-national company, to mine the valuable titanium deposits in the high dunes running along the Eastern Shores of Lake St Lucia. After a protracted Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – the largest of its kind in South Africa to date – conservationists won a qualified victory in 1996, when the new, post-apartheid government decided in favour of conservation linked to eco-tourism as the development strategy for the region.

Today the legacy of forced population removals remains one of the biggest challenges facing the GSLWP Authority. In coming to terms with the past and looking to the future the Park Authority and other conservation officials accept that they must respect local communities' claims to the area, thus distancing themselves from previous conservation policies that accorded little intrinsic value to black people's land rights and citizenship. Turning that acceptance into practice within the mandate of conservation with development remains difficult, however. It also raises complex questions about how 'community' is to be understood in relation to the Park. Not only are there tensions between those people whom the post-apartheid state has

recognised as legitimate land claimants and other, neighbouring groups who do not have direct ancestral ties to conservation land, yet still look to the Park and the uncertain promises of eco-tourism for improved livelihood opportunities. There have also been bitter struggles among restitution claimants themselves over whose claims are legitimate and why, as well as who should represent them and why. Furthermore, external interest groups – government officials, local politicians, mining company representatives, environmental non-governmental organisations (NGOs), development consultants, researchers – continue to advocate their own understandings of community, land ownership and the public interest, driven by competing visions of how the public interest is constituted, what the landscape represents, and where responsibility for decisions about its future should lie.

This article explores these knotty issues as they weave themselves through one of the pivotal land claims in this region – that of the Bhangazi (Mbuyazi)<sup>1</sup> people to the Eastern Shores of Lake St Lucia. This claim was formally settled in September 1999 in terms of the Restitution of Land Rights Act of 1994, thereby clearing the way for the declaration of the GSLWP as a World Heritage Site. The history of this claim reveals the limitations of easy, ahistorical notions of community identity that inform much of the popular and policy discourses around land restitution since 1994. It also brings to the fore the difficulty of reconciling the very different scales of public interest that are vested in the environment of Lake St Lucia, as well as the differentials of power that shaped the claim settlement yet were not hegemonic in determining the outcome.

The claim is also interesting because the formal settlement – financial compensation and a stake in the future development of the area, without the restoration of underlying ownership of the land to the claimants – is out of step with the official policy that has since been approved by the post-apartheid government to guide the resolution of claims on conservation land. This policy aims to combine claimant ownership of protected areas with the continued conservation status of their land, by means of partnerships with national or provincial conservation agencies. The rationale is that this represents the optimal balance, a harmonious synthesis, between restitution and conservation – one that will both guarantee widespread support for conservation among otherwise disaffected claimants and ensure that economic benefits arising from the protected area status of their land will flow also to them. This approach was pioneered in the celebrated case of the

Makuleke land claim in the northern Kruger National Park, in 1998 (see de Villiers 1999).

A comparative national study of settled claims on conservation areas, the different social and political dynamics at work in each, and how well individual settlement agreements are performing once the celebrations have faded is overdue, but beyond the scope of this particular case study, which must, rather, be regarded as a contribution towards that larger project. My contention is that the Bhangazi claim differs from the Makuleke claim in at least one crucial respect – unlike in Makuleke, the ‘community’ that claimed Lake St Lucia’s Eastern Shores was geographically dispersed and socially fragmented, with no alternative land of their own from which to exercise group rights of ownership that excluded resettlement on their historical land. A broader and more controversial point to explore in relation to current conservation orthodoxies, that must also await further explication, involves the legitimacy of the principle of state ownership of protected areas in cases where the significance of the natural resources and landscapes in question extends beyond local (almost inevitably parochial) constructions of community and place.

## **The eastern shores: historical background**

### ***Human settlement on the eastern shores before 1956***

Obscured within the designation of the Eastern Shores as a nature reserve today, the imprint of human settlement on this peninsula stretches back nearly two millennia. The very earliest Iron Age sites yet uncovered in South Africa, dating to 300 and 400 AD, are located on this strip of land, along with a string of Late Iron Age sites from the second millennium. Its marshlands, dune forests and coastline with ‘rich shellfish beds’ combined to provide ‘ideal locations’ for these pioneering farming settlements (Hall 1987:36). They long predate the ethnic histories inscribed in current restitution claims and proclaim the historical significance of the Eastern Shores for a much larger, southern African community than the claimants alone represent.

However, within this broader historical continuum, the Mbuyazi clan occupies a substantial slice of the more recent past. Their residence on the Eastern Shores appears to span some 200 years, to the pre-Shakan era. Their name for this territory is Nkokhweni, according to the spoken traditions of Phineas Mbuyazi, the leader who spearheaded the Bhangazi claim for this land in the 1980s and 1990s. In his telling, the sea is a significant marker of Mbuyazi identity. They are coastal people, ‘people of the sea’, who should not be separated from their land – ‘It’s like taking the fish from the ocean and

thinking that the fish will survive' (Mbuyazi interview). He describes his forebears as an offshoot of a chiefdom located in Kwambonambi to the south, near present-day Richards Bay, who first settled on the Eastern Shores in the early nineteenth century under their *inkosi* (chief), Sokana. Documentation supporting the Bhangazi claim gives Sokana's dates as *inkosi* as 1812 to 1821 and recounts a genealogy of six *amakhosi* (chiefs), ending with Lokothwayo Njojela Mbuyazi, a *sangoma* (diviner) of considerable repute who headed the clan between 1913 and 1971.<sup>2</sup> In broad outlines, the oral traditions recounted by Mbuyazi corroborate those recorded by the Zulu-speaking missionary-ethnographer, AT Bryant. In his *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (1929:105,117-8) he recounts how 'Mbonambi spear-smiths' vanquished the abaNtlozi (a group of 'artless arcadians' already living on 'that out-of-way peninsula') and 'subsequently develop[ed] into a separate and independent clanlet calling itself aba-kwa-Sokana (They of Sokana)'.

From the late nineteenth century, Lake St Lucia began to feature on British maps drawn without cognisance of or interest in the local people whose land it was. In 1879, at the end of the Anglo-Zulu War, the English Crown divided the defeated Zulu kingdom into 13 supposedly independent chiefdoms, and allocated (temporarily) the southern portion of Lake St. Lucia and the Eastern Shores to the once powerful Somkhele (Mpukonyoni) chiefdom of the defeated Zulu kingdom, whose heartland lay inland, to the west of the lake (Guy 1994:72-74). The following year imperial authorities annexed Lake St Lucia to block Transvaal Boers' ambitions for a sea harbour on the Indian Ocean (CSIR 1993a:20). In 1887 Britain annexed historic Zululand, excluding the substantial western tracts taken by Boer farmers. A decade later Zululand was incorporated into the Natal colony; henceforth the former kingdom's development was to be subordinated to the political and economic interests of white settlers to the south and west.

In the early twentieth century the people living on the Eastern Shores became, unbeknownst to themselves and along with thousands of their compatriots, squatters on their own land. In 1904 Zululand was 'delimited' by a commission of British and Natal colonial officials, which set aside 60 per cent of the territory for African occupation in 21 reserves. The remaining 40 per cent, which included the Western and Eastern Shores of Lake St Lucia, was declared Crown land (Surplus People Project 1983:23). A decade later the Natives Land Act of 1913 confirmed this devastating division between official 'native reserves' and crown land. Yet while the Zululand Delimitation

Commission had recommended that ‘natives’ be allowed to buy plots outside their reserves ‘if they wish to do so’, the 1913 Land Act prohibited African people from acquiring land beyond the seven per cent of land on its national schedule (Brookes and Webb 1965:186). With this foundational act of twentieth century white rule, the Bhangazi people were reduced to rightless occupants, their continued existence on their land dependent on an inaccessible and unaccountable bureaucracy. The 1936 Native Trust and Land Act reconfirmed this status.

Missionary, leisure-holiday and conservationist concerns precipitated other encroachments on Bhangazi land. During the 1890s Norwegian Lutherans moved into the St. Lucia area, establishing a mission at Mt Tabor (Dominy 1992:430). From the 1920s to 1930s the first lots of an all-white holiday town named St Lucia were laid out at the estuary mouth (CRLR 1999b). This meant that homesteads in the south had to shift northwards while the Bhangazi community as a whole lost access to communal lands and the estuary mouth. A series of official conservation interventions between the 1890s and 1940s further reduced land use options.<sup>3</sup> Then in 1956 some 25,000 hectares on the Eastern Shores were demarcated as the Cape Vidal Forest Reserve, opening the way for the Department of Forestry to plant exotic pine plantations in the southern section. Ownership of this land remained vested in the Republic of South Africa, but the management of the Eastern Shores was split between several national and provincial arms of government, with the Natal Parks Board (NPB) responsible for conservation (CRLR 1998a).

By the mid-twentieth century, the Bhangazi people’s way of life was being squeezed from all sides. The 1951 census recorded 2,075 ‘natives’ resident in the Cape Vidal Forest Reserve, of whom 58 per cent were female (CRLR 1998a:Annexure 26).<sup>4</sup> The considerable gender imbalance points to the prevalence of polygynous marriages as well as the degree to which homesteads had come to rely on male migrant labour to supplement household income. Born in the 1940s, Phineas Mbuyazi, for example, worked as a young man on a sugar farm in Empangeni (Mbuyazi interview). Yet the Bhangazi people continued to sustain many elements of their traditional way of life. Cattle constituted a major social and economic resource, with a total of 2,373 cattle recorded at two local cattle dips by the 1954/55 Agricultural Census (CRLR 1998a: Annexure 26). Homesteads practiced shifting cultivation in the shallow soils, supplementing agricultural yields with hunting, fishing and gathering of natural resources such as shellfish, despite pressure from

conservation authorities who classified these activities as poaching (Forrest interview). The Bhangazi people also maintained cultural and spiritual rituals in which the sea and lake system featured prominently. Infants were baptised in the sea and Mbuyazi *amakhosi* enjoyed a totemic relationship with the hippo living in the lake system, never eating their meat and calling on them in intercessionary ways in times of community conflict; Phineas Mbuyazi recounts a story of how two hippo followed Lokothwayo to Lake Bhangazi from Kosi Bay, after he had married two 'daughters' from that area (Mbuyazi interview). Speaking to field workers from the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights in the mid 1990s, Mbuyazi gave three reasons why he wanted to return to the Eastern Shores, which bound together social identity and the specificity of the place: *isiko* (local clan-based customs), *ulwandle* (the sea), and the lake with its hippo.<sup>5</sup>

In the mid-twentieth century the political relationship between this isolated group and the Mpukonyoni Tribal Authority was ambiguous. The suzerainty accorded the Mpukonyoni chiefdom by the British in the late nineteenth century had formally lapsed with the subsequent annexation of the Zulu kingdom and the declaration of the Eastern Shores as crown land. In 1951 the Bantu Authorities Act reconstituted tribal chiefs and councils across South Africa as petty functionaries of the state, thereby radically compromising any claims made by apartheid-era Tribal Authorities for direct political continuity between themselves and their nineteenth-century antecedents. At this time immediate authority over the African residents of the Eastern Shores lay with the local, white native commissioners and magistrates, first at Hlabisa, later Mtubatuba, who appear to have given the Mbuyazi a degree of recognition as a distinct entity, while also 'working closely with what [they] considered the relevant tribal authorities' (Forrest interview). According to Jeff Guy 'It is clear that this [Bhangazi] occupancy of the land was recognised by the magistrate and native commissioner, at least in the 1940s and 1950s when representatives of the Mbuyazi were sometimes present at the Quarterly Meetings of Chiefs, Headmen and People' (Guy 1995:2).

In the 1990s the Mpukonyoni Tribal Authority, under *Inkosi* Mkhwanazi, argued that the Mbuyazi leaders were *izinduna* not *amakhosi*, claiming as evidence that the Mpukonyoni *amakhosi* used to graze their cattle on the Eastern Shores. This claim was disputed at the time by the NPB Conservator on the Eastern Shores, Gordon Forrest, who could not recall a noticeable Mpukonyoni presence on the Eastern Shores when he started working in the

area, in 1964, but did remember strong links between the Bhangazi people and other coastal communities to the north (Forrest nd). For his part Phineas Mbuyazi insists that the people of the Eastern Shores lived independently of the Mpukonyoni *inkosi* before they were removed, although he concedes that at one point the local magistrate demoted Lokothwayo and temporarily designated, but then never instituted, the Mpukonyoni *inkosi* as regent on behalf of Lokothwayo's son (Mbuyazi interview).<sup>6</sup>

Regardless of how others interpret the Mpukonyoni/Bhangazi relationship, in his relationship to the Eastern Shores it is his identity as Mbuyazi that is core:

My *isibongi* (clan name) is Mbuyazi, Mbonambi is my *isithakazelo* (praise name). I know who I am. (Mbuyazi interview)

He also describes Lokothwayo as the first Mbuyazi *inkosi* to see himself as Zulu – before that ‘they were independent, they were not being regarded as Zulu, just Mbuyazi’. He dates the shift to the time of Zulu King Cyprian (1948-1964), when there was ‘a change in the system’, an apparent reference to the Bantu Authorities Act and the beginnings of the apartheid state’s bantustan policy.

#### ***Apartheid-era forced removals, 1956 -1974***

In the 1950s and 1960s a series of decisions by various state agencies finally destroyed the Bhangazi people’s precarious hold on their land. The first move came from the Department of Forestry, which in October 1956, after the proclamation of the Cape Vidal Forest Reserve, announced that henceforth only people who were prepared to work for it would be allowed to live in the areas under its control, and then on its terms. Addressing a meeting called with ‘Induna Lokotwayo Mbuyaze and about 75 followers’ at Lake Bhangazi, the Chief Native Commissioner, AJ Turton, listed stringent terms of residence:

Any family wishing to stay must have one member ... in service. The family will be able to graze 5 head of cattle in [the] area. The family will have a kraal site and 1 acre of land for crops. You will ask – How do I feed myself? My answer is – from wages earned from the Forestry Department. ... [You] are given three months to make up [your] minds. ... If [families] go they must be gone by May. Some can find their own places in the Reserve. (CRLR 1998a:Annexure 31)

Having sounded the death knell for the Bhangazi, Turton limited discussion since, he said, he did not have ‘all day . . . questions must be to the point’. In conclusion Turton’s assistant described the stark choice facing the Bhangazi people as ‘more generous than anything you could have expected’.

He claimed that those people who had already been moved from the Western Shores, who previously had 'cried', 'have now told me that we should have moved them a long time ago because they have been living like baboons among the bushes but now have good land' (CRLR 1998a:Annexure 31).

The second intervention was precipitated by a small conservation lobby, which began marshalling white public opposition to various commercial forestry, agricultural and irrigation projects in the region that had been identified as undermining the environmental health of Lake St Lucia and its environs. In response the government appointed the Kriel Commission, which released a report in 1966 extolling the 'unique environment' of the Lake and recommending the enlargement of the existing conservation zone under a single management; this preserve, it argued, would 'represent a vignette of the original wild life of Zululand' (Dominy 1992:430). The Kriel Commission ignored the interests of the Bhangazi people, recommending instead that they be removed and 'absorbed' into the adjacent African reserves (Dominy 1992:430). In 1986 environmentalists achieved a significant victory when St Lucia was proclaimed a wetland of international importance in terms of the international Ramsar Convention of 1971 (CSIR 1993b: 643).

At the same time, as the political isolation of South Africa and decolonisation in the rest of the continent gathered pace, apartheid military forces entered the scene, emphasising the strategic importance of this remote coastal area. In 1968 the SADF established a missile testing range extending from the tip of the Ndlozi Peninsula, over the northern reaches of Lake St Lucia and a coastal strip, to Sodwana Bay. This military installation led to the forcible and ill-planned relocation of some 3,400 Mbila people, the northern neighbours of the Bhangazi people, between 1972 and 1979 (Surplus People Project 1983:261-67). The missile range also affected Bhangazi homesteads living north of Lake Bhangazi, who were forced to shift southwards before being moved from the area altogether (Forrest interview). Also at this time, and notwithstanding the growing conservation interest in Lake St Lucia, between 1969 and 1976 several mining companies applied for and received prospecting rights in three lease zones on the Eastern Shores from the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs (CSIR 1993a:21-24).

By 1964 there were no longer any Bhangazi homesteads south of Lake Bhangazi. Gordon Forrest describes the living conditions of those who remained on the Eastern Shores through the 1960s and early 1970s as 'rough'. A severe drought, followed by floods, decimated subsistence production. Grazing was poor, hippos a problem, and money in short supply

– in his view, this ‘was not Eden’ (Forrest interview). Throughout this time the charismatic Lokothwayo provided a focal point of Bhangazi solidarity, but in 1971 he died. In the laconic phrase of one unidentified white official, this old man, likely in his 80s at the time of his death, had always been ‘somewhat adamant’ against moving.<sup>7</sup> With his death the last flickers of Bhangazi resistance went out (Mbuyazi interview), and in 1974 the Department of Forestry trucked the remaining 79 families out of the Eastern Shores into the Mpukonyoni area, from where they dispersed (CRLR 1998a: Annexure 34). For Phineas Mbuyazi, who was moved at this time, relocation meant that the Bhangazi people were severed not simply from livelihood opportunities but from the place that defined who they were:

We left our food in the fields. Our mealies, our bananas, our *madumbe*, we left them like that. Some of our goats were left behind in the forest. When we returned to fetch them, they said, ‘No, no one is allowed to enter here’. We were the last. Those who were removed, their houses were burned. If you had money inside, it did not matter. Our removal was a great heaviness. ... We were separated from our environment. I am referring to the graves of our revered ancestors. (Mbuyazi interview)

Because the Bhangazi people were classified as squatters they were not eligible for compensation, but were told to *ukukhonza* (declare allegiance to) neighbouring *amakhosi* to obtain homestead sites. Many ended up in the Mpukonyoni Tribal Authority. Some moved illegally into the adjacent Dukuduku state forest, while others drifted north to Mbazwana. While the ecological health of the Lake St Lucia system was beginning to draw public attention, the Bhangazi removal passed unnoticed in the mainstream press; the Mpukonyoni Tribal Authority raised no protests either (Forrest interview). Although the apartheid government’s notorious forced removals policies were beginning to receive critical attention in some opposition quarters (Desmond nd, Platzky and Walker 1985), the Bhangazi people were too small and isolated a community to be noticed. They were merged into the seemingly routine impoverishment of the surrounding districts over a period of nearly 20 years, powerless in the face of official insistence and the lurking threat of state repression.

### **Claiming the eastern shores, 1974-1995**

The history of the land claim can be divided into three stages. The first phase covered the period 1974-1989, when a small group of male elders toiled in obscurity to press their plea to return to their land, first to the newly established Self-Governing Territory of KwaZulu and, when that failed to

garner any results, to the Natal Provincial Administration (NPA). At first the proponents of the claim were individual men, contemporaries of Lokothwayo (Geva, Alos, Makhuzakhuza, Mhlanga and Mpesheya), all of whom died within a few years of the final removal (Mbuyazi interview). Phineas Mbuyazi dates his emergence as leader to '[PW] Botha's time', in the mid 1980s, when Lokothwayo appeared to him in a dream and instructed him to launch a struggle to restore his people's land.<sup>8</sup> The dream, Mbuyazi recalls, left him feeling sick and disturbed but, with the blessing of Lokothwayo's son, Daniel (who was reluctant to take the lead himself), he submitted to its authority.

When Lokothwayo came to me through the dream, I called the people of Bhangazi together. Then I explained to them about this representation. They gave me their support. Thereafter I pursued this matter. (Mbuyazi interview)

To mark this momentous step, Mbuyazi's own father slaughtered a goat and 'told [Lokothwayo] that the child has received the burden and will carry it'. Lokothwayo has continued to haunt Mbuyazi's dreams ever since: 'There were times when I would get fed up and want to stop, but Lokothwayo would come to me and say, "Who said you could stop?"' (Mbuyazi interview).

Backing him was his wife, Thokozisiwe Mbuyazi, who, unlike her husband, was literate and played a key role in writing the letters Mbuyazi dictated to the sequence of officials to whom bureaucrats, well versed in the art of referral, directed him. A small group of older Bhangazi men constituted a support committee; one of them, VJ Mlambo, owned a taxi in which the committee traveled 'up and down to Ulundi', the capital of the KwaZulu bantustan (Mfeka interview). The decision to approach officials in the KwaZulu government was occasioned less by loyalty to the institution than by pragmatic considerations; in the 1980s it would have been hard for Mbuyazi to imagine options outside the bantustan structures. However, he soon reached the limits of this route – 'At Ulundi they said they could not take the matter forward; I needed to reach up to the big government' (Mbuyazi interview) – and thereafter turned to the NPA and the NPB. Gordon Forrest remembers first meeting Mbuyazi about the land claim in 1987, when he was working for the NPB on the Western Shores (Forrest interview).

By 1989 South Africa was on the brink of a tumultuous period of transition. In August 1989 the more flexible FW de Klerk replaced the bellicose PW Botha as state president, clearing the way for formal negotiations between the ruling National Party and the leadership of the exiled African

National Congress (ANC). In February 1990 de Klerk released Nelson Mandela from prison. The following year the National Party formally abandoned its apartheid policy and abolished the 1913 and 1936 Land Acts. Under mounting pressure to address the legacy of forced removals, it also established an Advisory Committee on Land Allocation (ACLA), to make recommendations on the disposal of state land, including to formerly dispossessed people (RSA 1991). Also during these momentous years, conservationists launched a nation-wide campaign to block RBM's plans to mine the Eastern Shores.

The Campaign for St Lucia grew rapidly into one of the largest environmental campaigns yet mounted in South Africa, conducting an effective media campaign, collecting signatures for a national petition, and lobbying parliament. A prominent theme for the Campaign was the need to protect what conservationists defined as the unique 'sense of place' that visitors to the Eastern Shores experienced; in summarising this position the EIA Report noted how 'The St Lucia subregion, which is perceived as wilderness, has gained a special symbolic value in the minds of many South Africans, and people overseas' (CSIR 1993a:122). A major partner in the Campaign, the Zululand Environmental Alliance (ZEAL), argued that the St Lucia region 'constitutes a treasure of untold environmental richness which belongs to all the people of South Africa, indeed of the world' (CSIR 1993b:136). The de Klerk Cabinet responded to the unprecedented pressure by commissioning a full EIA of the mining option, and in 1991 appointed a Review Panel under Judge Leon to make recommendations based on the EIA, once that was finalised (CSIR 1993a).

The seismic shifts in the South African political order marked the start of the second phase of the Bhangazi land claim, which profoundly influenced the future course of developments at Lake St Lucia. Initially the former residents of the Eastern Shores were largely invisible in the public debate that erupted around the EIA between the proponents of mining and of conservation. Both lobbies regarded the landscape over which they battled as essentially unattached to local social geographies – their conception of the public interest did not include local black people as citizens but, rather, as abstract and undifferentiated beneficiaries of their preferred EIA outcomes. The managers of the EIA process themselves identified only one black organisation among 14 'lead interested and affected parties', and that was the National Union of Mineworkers, which was chosen to represent RBM workers and did not participate actively in the EIA (CSIR 1993c:1.21).<sup>9</sup>

However, as the process unfolded through the early 1990s, the previously submerged rights and interests of land claimants began to assume an unfamiliar legitimacy. In 1992 the expert commissioned to report on historically and culturally significant ‘structures’ that might be affected by mining referred briefly, in a catalogue of buildings and shipwrecks, to the history of removals and the possibility that ‘in the present situation ... the previous inhabitants of the area may feel that they have a rightful claim to the land’ (Dominy 1992:437); he recommended that some symbolic acknowledgment of their ‘contribution to the history of the area’ would be appropriate.

The recognition of the history of dispossession introduced new uncertainties into the EIA but also opened up strategic opportunities for key players. For the Bhangazi people their hitherto very locally framed objectives were now subsumed within national, even global, concerns, which were embedded in very different world-views and struggles over resources from their own. Phineas Mbuyazi tried to use the changing dynamics to press, doggedly, his claim ‘to go back to our land to Bhangazi if possible because we have ... developed a special relationship [to the] shores’.<sup>10</sup> In late 1992 he submitted a claim to the NPB, again approached the KwaZulu government, and contacted a member of the Natal Provincial Executive, who referred him to ACLA. In March 1993 he wrote to ACLA. The following month he arrived unexpectedly at an unrelated ACLA hearing in Richards Bay, from where he was directed to the EIA Review Panel. The Panel heard his story in November 1993 and referred him back to ACLA. That body decided that it did not have clear authority and requested the Deputy Minister of Regional and Land Affairs to determine whether it could consider Mbuyazi’s claim (CRLR 1998a:13). By this time, however, Mbuyazi was no longer the only spokesperson for the claim. In September 1992, the Mpukonyoni Tribal Authority entered the fray, with active support from RBM, who hired lawyers to undertake research in support of the Mpukonyoni claim, as a precursor to negotiations with the *inkosi* about future land-use options. Taking the lead in the Tribal Authority claim were several youthful advisers of the *inkosi*, who had never lived on the Eastern Shores themselves but were alive to the economic potential of its mineral wealth. RBM also embarked upon a major public relations exercise that appealed to ‘at least 100 *indunas* and *inkosi* from as far away as Eshowe’ to back the Mpukonyoni claim (Marais 1993:35).

Compared to RBM, the conservation lobby’s response to the land claims was less coherent. The Campaign for St Lucia was comprised of many

organisations, overwhelmingly white, who had a common enemy in mining but did not all agree on the optimal relationship between conservation, human rights and development. Most organisations within the coalition downplayed the legitimacy of the claims, fearing that recognition of either claimant group as equal partners would play into the hands of RBM.<sup>11</sup> By 1992/93, however, a smaller grouping had emerged which was working to ‘democratise the battle for St Lucia by consulting and involving local residents’ (Marais 1993:35). They were receptive to new ideas about including local communities in the management of protected areas under the slogan ‘People and Parks’ (New Ground 1993). Their sympathies lay with the Mbuyazi grouping, which was seen as independent of RBM, although not supportive of a pure conservation option for their former land.

In November 1992 the Review Panel requested that the public participation programme be extended to include a ‘Rural Liaison Programme’ to facilitate the involvement of ‘rural communities’ in the EIA. These were defined as ‘those communities living within or adjacent to the subregion who are largely illiterate, whose first language is Zulu, who are not communicable by post, and who are ... affected by any of the two land-use options’ (CSIR 1993c:2.2). In practice, however, the liaison programme was weighted towards black employees of RBM and the NPB on the one hand, and KwaZulu structures on the other, with the Mpukonyoni Tribal Authority assumed by the facilitators to enjoy ‘*de facto* authority’ (Mlambo and Mzimela 1993:1-2).

However, during this Programme some union members alleged that ‘Chief Mkhwanazi knows full well that he is not the legitimate representative of the people of the Eastern Shores’ and referred the facilitators to ‘a certain old man [who] claims to have some documents that prove the ownership of the land by the Mbuyazi people’ (Mlambo and Mzimela 1993:17). When interviewed by the Programme facilitators, Mbuyazi emphasised the autonomy of the Bhangazi people and expressed concern ‘that Chief Mzondeni Mkhwanazi has entered into an understanding on the issue of mining on the Eastern Shores with RBM’, because ‘Chief Mkhwanazi ... is not and his ancestors never were the traditional rulers of the territory across the St Lucia estuary’. He warned of a pending ‘bloodbath’ and claimed that RBM was manipulating the situation in its favour by ‘giving chief Mkhwanazi the center stage’ (Mlambo and Mzimela 1993:17).

The draft EIA Report was released in 1993. It tentatively outlined a potential compromise: mining in a reduced area, subject to mitigation, and

the development of ‘nature conservation and eco-tourism activities’ in the remaining area, within the framework of an enlarged wetland park (CSIR 1993a). The Report stated that the resettlement of the previous inhabitants of the area was not an option it could consider ‘on the grounds that present government policy determined that the area would revert to nature conservation’, but suggested that this might have to be revisited ‘in view of the developments with respect to this issue in South Africa today’ (CSIR 1993a:39). Subsequently the EIA Review Panel recommended in favour of the eco-tourism option, because:

... mining the Eastern Shores would cause unacceptable damage to a place which is special because of its rich history, ecological and biological diversity and the significance it has in the eyes of its many visitors. This unique combination makes the Greater St Lucia Area a very special asset for the nation. (quoted in Baskin 1995:4)

The Panel also identified the plight of the original inhabitants as in need of serious attention. In the meantime, however, senior officials in the then Department of Regional and Land Affairs (DRLA) had advised the Deputy Minister against referring the Mbuyazi claim to ACLA, arguing that the claim had no legal merits and the population relocation that had taken place had never been forced. These officials were anxious to prevent the claim from derailing their favoured land-use option – ‘balanced development’ encompassing both eco-tourism and mining – and did not regard community structures operating outside the Tribal Authority as legitimate. Their plan was to establish a single claimant committee under *inkosi* Mkhwanazi, and then bring selected parties together in a negotiations forum under the DRLA to settle the land claim (CRLR 1998a:14).

In April 1994, in its dying days, the apartheid Cabinet decided to delay the final decision on the EIA until the uncertainties around land ownership in the Eastern Shores had been resolved. At the time, this decision was seen to reward mining interests. While the first democratic elections ushered in a new dispensation, including an ANC Minister of Land Affairs and a restyled Department of Land Affairs (DLA), they did not signal a rapid shift in the state bureaucracy. The same officials who had managed the Eastern Shores claim on behalf of the DRLA before the elections continued to do so for another year. In early 1995 they motivated successfully to Minister Hanekom to appoint a mediator, Professor de Clerq of the University of Zululand, to resolve the dispute about the leadership of the land claim (CRLR 1998a). This mediator, who had worked closely with the KwaZulu government

on regional development initiatives in Zululand in the past, had no doubts about the right of the Mpukonyoni *inkosi* to represent the Bhangazi people in terms of Zulu customary law.

At this point local tensions escalated sharply. In April 1995 Gordon Forrest had to escort Mbuyazi to safety after a threatening mob had surrounded the Mtubatuba hall where a mediation meeting was underway (Mbuyazi interview, Forrest interview). In this intimidating environment, the men who remained behind after Mbuyazi had left, including three members of Mbuyazi's own committee, signed an agreement as 'members of the Bhangazi sub-committee of the Mkhwanazi tribe' agreeing to submit 'one claim for the return of the land ... to the Mkhwanazi tribe' (CRLR 1998a: Annexure 63). Shortly thereafter, following the murder of a member of the Bhangazi group, Mbuyazi felt compelled to flee the Mpukonyoni district with his wife and moved north to a shack on the sandy flats west of Mbazwana. As the time of finalising this article, he was living there still.

### **Land restitution: negotiating the land claim, 1995-1999**

The third phase in the history of the claim was initiated by the appointment of the national Commission on Restitution Land Rights (CRLR) by the ANC government in March 1995. A few months later, alerted to the DLA's in-house negotiations process by an Empangeni-based lawyer acting for Mbuyazi, the newly appointed Regional Land Claims Commissioner (RLCC) for KwaZulu-Natal (myself) intervened to take over responsibility for the claim. Mbuyazi had been referred to this lawyer by conservationists who were concerned about their own exclusion from the DLA's negotiations process and hoped this might shift the balance of power.

The Land Claims Commission tried to minimise the significance of the leadership dispute by arguing that historical land rights to the Eastern Shores belonged to the actual people among the claimants who once had lived there, and that they could be represented by more than one set of leaders – a position that did not sit comfortably with either Mbuyazi or Mkhwanazi, both of whom operated in traditionalist, chiefly mode. Now attention turned to identifying the people who had been removed from the Eastern Shores, whose identity, interests and preferences were always indistinct in the presence of their leaders or at public 'community' meetings called on their behalf within the Mpukonyoni district. In a patriarchal society women were particularly reluctant to make their voices heard. Then, as now, the people with ancestral ties to the Eastern Shores were generally very poor,

scattered over considerable distances, with no records that documented their family histories. They relied primarily on the radio, Tribal Authority meetings, neighbourhood and family networks, as well as rumour, for information and were extremely vulnerable to intimidation - several times the author had the disconcerting experience of being loudly condemned by members of Mbuyazi's committee at meetings with the Tribal Authority, men who on other occasions, at less public meetings where they participated openly as members of Mbuyazi's delegation, were friendly and supportive.

In the meantime, Derek Hanekom, the new ANC Minister of Land Affairs, had instituted his own review of the EIA, which his reviewers criticised as 'essentially an academic study' that was 'biased in favour of "concerned parties" with technical capacity, rather than the neighbouring communities who would be materially affected by the decision' (Baskin 1995:5). For the ANC-aligned Land and Agricultural Policy Centre (LAPC), the consultants appointed to assist the Minister with this task, the understanding of local community needed to extend beyond just those involved in the land claim:

Given the high levels of poverty in the Hlabisa district, it is arguable that the conceptualization of the problem should be redefined to answer the question: how can the natural resources of the region be utilized in a manner that brings tangible and sustainable development to the sub-region? (Baskin 1995:6).

Within this framework this ministerial review ultimately endorsed the eco-tourism route, while urging that land claims be resolved as quickly as possible 'not through reoccupation of land, but through equity-sharing in eco-tourism ventures and/or through the provision of alternative land' (Baskin 1995:22). In March 1996 the national ANC Cabinet finally rejected the mining option and adopted a development strategy that tied the conservation status of the future GSLWP to the promotion of eco-tourism as a spur for economic growth for the entire subregion. In the same month the Land Claims Commission formally accepted that the people who had been removed from the Eastern Shores had a valid claim, while also recognising that at that stage they had two sets of representatives.

Two major challenges facing the next round of negotiations were, firstly, to identify, enumerate and verify the actual claimants; and, secondly, to establish the negotiating positions of the principal parties, ie the claimants, the NPB, and the state (which was by then represented by a new echelon of DLA officials). Over several weeks in 1997 a team made up of community elders, a lawyer, a surveyor equipped with Global Positioning Satellite (GPS)

technology, an anthropologist, and CRLR, DLA and NPB staff walked the Eastern Shores to locate old homestead sites that the surveyor had already identified off historical aerial photographs, and then record the names and whereabouts of the families who once had lived there. To make the wilderness area north of Lake Bhangazi accessible, the NPB provided a helicopter – for the old men who flew for the first time, it was a memorable experience to view their former land from the air.

This mapping exercise proved extremely significant in bridging the divisions among the elders from the two leadership camps, who had time in the evenings to sit and talk, to review the day's work and its relationship to their past, their present and their future. Revisiting the land separated those who had lived there from those who had not; already, at an earlier demonstration organised by the Mpukonyoni Tribal Authority at the park entrance to the Eastern Shores, local people had observed that the *inkosi* did not know where to march to assert his claim when he climbed out of his car:

He could not take anyone, he could not show anything, he was weak.  
But Phineas went and said, 'You see that bush, you see that there?  
That's where we were.' (Bhangazi Community Trust interview)

Andrew Spiegel (1999), the anthropologist on the mapping team, was struck by the ease with which the men walked – remembered with their feet – old pathways that were invisible to him; he also remarked on the contrast between their confident resurrection of place in the indigenous forests and grasslands and their acute disorientation in the pine plantations.

During this time the DLA developed its negotiating position, based on the state's commitment to preserving the Eastern Shores as a protected area. At the same time, the NPB – always fiercely protective of the conservation integrity of the Eastern Shores – began to acknowledge the need to incorporate claimants more actively in the benefits and management of Park resources. In early 1998 a settlement appeared finally within reach. The Mpukonyoni Tribal Authority, weakened by the loss of external support, effectively withdrew from the negotiations and in March 1998 a single committee, with one legal representative, was finally chosen at a claimant meeting in the NPB auditorium at St Lucia town (CRLR 1998b). (After intense discussion among the men about the nature of South Africa's new democratic dispensation, the committee was enlarged to include a number of women as well.) Thereafter the CRLR undertook two polls to gauge claimant settlement preferences, in which the overwhelming majority of respondents opted for

financial compensation above land restoration. Mbuyazi was one of only seven claimants who opted for the land. For many beneficiaries, especially younger descendants of the original inhabitants, who had only tenuous links to the Eastern Shores, cash was an attractive proposition. However, committee members also maintain that the outcome of the poll reflected claimants' belief that at the end of the day money was all the state was prepared to offer (Bhangazi Community Trust interview).

### ***The settlement agreements***

The Bhangazi land claim was finally settled by means of two separate but interlocking agreements in late 1999. The first agreement, between the claimants and the Minister of Land Affairs, formally settled the land claim by means of a financial settlement. In arriving at the quantum, the state treated the land rights of the Bhangazi people as *de facto* equivalent to those of ownership, and then determined a total value for the land under claim, based on a determination of its presumed agricultural value in 1999. Through the process of negotiations the parties eventually settled on an amount of R16,680,000. They also agreed to fix the size of the dispossessed community at a maximum of 556 families;<sup>12</sup> the financial settlement thus meant a cash payment of R30,000 per beneficiary family. A further clause committed the DLA to assist 'as far as possible' those beneficiary families who wished to use their compensation to acquire alternative land.

As already noted, in deciding not to make an offer of land restoration, the state followed a different course from other high-profile claims on protected areas, including the Makuleke claim that had been settled the year before. The Bhangazi settlement was shaped by a number of overlapping considerations concerning the land, its regional significance, and the nature of the claimant community. A primary consideration was the pending World Heritage Site status of the park, which was regarded as central to a regional development strategy intended to benefit more people than the claimants alone. Another consideration was the poor agricultural potential of the land (a judgment vehemently opposed by claimants), which the state believed would effectively mean restoring claimants to continued poverty if they were to return to the land in any numbers. While ownership could have been restored without rights of settlement, as in the Makuleke case, the absence of a coherent, settled, functioning community in the Bhangazi case worked against this option. Local politics in the St Lucia area were extremely unstable, with deep fissures surrounding the mining issue. Furthermore, those former residents most strongly invested in the restoration of the land,

such as Mbuyazi, were not interested in symbolic ownership of the Eastern Shores. If they could not settle on the land, they needed alternative forms of compensation. Related to this was the question of the wider public interest in the Eastern Shores and its holistic management as part of the larger wetland park. In the words of Jean du Plessis, chief DLA negotiator:

In this particular case we were one hundred percent convinced that running cattle on that land would destroy an asset that belongs to the nation and the world for perpetuity. We argued that the settlement should confer a form of ownership that gives the claimants a real return, through gate fees and whatever, and also gives them a powerful symbolic presence that would make it impossible for visitors not to know who that land belongs to. (du Plessis interview)

The second agreement cementing the settlement was between the claimants and the KwaZulu-Natal Nature Conservation Board. It anticipated the establishment of a Bhangazi Community Trust, which would be the major beneficiary of a community levy on tourists visiting the Eastern Shores, and also committed the Park management to the establishment of a 4.6 hectare Heritage Site for the Bhangazi people at Lake Bhangazi. To operate for a period of 75 years, the community levy required hard negotiations, as the state was anxious not to exclude the Mpukonyoni Tribal Authority altogether from the benefits of the settlement, in the interests of stability, while the claimant committee wanted all proceeds to go only to its Trust. Eventually the parties settled on 70 per cent of the gate levy to the Trust, 20 per cent to the Tribal Authority, and ten per cent to the central community fund of the Conservation Board. The agreement stipulates that these funds are to be used for the education and benefit of the community of beneficiaries as a whole and identifies the Trust as the mechanism for representing the Bhangazi people in their future dealings with the GSLWP. The agreement also commits to the protection of important community grave sites and granted a number of additional benefits to claimants, such as free access to the Eastern Shores during normal gate hours, eligibility for seeds, cuttings, and culled animals 'in accordance with Board policy' and consideration for employment opportunities by the conservation authorities.

The agreements were signed by the parties at a major ceremony next to Lake Bhangazi on 24 September 1999 (Heritage Day) – a 'hot, hectic day' infused with last-minute tensions and logistical dramas (Walker 2003:3). In recognition of the importance of the settlement, then Deputy-President Zuma as well as the premier of KwaZulu-Natal, the new Minister of Land Affairs, the Chief Land Claims Commissioner and members of the KwaZulu-

Natal Conservation Authority (the successor to the NPB) were all present, as well as hundreds of local people who were bussed in to witness the event. There were speeches, a school drama performance, and a feast, for which the NPB and the St Lucia Town Board (relieved by the outcome of the settlement) donated beasts for slaughter. It was an emotional occasion. For conservationists it was a moment to savour. For other participants it was a bitter-sweet moment, with an 'element of sadness ... in this moment of congratulation' for those who 'had always hoped that one day they would be able to return to their former homes' (CRLR 1999a). For Phineas Mbuyazi, putting his thumbprint to the settlement documents signaled a painful conclusion to his labours. While he could finally rest, for which he professed himself grateful at the time, he also had to come to terms with the knowledge that his promise to Lokothwayo, made in his dreams, would not be fulfilled (Mbuyazi interview).

## **Conclusion**

Five years after the signing ceremony, it is still premature to pass final judgment on the resolution of the Eastern Shores claim. The main provisions of the two agreements have been implemented, with the unfortunate exception of the provision for DLA 'assistance' to the handful of claimants who had indicated that they were interested in buying alternative land with their payout. That undertaking was never pursued aggressively by the parties once the settlement was signed and with time became increasingly unrealisable, as the officials involved in the claim left their positions or moved on to other claims and the beneficiaries spent their money.

The longer-term success of the settlement remains in the balance as the state's developmental vision for the subregion struggles to take off in an extremely difficult socio-economic environment. The payout process roused expectations of compensation beyond those homesteads identified as claimants by the settlement and also stirred tensions within extended beneficiary families as to who would receive the money and how it should be spent. The Bhangazi Community Trust includes a younger generation of leaders from those who fought the claim in key positions; the transition has been a bumpy one, with Mbuyazi particularly unhappy about the new dispensation, from which he feels excluded. The development of the Heritage Site has not yet moved beyond the concept stage, nor have the Trustees come up with policies around the development projects the Community Trust should fund; by February 2003 the fund stood at over R750,000 (Bhangazi Community Trust interview). To this group now falls the major

responsibility for defining the relationship of the Bhangazi people to the new Park management, the GSLWP Authority. Trustees are regularly called upon as representatives of the Bhangazi people in ‘People and Parks’ events – for instance, the consultation held at Cape Vidal on the Eastern Shores as a precursor to the World Parks Congress in Durban in September 2003. Engaging the dispersed members of the community in consultation around development initiatives remains a major challenge, however. Managing substantial community funds well, in the midst of poverty, is another.

Given the history of the claim and the impoverished rural context in which the settlement must work, these problems are not surprising. Yet what may surprise those interested in the dynamics of land reform is just how contested the boundaries of community and expectations of land restitution have been in the Bhangazi claim. The struggle for restoration of the Eastern Shores was driven by a patrilineal clan-based identity, organised around a very specific relationship to place, that successfully challenged attempts to subordinate it to a larger tribal identity; that identity was located within a particular, nationalist version of Zulu history that allied itself to mining, not resettlement, options for the land. In the process, the land claim came up against other struggles for the Eastern Shores, which drew on very different and ultimately more powerful constructions of place, development, and the public interest, and steered the claim in a direction which has finally confined Mbuyazi’s vision to the world of dreams. Today his confident articulation of Bhangazi identity has given way to the still inchoate aspirations of a younger generation struggling to find its feet in a post-apartheid, post-bantustan, and, I would suggest, post-peasant era.

## **Acknowledgements**

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## **Notes**

1. ‘Mbuyazi’ is a clan name while ‘Bhangazi’ is the name of the small lake near Cape Vidal on the Eastern Shores that lies at the heart of the claimants’ former land. Terminology for the claimants has fluctuated over the years. While ‘Mbuyazi’ was more common in the land claim phase, ‘Bhangazi’ has become the dominant appellation since then and is the one I favour in this text.

2. The claim form submitted by Phineas Mbuyazi records: Sokana Mbuyazi, 1812–1821; Makhungu Mbuyazi, 1821–1829; Dobo Mbuyazi, 1829–1840; Hlawukane Mbuyazi 1840–1910; Siyakatha Mbuyazi (regent), 1910–1913; Lokothwayo (Njojela) Mbuyazi, 1913–1971 (Mbuyazi land claim form, Commission on Restitution of Land Rights (CRLR), File KRN6/2/2/E/8/0/0/1473, Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, Pietermaritzburg). When interviewed by the author in 2003 Mbuyazi referred in addition to Mabhodla, a Moses-like figure with magical powers (reported to have parted waters with his stick), who appears in the interview to have predated Sokana. Mbuyazi also described Dobo as the son of Sokana and did not refer Makhungu. The claim form supplied by *inkosi* Mkhwanazi on behalf of the Mpukonyoni Tribal Authority largely confirms the genealogy, but places Makhungu after Dobo and describes all these Mbuyazi leaders as headmen of the Mpukonyoni *amakhosi* (Mkhwanazi land claim form, CRLR, File KRN6/2/2/E/8/0/0/1473, Commission on Restitution of Land Rights, Pietermaritzburg). Bryant (1929:105) also mentions Mabhodla and speculates that Sokana could have been another name for Mabhodla, ‘or that of his grandfather, or that perchance of his son’.
3. In 1895 a game reserve was declared over Lake St Lucia and the Eastern Shores. Although the 1895 decree was withdrawn in 1928 (amidst settler pressure on the government to eradicate game in order to control tsetse fly), a bird sanctuary was proclaimed for the Eastern Shores in 1927 and a nature reserve reproclaimed over the lake and a reduced section of the Eastern Shores in 1938. See Brooks *et al* 1993: 310-3.
4. This population total corresponds reasonably well with the tally of 381 former homestead sites that the CRLR mapped as part of its claimant verification exercise in the mid-1990s (CRLR 1998a: 8).
5. Hand-written notes on a meeting with Phineas Mbuyazi, Mbazwana, 7 March 1997, copy in possession of Cherryl Walker.
6. At the time Lokothwayo was facing a charge of arson; the details of this case are not known.
7. The quotation comes from an undated and unsigned memorandum, ‘Squatters in crown ground between the sea and the St Lucia Lake system north of Mtubatuba’, a document possibly generated by the NPB; copy in possession of Cherryl Walker.
8. The exact nature of the relationship between Lokothwayo and Phineas Mbuyazi was a matter of considerable dispute during the land claim process. In different testimonies Phineas Mbuyazi describes Lokothwayo as his father, as well as the brother of his father, while other sources maintain that Phineas Mbuyazi’s father and Lokothwayo were, in western terms, cousins not brothers. However, Phineas Mbuyazi recognised Lokothwayo’s biological sons; for him Lokothwayo was a close, senior clansman who figured as a social rather than a strictly biological father.

9. The 14 'lead interested and affected parties' were: the Chamber of Mines, Department of Environment Affairs, Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Natal Parks Board, Natal Provincial Administration, Regional Development Advisory Committee (Region E), Richards Bay Minerals, KwaZulu Bureau of Natural Resources, Wildlife Society, Zululand Environmental Alliance, Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Pinechem (Pty) Limited, St Lucia Town Board, and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). NUM did not submit comments on the EIA Report, though some members were interviewed as part of the Rural Liaison Programme initiated by the Review Panel in late 1992. Interestingly, this Programme reported that NUM was anti-mining, because of skepticism about the nature of the job opportunities promised by RBM (CSIR 1993c: 2.5).
10. The quotation comes from a photocopied document headed 'Translation of a letter written in Zulu to the Advisory Land Commission dated 24-3-93, written by Mr. Pheneas Mbuyazi', copy in possession of Cheryl Walker.
11. These comments are based on submissions made to the author when she was serving as RLCC.
12. Although the list of families was based on field evidence from the mapping exercise, its finalisation was, inevitably, a political process. The actual number of households on the list was 548, made up of 342 homesteads identified in the field by the CRLR, with a living, verified beneficiary, 39 homesteads identified in the field but without a living, verified beneficiary and 167 homesteads identified by the claimant committee as valid community members and accepted as such by the Commission through the process of negotiations.

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# Article

## Questions regarding tradition and modernity in contemporary *Amakwaya* practice

Patrick Giddy and Markus Detterbeck

### Introduction

There is the view – we will term this the modernity thesis – that modern social developments entail a radical discontinuity in history and break with tradition. Anthony Giddens (1990:4), for example, writes that ‘the modes of life brought into being by modernity have swept us away from *all* traditional types of social order, in quite unprecedented fashion’. The radical reflexivity which is the mark of the modern, means one can no longer appeal to tradition. Or rather, if one does justify tradition, this is ‘only in the light of knowledge which is not itself authenticated by tradition’. And such justified tradition is ‘tradition in sham clothing’ (1990:38).

In this paper we will present what we think is a counter-example to this thesis, namely the black choral tradition, *amakwaya*. The picture drawn by the modernity thesis is that of a social system in which individuals are subject to, or subject themselves to, a system of rewards which disengages persons from their traditions with their internally generated criteria of excellence, isolates and individualises them, emasculating their specific motivational parameters or frameworks. With our counter-example we want to show the tenuous nature of the thesis that this is *inevitable*, a necessity of social and economic development. We suggest that it can be reasonably hoped that *amakwaya* tradition will continue to synthesise elements from other cultures without fully losing its continuity with past tradition. The way, for example, in which dress codes were adopted, and also the way in which ideas of ‘progress’, ‘education’, and so on were assimilated, points not to a capitulation to modernity (represented by the colonial powers and missionary ideas) but rather to a negotiated identity, embracing various elements and not essentially in opposition to the ‘other’.

In the first part of this article<sup>1</sup> it is argued that the development of the black South African choral tradition *amakwaya*<sup>2</sup> has had an integral connection with questions of cultural identity and this formation of identity can be seen to mature from one of imitation to one characterised by negotiation. The hybrid musical form of *amakwaya* symbolised, in restrictive political circumstances, the general political and social aspirations of black people, as is evidenced in the lyrics and performance practice, as well as in the comments of the choristers themselves. The tradition somehow gave meaning and sense to people's lives, and had a not insignificant role in the emergence of a national culture. The identity being constructed, while for the most part an open one with the potential to inspire a more embracing cultural unity, was however mixed with elements of a class stratification and exclusivity, pitting the educated middle-class and 'progress', against rural and uneducated 'traditional' folk. In the second part of the article we argue that this aspect of exclusiveness has been reinforced more recently by commercialisation, and competitiveness, even simply monetary gain, has increasingly played a distorting role in the choral practice. The evidence indicates that the African cultural practice here in question is able to resist – through assimilation – those seemingly overwhelming detraditionalising forces. An appreciation of the hybrid character of the genius of *amakwaya* tradition, along with its role in giving meaning, would encourage participants and leaders to be aware of, and take measures to counteract, potentially undermining elements in the present situation.

### **Choral singing and identity: from imitation to negotiation**

We can begin with a brief vignette illustrating the impact of the missions on choral singing. Ray Phillips (1930:93-94), an American Board missionary recorded the following experience he had around 1918 when he attended a rural wedding:

We discovered on our arrival that both Christians and heathen had been invited to attend the joyous occasion. On one side of the collection of huts were assembled the heathen; on the other the Christian folk. On the heathen side the wedding dances were being put on by a long line of sparsely dressed men, young and old. They stamped and shouted and sang, looking up into heaven with staring eyes. They were evidently invoking the blessings of the spirits of the departed on the newly-wedded pair. When the dancers lagged there were the women to encourage them by their steady hand-clapping. There also were the equally encouraging pots of home-brew beer containing a powerful 'kick.'

The side of the kraal occupied by the Christians, however, was quiet and dignified. Here in his black frock-coat was the preacher, vigilant to guard his flock. All were attired, as nearly as possible, like the white people they had seen. And they were seated on European chairs. (Their heathen brethren squatted on the ground.). What could the Christians do to contribute to the joy of the wedding? The pastor solemnly stood up and selected a hymn; they turned to the places, stood up together, and in good harmony sang one of the great hymns of the Church: 'Holy, Holy, Holy'. Then they resumed their seats. But all the time, on the opposite side of the kraal, the heathen commotion continued without check, the noise rising and falling – stamp, stamp! grunt, grunt! the bursting into song, the waving of the shields, and the vicious jabbing of the spears.

Although one has to bear in mind that the report exposes a good deal of missionary prejudice, the report gives a good sense of the tensions that must have existed between educated and traditionalist Africans. Moreover, it gives us an idea of the alienation of black mission communities from their past. It reveals how far the mission educated Africans had departed from their ancestral roots, being almost completely prevented from participating in their own past culture.

The development of a new class of westernised and educated Africans was however not a smooth process, but rather marked by ambiguity. From the available literature dealing with the new middle-class, also called *amakholwa* (from Zulu: *kholwa* – to believe) it is clear that historians have formed two, quite distinct impressions of the early twentieth century Zulu Christians. The first is that of a scorned minority that was left out of both the black traditional communities and the white communities. Here the early converts are portrayed as the 'flotsam and jetsam' of black society washed up on the mission stations, their motivation to convert and settle on mission land being primarily nurtured by the fact that they had no other place to go (Etherington 1978:67). The second impression, however, is quite different, depicting black middle class communities and the mission-educated black elite as new emergent urbanised leaders (Houle 1998; Cope 1993; Marks 1986). Members of the black middle class are portrayed as influential personalities who rose to positions of authority within the wider Zulu society, playing a crucial role in forming political parties. Names such as Rev Canon Calata, ZK Matthews, Chief Luthuli and Dr Zuma come to mind (Wilson 1986:194).

A closer look shows that these two contradictory perceptions belong to

successive periods in the history of the black middle class, with the turning point around 1900. What led to this remarkable transformation? Leaving the rural community meant leaving the protective community of shared values and ideas, the secure position of traditional identity. The separation from these social and cultural ties had a traumatic effect on those who arrived at the mission station. Imbued by the missionaries with Western ideas, they gradually came to perceive imitation and assimilation of Western identity as a possible escape route from the exploitative situation created by the colonists. Under the influence of the missionaries, the majority of black Christians were successfully weaned from past beliefs and practices. The rejected now became the rejecters. All the aspects of African social, religious, political or cultural life that were condemned by the missionaries as being ‘primitive’ or ‘heathen’ – the customs, beliefs, dress, and music making up the tradition – were now regarded contemptuously. To become a Christian was to turn away from these things, as Vilakazi (1962:99) points out:

There are two words which the Christians and the educated dread. They are *iqaba* or *umhedeni*, i.e. a pagan or heathen... who do not belong to any particular church or who show a preference for traditional or tribal ways... – for example, a man who did not build a modern European-style house or have European-style furniture, or did not wear shoes, or whose manners were more traditional than western, as indicated by his attitude to women, to children, etc.

The mission stations became, as David Coplan puts it (1985:26-27), ‘islands of acculturation in a traditional sea’ that led to the polarisation of the traditionalists (*amabhinca*) and *amakholwa*. But the unyielding opposition to the black Christians on the part of the whites led, in turn, to a re-evaluation of this turning away from tradition.

Daniel Msimango, a resident of Edendale station, expressed his confusion and disappointment over this situation in an article published as early as 1863: ‘We are in the light and yet in the darkness. We are in the immediate neighborhood of the white man, and yet we are far removed... Which road are we to take to the right hand or to the left? Are we retreating instead of advancing in civilization?’ (*Natal Witness*, March 27, 1863). The situation provided *amakwaya* with the necessary energy to form a new social stratum with a distinct identity. In *amakwaya* groups a decisive shift from uncritical imitation of Western influences to an informed negotiation between Western and ethnic values is evident in the last decade of the nineteenth century. The first signs occurred in the late 1880s when many mission-school Africans

were beginning to wonder whether they had been wise to trade ‘the birthright of [their] cultural heritage for a Western pottage of unattainable goals and unkept promises’ (Coplan 1995:30). A strong sense developed that a satisfying self-image could not be built entirely on adopted European models. The aspect of the new identity bound up with the musical aspirations is well illustrated through Skota’s ‘Who’s Who’, an *Illustrated National Biographical Dictionary*. Published in the early 1930s, it is a sourcebook documenting the change of the middle-class towards an identity described as ‘New Africans’. This register is both an appeal for recognition by the white rulers and a directory of black ideas and ideals. Many of those whom Skota mentions in his *Register* are the ‘New Africans’ categorised by Herbert Dhlomo as ‘progressive thinking African intellectuals and leaders.’ While the ‘New Africans’ were aware of their position as progressive and educated people, they had at the same time a growing consciousness of their ancestral heritage. ‘The New African knows where he belongs and what belongs to him; where he is going and how; what he wants and the methods to obtain it’ (Dhlomo, in Couzens 1985:33). The attitude of ‘New Africans’ to members of the lower classes was distinctly different from that of the first generation converts. They no longer rejected their traditional heritage, but attempted to incorporate it into their conception of a new African national culture. They saw themselves as providing leadership for those previously left behind in a ‘savage state’. And the prominent *amakwaya* personalities feature in the Register, as does the category ‘lover of music’. The development of a syncretic African choral tradition was one weapon that could be used in order to define and express a distinctively African concept of modern civilisation.

### **Aspects of negotiation in the choral repertoire**

Aspects of negotiating Western and African influences can also be traced in the threefold sectionalised repertoire of *amakwaya* practice itself. This consists of neo-traditional songs (modernised versions of songs taken from African folk repertoire), Western art music (of mainly European origin), and African eclectic compositions (by mainly mission trained composers). As Zakhele Fakazi, Secretary of Imvunge Choral Society, puts it, ‘you do Western pieces, and then you do African pieces, and then you start dancing. That is standard... When they have movements, then it’s wedding songs’.<sup>3</sup> The point that we want to emphasise is that almost all performances of *amakwaya* groups are based on this structure, and, with the distinct function and meaning of its various parts, this distinguishes them from other choral

practices. The choice of repertoire, ranging from simple borrowing in the case of neo-traditional wedding songs, to the wholesale imitation of Western aesthetic and performance practice, reveals to what extent *amakwaya* mediate foreign influences. That this cultural negotiation still continues today is evident in the inclusion of neo-traditional wedding songs, as a sign of their desire to remain true to their ancestral roots, just as the inclusion of Western compositions is a sign of their continued aspirations towards a 'modern' way of life. The section of African-composed eclectic choral works may be viewed as a distinct attempt to reconcile these two cultural elements.

The styles of African composers allow a rough categorisation, which is determined mainly by the degree to which Western or African musical aspects and traditions are used. As might be expected with the development of new styles, this categorisation is marked not by rigid periods, but by fluid transitions. We have argued that a process of negotiation was, at least by the beginning of the twentieth century, a characteristic mark of black middle class communities. Whereas assimilation and imitation were the main strategies of early missionary converts in the struggle to win the recognition of the dominant European culture, this changed decisively towards the turn of the century. Black Christians now began to reconsider the wisdom of rejecting their own cultural heritage in favour of Western values. This move came at a time when, caught between their own culture and the Western culture to which they aspired, they found that they did not belong completely to either. In redefining their identity they began to conceptualise ideas of a national culture that included both traditional and Western values. There was a growing awareness of their African roots, which culminated in the black consciousness movement and later in the idea of the African Renaissance, and this had a formative influence on *amakwaya* composers and the stylistic development of their compositions.

*Amakwaya* compositions reflect the process of identity formation undertaken by South Africa's black middle class, and show *amakwaya* composers progressively re-connecting with their traditional culture as the twentieth century moves on. The proportions in which the various elements are combined, however, are in a state of constant flux. Starting with an almost exclusive imitation of Western musical structures and ideas, by the end of the nineteenth century composers increasingly were looking for ways to find their own style. They never gave up Western elements completely, and all periods reveal a clinging to European ideas.

The development of African composed compositions can further illustrate this point. Various periods can be distinguished, with Ntiskana Gaba, born around 1780, as an influential precursor, with his ‘Great Hymn’ and other compositions being transmitted orally for half a century. Ntsikana’s compositions are today regarded as embodying a genuinely original ‘African’ aesthetic.<sup>4</sup> But the works of our first category of composers, who emerged from the mission stations almost 50 years later, show that many of the features of that aesthetic had been lost. African vernacular words were the only native element, and what we find is mere imitation of the melodic and harmonic structures of hymns taught by the missionaries. Examples of this are John Knox Bokwe’s ‘Vuka Deborah!’ (early 1880s) and Enoch Sontonga’s ‘Nkosi Sikelel’ Afrika’ (1897). A decisive change set in towards the beginning of the twentieth century, when composers started to reconnect with their roots. Initially this recourse to African musical elements that coincided with the emerging nationalism, concerned only rhythm. Composers started to replace Western hymnic square rhythms by introducing polyrhythm, multiple downbeats, syncopated rhythms, interlocking and interrhythm, into their compositions<sup>5</sup> – examples are PJ Mohapelo’s ‘Mokhotlong’ and RT Caluza’s ‘Silusapho Lwaze Afrika’, or ‘I Land Act’, (1912), the political content of which is evident. It was only towards the middle of the twentieth century that composers began to explore what Mzilikazi Khumalo, one of the foremost *amakwaya* composers, calls a ‘distinctively African style’ of choral composition. In the late 1980s he created, with *uShaka Kasenzangakhona*, a large-scale work that is based on the European form of oratorio, but uses many African elements. His most recent development is the composition of an African opera, ‘Princess Magogo’, premiered in Durban in 2002. This undertaking has provoked interesting, and at times, heated discussions regarding the contrary forces, or *Spannungsfeld*, of what is taken to be ‘African authenticity’ on the one hand, and the negotiated choral tradition on the other.

The link drawn here between music and identity is not fanciful. In the African cultural tradition, music and choral singing were never simply entertainment. Among South African Nguni, music is regarded not only as an expression of one’s creativity, but also as a powerful means of communication with the ancestral world and the natural environment. Thus music creates a strong feeling of community. Men, women, and children join in spontaneously, no matter what their status or function in the society, and ‘any individual who has the urge to make his voice heard is given the

liberty to do so' (Bebey 1975, in Pewa 1984:27). This, however, should not be taken to imply conformity: an attitude of criticism (for example challenging a figure of authority, a king or a chief) that would be unacceptable if directly expressed could be freely articulated if put into song. Such customs were alluded to by Mangosuthu Buthelezi, then Minister of Home Affairs, at the 'Birth of an African Opera' event at the Playhouse in Durban, April 18, 2001:

Music and song play an important function in our nation. They express how chorally we perceive and experience life, and mark joy and sorrow, love and war, and each of the recurring seasons. They manifest the ethos and pathos of our nation. Other nations have consigned the expression of their culture to writing or buildings while, since time immemorial, the Zulu nation has consigned it to music, dances and rituals. For this reason, music is one of our most important cultural expressions.

Today, choral music has become the most popular form of musical endeavour among black communities in South Africa (compare Peter Morake, *Drum Magazine*, February 1992). With hundreds of choral groups rehearsing on a regular basis and receiving financial sponsorship from the private sector for big choral events like the annual National Choir Festival, these mixed choirs have arguably become the most important musical group in South Africa. The value attached to choral singing goes back a long way: 'If there is an assurance of civilised advancement', wrote a correspondent in 1911, 'it can be found in beautiful singing, especially in concerted singing' (*Ilanga* June 23, 1911). Singing and in particular choral music, we want to argue, played its role in the process of formation of black middle-class identity. In an arguably parallel context of subaltern groups in Peru, Thomas Turino (1993:3-4) concludes that music often plays a crucial role in group identification. People 'adapt, alter, combine, and create cultural resources in unique ways, and for very specific reasons, the search for security, feelings of self-worth, and some kind of liveable space not least among them'. In our own case this importance was recognised during the socially restrictive years of the 1960s, as the following extract shows.

The deeper and more realistic purpose of our music is the positive building of our nation on the cultural plain [sic]. If the magnitude of this campaign has reached unprecedented heights it is only because music is the only talent we can develop to the international level without any restrictions... It can be nothing else at the moment (*Journal of the Transvaal United African Teachers Association, TUATA*, June 1962:4).

This perception, as the writer continues, was partly responsible for the increasing focus of these choral groups on competitions, by means of which they hoped to ‘produce [not only] singers but musicians – composers of world standard’. In music and singing, the black elite saw the possibility of achieving their goal of emancipating themselves, and of drawing level with and even excelling the white communities. The ambiguous nature of this development, and its link to the elitist identity-formation associated with *amakwaya*, is what we now turn to in the second part of this article.

### **Competitions, tradition, and modernity**

The new music was creating meaning for the choristers and their audience. At the same time the identity being forged was one which was to some extent a self-consciously elitist one, in other words, one which positioned a certain group as privileged over other groups. One manifestation of this continued privileging is the competitive dimension to be seen in *amakwaya* performance, issuing in the present-day National Choir Festival and all it entails for choristers today. Before the National Choir Festival there is an undignified scramble to ascertain the judges’ opinions on the material they will judge. This would seem to run counter to the tradition in which external criteria of what counts as ‘good’ in choral singing – for example, the European approach – were always, after the initial period of imitation, sifted through by a process of negotiation, producing something truly original.

Thus the very success of the choral music – signifying triumph over adversity – ushered in a new danger, that of betraying the aesthetical values of the art form in favour of success in a simple competitive sense. And this development would seem to some extent to support the modernity thesis: no longer does the choral practice of itself bear the same meaning-giving force for the choristers and audiences. We will suggest, however, that this does not at all indicate that the ideals of the tradition will inevitably be lost, as long as appropriate and realistic steps are taken to counter such tendencies. It is argued, against the modernity thesis, that the goal of an authentic identity in a tradition is a well-founded one and needs to moderate the future planning and direction of choral music. Jean and John Comaroff make a similar point (as Turino explains, 2000:6), namely that the very term ‘modernity’ highjacks the issue, by suggesting that there is no alternative to ‘progress’, understood in its European and American paradigms. Modernity, Turino argues, ‘is a continuation of evolutionary discourse that posits European and American post-Enlightenment ethics and economics as the

apex of universal development through the rhetorical hijacking of contemporary time...’ (2000:6).

What is it about the intensity of the choral competitions that strike the observer as so surprising? Here we have to take into account the subaltern status, during the Apartheid years and before, of the black choristers in South Africa, in their places of residence and also their school or work situation. Winning at the competitions began to symbolise achievement in general, measured against world standards, a way of ‘beating the system’ which was all the time, with Apartheid, closing in on and marginalising black people. Where the efforts of *amakholwa* to achieve a sense of identity and self-worth by imitating western culture had largely failed, success at competitions could now succeed. It would convey the message to the outside world that here, as an NCF chairman puts it, we have men and women of true worth, at ‘world-class levels’ (George Mxadana, *Newsletter of the Old Mutual/Telkom National Choir Festival*, 2000, nr 2:1). ‘No man or woman who has a heart beating in his breast can afford to stay out of competition today’, remarked IEZwane in 1965 (in Detterbeck 2003:237). While at first glance the competitive side of music performance might seem to be of secondary importance, this is in fact not at all the case, and again stresses the link between the singing tradition and the formation of identity.

With such aspirations governing these events, demonstration is everything. ‘Here we are showing our culture, values and norms’, one competitor remarks (Xolani Cele, Imizwilili Choral Society, questionnaire, 2000). It is felt that one can even overpower the other groups by the sheer volume of sound one’s choir produces: in this way, one ‘makes oneself heard’, in a land in which one’s voice has, in other spheres, been silenced. You need power, various commentators repeat. ‘First of all you got to have power. Because without power, you are nothing. In someway you got to be supported by singing. And if you don’t have power, really, you cannot survive’ (Thulani Maqungo, Tsakane Adult Choir, questionnaire, 2000). And winning, being number one, is everything. No doubt this is the case with any competitive event, but here this seems to take on added meaning which can only be understood by taking into account the broader social context of the singing. ‘There is only one winner – and this winner takes it all’, confirms Sidwell Mhlongo, conductor of the Gauteng Choristers, voicing his disappointment on achieving second position at the NCF in Cape Town in December 2000. Participation in a choral contest is a matter of testing yourself. As Ray Kantuli, an *amakwaya* veteran, puts it, ‘if you

see somebody doing something good, and you have got a constructive jealousy, you want to be above that person' (personal communication). The day of the contest is the 'moment of truth', adds Thembelihle Dladla of the Pietermaritzburg Choral Society (interview questionnaire, January 30, 2001), it is the opportunity to 'put ourselves on the stage to see where we are'. Here again, we can perceive the social background of the participants as one of disruption and alienation. Being on centre stage is important, and the audience then has the role of affirming their approval.

This focus on identity, which we have seen is part and parcel of the tradition, seems to continue today. For many people the social structures in post-Apartheid South Africa do not yet offer an adequate sense of security, and the choir continues to be 'a family affair', 'something fairly permanent in a situation where there is little permanence' (Thanduxolo Zulu, personal communication). This sense of belonging is attested to by other choristers. 'I can't be without singing,' says Falithenjwa Mkhize, 'I can't be without the choir – without the choir it's like being hungry' (personal communication). But it is, finally, a fragile affair: a good 'choir family' is one that wins. Thabane Sello, who sings with the Lesotho based Maseru Vocal, stresses the importance of joining a choir – 'a winning choir', he adds, 'because I don't think anyone likes to be associated with losers' (questionnaire, Cape Town NCF, 2000). And Thokozani Ndolomba, a chorister of the Pietermaritzburg Choral Society, argues that 'if you join a choir that is not successful, you waste your time... you want to be successful, you want to be recognized and known' (Pietermaritzburg Participatory Action Research Group, 2000).

The culmination of these expectations is for many the Finals of the National Choir Festival. Preparations begin early in the year, the venues for the preliminaries being selected according to rotation so as to reach as wide an audience as possible. Participants are caught up in the infectious excitement of challenging other choral groups. One cannot help feeling the thrill of the anticipated contest. But this narrow focus – for the entire year – on a few competition pieces, as interpreted by those particular judges, constricts the sustained growth of the choirs and their repertoires. Competitions, to be sure, motivate the participants, but this comes at a price: among other things, the competitiveness as manifested in secrecy, lack of cooperation, and in an attempt to outguess the judges by working out exactly what aspect of the winning choir in the previous year had swayed the results, and then imitating that. Already in 1967 it seems the conflicts

between choristers and adjudicators could turn the events into fairly grim affairs. In a letter to *The World* newspaper (quoted in *TUATA*, September 1967:32) a reader complains that the annual Reef Eisteddfod has begun to be dominated by threats to choirs and conductors, and that one of the best choirs, from ‘consideration for the safety of its members’ has been forced to stay away. Various commentators have judged the event not capable of bearing the weight of such aspirations and hopes, and the Johannesburg conductor, Richard Cock, will have nothing to do with the choral competitions. He comments that they are taken too seriously, ‘ranging from death threats to physical attacks of adjudicators after the competition’. At times they may degenerate into near chaos, as is evident from the following account given by Douglas Reid of one regional preliminary held in the Jameson Hall at the University of Cape Town:

It was raining outside. They had packed people into this venue, so that you couldn't even breathe. They were right on top of each other. And then three adjudicators at the table, myself being one. In order to cope, we needed a secretary, who would table up the results and all the rest of it. And what happened unfortunately was... the choir that came third, in fact came fourth. In looking at all the numbers – everything was under pressure – we had mixed up the third and the fourth position. A mistake by the secretary and of course by the adjudicators that were there. We should have been checking through things. But at the end of a competition everybody wants to know the results before you can even think. And after the results were announced, there was a whole to-do at the back – so we were rushed out, even Peter Morake and the secretary. And while we were waiting, I looked at the results and I discovered that three and four were the wrong way around. It was one point difference. So Peter went in and announced that straightaway – Gosh! People stormed, they took the typewriter, they threw the typewriter across the floor and they were all upset. So ... a public apology was made immediately. And it was decided – because money was involved as well – that in fact an award should be made to both choirs. And the one choir that had got third place now said that they were ruined because they were now fourth and they had been told they were third. The choir that was fourth said that *they* were ruined because they should have been third and they were announced fourth. A press conference was called ... and it went out on the air, a public apology was made, that the wrong result was announced and that an award would be made to both choirs. And that they both had been good choirs and there was just a single point difference. I tell you, you'd have thought the world had come to an end.

This account speaks for itself.

In order to sustain the authentic tradition, the choristers have to see the aesthetic values of this kind of music as part and parcel of their normal motivational framework, bound up with – not of course coextensive with – their sense of their general identity as persons and members of society. This way of seeing things, as we have argued, is evidenced in the South African choral tradition. That tradition includes good music – however complex and culture-specific this notion is – as part and parcel of what it means to be a successful human being, a model for others: ideas of pleasing the audience, of giving meaning and identity, of offering a technical challenge to the choristers, and so on. Our notion of an authentic music tradition within the framework of an authentic national culture presupposes this idea. For Giddens (1990), on the other hand, a reconstituted tradition is a sham, without intrinsic drawing power, although one might join in with others (sharing the mock-tradition) because of extrinsic benefits in status, or hegemony, or because tourists demand it, and so on.

The choral tradition seems to have been a way of giving meaning, under stringent and potentially destructive social conditions. The question that arises, under present radically altered social conditions, is whether an adequate account of society can be given without reference to any such elements to do with meaning. In his study of the exigencies circumscribing contemporary South Africa, Daryl Glaser (2001:216-20) discusses with equanimity the (to us incommensurable) possible factors of social cohesion: the English language, Christianity, consumerism, and sport! The approach seems to proscribe any discussion of strongly-valued goods of the kind which promote an identity and counter disintegrative tendencies, such as consumerist attitudes, which would override, for purposes of gratification, the cooperation and commitments made in the name of the communal project. But *amakwaya* tradition seems to suggest a way of seeing persons as, importantly, ‘participants in meaning’, and this perhaps points to a difference of outlook between the traditional African approach and the modern western picture of, in Charles Taylor’s phrase, the ‘unencumbered self’ (Taylor 1989). Our point is that there might be many aspects in which one might think of a renaissance of a cultural tradition as ‘sham’ – we can point to purist approaches to African choral music – but the project itself is *not necessarily* correctly judged sham as a whole.

## Questioning the modernity thesis

What is thought to be at stake in the alternatives, tradition or modernity, is well explained by Ross Poole (1991). According to Poole, market conditions associated with contemporary society break down the sense in which the individual is first and foremost a *participant*, rather than an isolated individual. He illustrates the problem by the example of the family as a social practice, and the kind of normative constraints that govern members of a family (analogous to the way in which choristers, through natural and learned talents, slot into certain roles in the choir). In pre-modern society the individual is first and foremost a participant, and one's behaviour patterns are governed by particular relationships to one's child, or colleague, or husband, and so on. The tradition gathers individuals through their shared beliefs about common meanings and values. Because of the way one identifies oneself, the dyad egoism/altruism does not apply but rather as a father in a family, or a chorister in a choir, for example, one achieves one's own good through the achievement of the good of others too. But later, so goes the modernity thesis, the role-defined identity that is part and parcel of a pre-modern society, gives way to the self-concerned critical and socially unencumbered individual. In dissenting from this view, however, we are not proposing as basic drive in persons unselfishness rather than self-centredness. It is not that the mother, for example, is altruistic rather than egocentric, at least in the sense in which these are constituted in modernity, ie as practically as well as conceptually opposed: if I give more time to you, I give less time to myself. Rather, modernity's conception of instrumental reasoning is being thrown into question (Poole 1991:54). Applying these ideas to our own problematic we can say that modernity has constructed an identity which is incompatible with our proposed guiding standard of an authentic identity, authentic participation, in the choral tradition, which symbolises and gives meaning to one's life as a whole.

Once the identity of the individual is conceived in abstraction from his relations with others, the assumption of pervasive self-interest becomes almost inescapable... The identity required by the market is that of an individual who is not tied to particular activities and responsibilities. (Poole 1991:7 and 61)

And this means that the countervailing tendencies to do with winning at all costs will have much more of a foothold on the motivations of the choristers and others in the choral scene. External goods, of reward and so on, increasingly dominate the internal goods intrinsic to the tradition, to do with the aesthetic qualities of the music.

For Poole, the greater options available in modern societies break down the drawing power of past identities. Is this an accurate view of the matter? Clearly the modern period has ushered in the conditions for a greater degree of individual freedom of choice. But this has led to the assumption that participation in the (past) tradition is *defined* by its uncritical attitude towards the status-quo allocating roles in the cooperative social project. The dichotomy traditional/modern seems, in our secularised culture, part and parcel of the received wisdom of how history is moving forward: ‘those people then’, we think, were for the most part less critical, narrower, less aware, more prejudiced, than we are now. Only if the traditional identity or sense of self, so the argument goes, is thought of as an inescapable destiny, not social and contingent but natural and necessary, will it have drawing power (Poole 1991:62). One could think of the affirmation of the choristers of their roles, and the discipline required of these, in the creating of the music. In other words, Poole is implicitly arguing that there can be no *critical* adoption of the role-based social participation:

Any process of evaluating these identities is liable to undermine them. For an individual to subject her or his identity (as wife/mother or breadwinner/head of household) to such a scrutiny is to render that identity vulnerable... To ponder the identity in question is to render contingent what must be assumed as necessary and inescapable if it is to found an ethic of virtue. (1991:63)<sup>6</sup>

But a critical (and negotiated) approach to identity seems to be, on the contrary, a very characteristic of the choral tradition we have been studying: all new influences are creatively sieved through before incorporation. Poole assumes, rather than argues for, the inevitable hegemony of the picture of persons as isolated individuals freely choosing from an otherwise value-neutral range of aims and behaviour patterns – over against the picture of the individual as participant. In contrast to this, other studies argue that the expression of meaning supplying an internal link between individual and group, perhaps through religion, or cooperative community projects, or traditions such as *amakwaya*, is an enduring need which if denied results in all kinds of social dysfunctions, and indeed constitutes ‘a threat to our society’s fundamental democratic values’ (Elchardus and Siongers 2001:197).<sup>7</sup>

The institutional aspect, it is true, can always corrupt the practice.<sup>8</sup> The institution – here, for instance, the set up of choral competitions – is structured by means of a set of rough-and-ready public rules for the

allocation of external goods of power, status and financial rewards. If the internal goods are achieved, all benefit; but in the matter of external goods, one individual is in competition with others – only one can achieve first place, the others must be content to be second. The ethos of any practice – its promotion, for example, of loyal ways of behaving – is designed to guard against being overtaken by the desire for those external rewards, money and position. In a particular kind of commercialised society traditions and their sustaining ‘visions’ will only be maintained with difficulty. Iris Murdoch, in her study of art and Plato, insists that ‘a sense of beauty diminishes greed’ in pointing us ‘in the direction of the real and the good’. It has a certain authority which overcomes egoism ‘in its protean forms of fantasy and illusion’ (Murdoch 1977:34-35, quoted in Kerr 1997: 88). This contention seems to be borne out by our study of the choral tradition which is expressive of, and forging a fragile identity beyond, the self-interested isolations of the past.

## **Conclusion**

It is our contention in this paper that if the choral tradition is to flourish under present conditions, the dangers of the detraditionalising forces of the global market, coupled with the fact that the institutional goods of any social practice may be a disintegrating force, need to be taken into account and realistically dealt with. But if one has followed the description above tracing the maturing tradition it will be clear that the tradition has its internal resources. There are many voices within the tradition critical of the current emphasis on competitions. And the same time the competitions have always been tempered by an encompassing meaning-giving vision, an aspect which is uncharacteristic of what is understood by ‘modernity’. We hear of choristers overcoming obstacles of time, money, and marginalisation, to attend regular voice classes at the university in order to learn ‘how to care for our voice, what exercises to do, how to project’. And they re-affirm the negotiated nature of the choral tradition, inclusive of African music, of wedding songs (included in order to please the audience), and of the challenging ‘advanced Western music’. ‘It is the love of music that gives us the energy,’ they enthuse.

## **Notes**

1. This paper emerged from a conversation between ethnomusicology (Detterbeck), and philosophical ethics (Giddy), and was presented in shortened form at a symposium in Pietermaritzburg in April 2003 organised by the University of

Natal. The historical analysis and the documentation of the development of the repertoire, as well as the theme of identity, are based on Markus Detterbeck (2003). Because of this overall indebtedness no further detailed page references to that document will be made here.

2. The term *amakwaya* is used to distinguish the choral practice of the mixed black choirs that emerged from the mission stations in the nineteenth century, from other South African vocal and choral traditions, such as *isicathamiya* or Gospel.
3. Personal communication to Markus Detterbeck, Mariannhill, November 5, 1999. All interviews referred to in this paper were conducted by Detterbeck (henceforth cited only as 'personal communication' or else 'interview questionnaire') and took place between 1999 and 2001. More detailed references can be found in Detterbeck, 2003.
4. The idea which we are putting forward in this paper, that it makes sense to speak of an authentic tradition, clearly takes issue with the contention that any such categorisation is 'essentialist'. There is no space in this paper to discuss this point of view (which would render pointless our attempt to show that certain trends in contemporary practice are not fully in the spirit of the tradition). We can however mention just one writer on our side, the philosopher Joe Ndaba at the University of Zululand, who draws on hermeneutical philosophy to make his point. Ndaba (2001) argues at length that disallowing some such notion as authentic tradition is characteristic of the neo-logical-positivist philosophy which would exclude the examination of the 'life-world' of the African and he argues that on this issue 'the African philosopher cannot afford to be neutral'. This is because such a view would undermine the much-needed project of cultural and philosophical dialogue. 'In the light of our central quest for dialogue between traditions, the contemporary philosopher's task should be how to synthesise the insights located in the background of indigenous philosophical resources with those harvested from the African philosopher's institutional education handed down by the historical circumstances of western colonialism' (2001:37). In an earlier article Ndaba (1999) carefully delineates the helpful from the unhelpful sense of the term 'traditional' (he is talking about philosophy) which is needed in order to challenge 'valorised' Western rationality; and its use should not at all imply that Africans (traditional) were void of 'rationality'.
5. To illustrate the difference to the standard western rhythm one can think for example of the regular (say, four-beat) metre of any church hymn: polyrhythm (or cross rhythm) can be thought of as juxtaposing that with a three-beat metre to create a new and more complex rhythmic grouping. The Nigerian music scholar Meki Nzewi (1997) objects to these terms which suggest a prior canonic *norm* from which the African rhythm is seen to be diverging, and offers instead the term, 'inter-rhythm'.

6. But see his more developed and positive views on the implications of our 'meaning-giving' human condition, in Chapter Two of his 1999 work, *Nation and Identity*.
7. In their survey of young people in Brussels during the years 1996 and 2000, the authors tested the hypothesis that questions of meaning in a detraditionalised society might be either trivial or of a transitory nature, an attitude that would seem implicit in the above-mentioned analysis of South African society to be found in Glaser. They found that, on the contrary, such questions are important from the point of view of people's well-being and society's health too.
8. See the very useful analysis of the two dimensions of any social practice, in Alisdair MacIntyre's celebrated study *After Virtue* (1981:181).

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# Article

## Beyond experience: the mediation of traumatic memories in South African history museums<sup>1</sup>

Sofie MMA Geschier

### Introduction

South Africa is ten years into its democracy and history is actively rewritten and negotiated while many of the primary witnesses are still alive. Stakeholders within the Department of Education, the heritage industry, the academic world and teachers increasingly perceive museums as crucial educational sites that document and symbolise the transition and facilitate the building of 'the future' (see various contributions in Jeppie 2004).<sup>2</sup> Outcomes Based Education, discussed and developed over the last ten years (see Chisholm 2004), prescribes both the Holocaust and apartheid as topics in the Revised National Curriculum Statements for grades R-9 (Department of Education 2002:92-93). The educators, who might be primary or secondary witnesses to these events, are assumed to know how to achieve the prescribed outcomes and how to facilitate the learning process. References to the role and influence of personal positions and experiences of mediators, such as teachers and museum facilitators, on the learning process, are however rare (Harley et al 2000; Goodson 1996; Swina 1994).

This is problematic for historical and pedagogical reasons: writers such as Bar-On (1999) and Simon et al (2000) have pointed out that people do not merely change their identities and values when political or social changes occur. While one needs to be careful in drawing comparisons,<sup>3</sup> it is legitimate to argue that totalitarian regimes such as Nazism in Germany and apartheid in South Africa impact on people both in the past and present in two intertwined ways: on the one hand they erased and reshaped individual and collective memories of 'other' pasts and presents, particularly those memories that were not compatible with their ideologies (Winter and

Sivan 1999:7). On the other hand, in the case of the Holocaust and apartheid's forced removals, they took people away from their physical and metaphorical place in society. For the survivors, the actual loss of this physical and metaphorical place and thus of their identity is traumatic because with it they lost their trust in others and in the safety of the world (LaCapra 2001:45-46).<sup>4</sup> The question then is: how do people 'change', reflect on 'change' and how do they mediate this to the younger generations?

In the field of education, researchers such as Ellsworth (1997) and Jagodzinski (2002) also challenge an idealistic, unproblematic interpretation of 'change'. Ellsworth points out that pedagogy is 'a much messier and more inconclusive affair than the vast majority of our educational theories and practices make it out to be' (1997:8). Educators (and human beings in general) have the desire to forget that 'the fancy of understanding' is a prestigious but seductive illusion (1997:81-82) (see also Britzman 2000). Ellsworth (1997:70) explains:

Teaching is not psychoanalysis. But consciously or unconsciously teachers deal nevertheless in repression, denial, ignore-ance, resistance, fear and desire whenever we teach. And in any classroom, the presence of the discourse of the Other can often become painfully and disturbingly evident and 'disruptive' to goals such as understanding, empathy, communicative dialogue. This is especially so in classrooms that deal explicitly with histories.

This project attempts to address this under researched area in history education in South Africa. Paying attention to the subjectivity of mediators, be they teachers or museum facilitators, is pivotal if we want to understand how 'change' – as a historical 'event' but also as changing moral values, behaviour and thought – is taught. The question that drives this paper is: how do museum facilitators define and analyse the role of primary narratives of traumatic events such as the Holocaust and apartheid forced removals in pedagogical interactions with a younger generation?<sup>5</sup> The data entails interviews conducted in 2003 with museum facilitators of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre and the District Six Museum. Both museums were established during the first ten years of South Africa's democracy, are extensively visited by school groups, and have developed lesson material and specific programs for schools. I interviewed respectively seven and five museum facilitators (holding different positions within the museum hierarchy). Two of the Holocaust Centre interviewees are Holocaust survivors and all District Six Museum interviewees lived in District Six. In the interviews I asked the facilitators how they perceive their own role in

facilitating school visits and what, according to them, is the role of (directly mediated) primary narratives of traumatic events in these interactions with young people. In this paper, I use pseudonyms for all the museum facilitators.

The paper is guided by theories of oral history and post-Vygotskian and Lacanian inspired pedagogic research (see Daniels 2001; Ellsworth 1997; Portelli 1991 and 1997; Samuel and Thompson 1990). These theories demand a self-reflective interpretation of the interview space as a dialogue in which both sides observe each other, and create and recreate expectations. In this dialogue the construction of narratives is central, which envelops an intangible interaction between 'facts' and 'evaluation' (Antze and Lambek 1996; Casey 1995; Portelli 1991 and 1997). In Portelli's words, 'oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did' (1991:50). The dialogue is perceived from a 'generational' point of view. I make a distinction between primary narratives, which are narratives of the victims of the traumatic historical event, and the narratives of secondary witnesses or commentators of the event. The latter do not only include relatives of the primary witnesses but also commentators and witnesses without a familial connection.

### **Pedagogical justification of remembrance**

How the museum facilitators define the role of primary narratives in the pedagogical interactions with younger generations in the respective sites, is closely linked with how they define the role of the museum. The latter is described along generational lines: both sites are perceived as 'a spiritual home' for the primary witnesses/survivors of the respective atrocities. The majority of the facilitators in the District Six Museum are ex-District Sixers and a handful of Holocaust survivors testify at the end of some of the educational programs in the Cape Town Holocaust Centre.<sup>6</sup> The teaching of the history of past atrocities through the personal stories of survivors is linked with an active acknowledgment of the survivors' present needs through the establishment of a 'place of memory' but also, in the case of the District Six Museum, an initiative that strives to physically reconstruct District Six.

Closely linked to the notion of 'a spiritual home' is what Simon et al (2000) call the pedagogical justification of remembrance: to guarantee that the atrocities are not repeated, young people have to listen to, and thus acknowledge, the stories of the survivors as historically accurate, but also

learn not to make ‘the same mistakes’. Stephen Ackers\*, one of the older trustees of the District Six Museum explained this as follows:

[T]he essential aspect of remembering and bringing to the youth also is important because [...] there is a saying that if you don’t [sic] forget your past, you’re up to return [...] to actually repeat it. And the people tend to repeat bad things you know. So essentially what we’re saying is, that [...] the place and the struggle for the [...] formation of the District Six Museum [...] is to say that, never again must anything like this happen. [...] But also, and that is the function of what we believe, because we believe that this institution certainly needs that connection [...] for young people. Because [...] they get the stories primary here! They get the stories that have been spoken and, and [...] recorded, and the photographic [...] witnesses of it [...]. And that should impact on people in terms of where they are, and say that ‘how is it that this occurred in, in what we call a civilized country?’<sup>7</sup>

This pedagogical justification of remembrance is also used to point out the necessary and important cooperation between the museums and schools. Anne Hartmann\*, one of the facilitators at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, highlighted the role of the facilitators in the ‘teaching of history’ but also the ‘building of bridges’, which is one of the aims of the current syllabus for grade nine. However, success of this teaching also depends on the input of the school teachers:

[O]n the one hand while you are there also to teach history. Because after all the [...] main reason they’re coming is, and this is to *the great* credit of the Holocaust Centre that at grade 9 now it is part of the syllabus within World War II history. [...] [I]n terms of knowing that you have them for the one morning only, it’s very important that it becomes an outreach, a building of bridges, you know, an interaction across faith, across cultural levels and so on. Or for me it’s certainly, it’s that. [...] [O]f course, the difficulty is [...] the extent to which they *do* come prepared or the extent to which there is follow up afterwards.

While this pedagogical justification of remembrance is rightly used and defended by many (including myself) it embodies an assumption about the moral vigilance of the listener which is not unproblematic. In the words of Simon et al (2000:5):

While the promise of remembrance is that of a moral vigilance that stands over and against indifference, the continuation of local and global violence suggests that such a pedagogy rarely serves as an effective safeguard.

Some facilitators do reflect on the tensions that inhabit this assumption by indicating ‘the gap’ between the actual and desired roles of primary and secondary witnesses within the pedagogical interaction. In what follows I explore the facilitators’ perceptions of the respective roles of teachers, learners and the facilitators themselves; what kind of message has to be ‘transmitted’ and how; and what kind of effects the specific interactions in the museum setting have on the younger generation, but also on the facilitators themselves.

### **The role of the school teacher: an interface**

Facilitators in both museums perceive the role of the school teacher as an interface between the museum space and the space of the classroom. Julie Abrahams\* from the District Six Museum, for instance, remarked:

If they have a project for their children, they will inform us what it is about, or they’re asking me to fax a copy of their paper so that there can be some [...] focus on the project while they are here and to motivate the learners so I don’t think I have difficulties with the teachers. [...] But [...] teachers have to participate in what goes on. They have to take responsibility for their children and they have to be included. [...] Sometimes the teachers think they will just drop the child, the children and, [...], you know, I would just take over completely and they have to be here and some of them will escape to the coffee shop (laugh) and, you know, have a nice break. And I will [...] invite them to rather join. Because it is for their own benefit too.

The Holocaust survivors I interviewed linked the relationship with the visiting teachers more with their own ways of remembering and telling about the Holocaust. Maria Dubois\*, for example, stressed that the Holocaust survivors only talk to adult groups (and to Jewish learners) because it is too painful to talk to young children. Well informed teachers should speak, she asserted:

We find that for us to speak to young children is not necessary. Teachers, who are well informed, should speak, as part of their Holocaust Education. That’s why we speak only to [...] students, people over 18 and so on. Because every time we speak it/it’s a *piece* of my *heart*. And it’s a piece of my *health*, that is destroyed. You know, for the young people, 60 years, 50 years, [is] long time ago! For them it is part of history! For me it’s my youth that was brutally taken away from me! And even after my miraculous survival it was not given back to me! I never got my youth back! I never got my home, my parents, [...] my relatives, my teachers, my school!

It is interesting that the facilitators do not take into account the possibility of teachers being primary witnesses themselves. The role of the teacher is defined in very specific terms: the teacher needs to have a certain distance and discipline, and (for some of the facilitators) also needs to take on the role of ‘the learner’.

### **The interactions with the learners: sermons and silences**

The paradox of the pedagogical justification of remembrance seems to evolve around two challenges or unsettlements that inhabit the act of listening. Firstly, facilitators emphasise that imagining and understanding atrocities that oneself did not experience is difficult, if not, according to some facilitators, impossible. Secondly, listening is complicated by the silences and gaps that every narrative and dialogue contains. Although I make a distinction between these two challenges, the reader will see that they are intertwined. The second challenge can be read as an elaboration, or a deeper layer of the first challenge.<sup>8</sup>

#### ***Challenge 1: Imagining and understanding atrocities***

Most of the museum facilitators questioned the possibility of imagining for those who did not experience the atrocities first hand. I had the following dialogue with Henry Anderson\*, one of the trustees of District Six Museum:

HA\*: [...] the children don't and [...] I don't expect them to fully understand and appreciate. They can read about it and they can say 'I hear what you're saying'. But they *can't* identify with it.

SG: Why?

HA\*: Because they've not experienced it! So what does it need now, is for them to know the *history*, and to accept when people *tell* [...] that when you are stripped of your humanity, this is what happens to you! Now I need you, if you are the student, I need you to accept my word!

SG: To believe you.

HA\*: To believe me! And to believe what other writers have written about humankind's behaviour towards humans. OK? [...] And here understanding is linked to seeing, and hearing it, and also feel. And the best way is to be able to use a vehicle, use words, which could be a vehicle, use sounds, which could be a vehicle, use visuals, which could be a vehicle to help you [...] to transport yourself into that situation. And, [...] imagine that you are experiencing that pain, that hardship. It's not easy! It is not easy for the children, descendants of those [...] parents, those grandparents who suffered forced removals to *fully* appreciate [their experiences] [...] They never lived here.

One can say that high school learners, as secondary witnesses to the event can only try to imagine what it was like by placing themselves in the shoes of the narrators. Smith (2001:447) however warns that believing in possibilities and similarities can foreclose remembering that one forgets and imply accepting uncritically what the primary witness conveys. One could say that survivors of atrocities experience an uncanniness that ‘occurs when the boundaries between *imagination* and *reality* are erased’ (Kristeva 1991:188; her emphasis). This uncanniness is also experienced by the listener. Even though museum facilitators indicate that certain groups amongst the young visitors have a familial connection with the traumatic event, having parents or grandparents that have experienced apartheid forced removals or the Holocaust, and one could expect these groups to have a ‘better’ understanding of (or potential to understand) these experiences, this is not taken for granted. Human beings universally have the tendency not to think about or to build an emotional wall against painful experiences, also when these experiences are not theirs (Bauer 2001:40,262; McCully et al 2002). Maria Dubois stressed that it is impossible for the young learners to understand what had been happening in the camps. Even for herself, a survivor of the extermination camps, understanding is an everlasting challenge and this is what makes testifying a difficult thing to do:

They [learners] don’t grasp it! And another thing! We can’t speak so often! You speak a few times; you have to have a break! [...] [Y]ou’re trying to find out, you’re trying to learn, you’re trying to study, you will never fathom it! [...] [Reflecting on a personal, very upsetting experience in one of the extermination camps:] For a [silence] good moment I thought I must have died and I am in hell! Because it couldn’t happen in reality. [...] [N]o matter how much you learn about it, you cannot fathom it, you cannot *even visualise* it!

Paddy Berkovitch\*, one of the museum facilitators, said that the Centre asks the Holocaust survivors to testify only in some of the educational programs because of the emotional impact the act of testifying has on them. She states that even when the survivors talk, listeners do not necessarily understand what they say:

‘[...] often that is also falling, almost, on deaf ears. Because the listeners haven’t got the context, and therefore haven’t even got the empathy. Unless you’ve done quite a bit of reading, you don’t really know what they are talking about. Because they never talk worst case scenario. They give you an outline of what happened to them. And

these people have no idea what the worst case scenario actually was. (Silence). And we also don't like to expose them to [...] young people, who may not appreciate what they are talking about. [...] [They do] not empathise efficiently, you know, this, to them, to a very young person, this is an old person standing and talking about something that happened 60 years ago. OK and they *don't really* understand what it is.

Paddy Berkovitch's reflection indicates that reaching an understanding is challenging because of the different historical positions and needs of both parties. This challenge is complicated by dynamic and intrinsically social practices of forgetting and remembering (Hayden 1999). For the survivors it is important to be able to deal with their traumatic past and to construct a morally defensible self-image while the listeners might accept and even demand redemptive narratives (Friedlander 1992; LaCapra 2001:153-159). Isabelle Lagrange\* highlighted the two-way direction of wanting to forget by saying the following about a family member who experienced the extermination camps: '[S]he would never talk to me about it. About the camp. And I didn't want to know'.

While uncanniness and 'misunderstandings' might be experienced as something restraining and even threatening, something that need to be 'remedied', they also open a door to what LaCapra calls 'empathic unsettlement' 'in which emotional response comes with respect for the other and the realization that the experience of the other is not one's own' (LaCapra 2001:40). Marian Spielberg\*, one of the Cape Town Holocaust Centre facilitators, for example, did not experience the suffering of the Holocaust but directly witnessed the humiliation inflicted upon black people during apartheid. Her reflection on the suffering of the Holocaust indicates that she will never fully understand it, despite her attempts to imagine 'how it must be like'.

I can imagine, but it wasn't me, so the best I can do is try *in limited language* I have, because I don't have a vocabulary to describe that suffering. And I wasn't even there! But the more I read, the more I know, the more I can give examples, and explain and engage and interact, *the closer one can get to imagining what it must be like*. I don't think one needs to have gone through it to be able to say *we/we can now relate to it, we can relate in some ways*, because we do have an imagination and with/with more knowledge, we can *begin to understand* without actually experiencing the same emotion.

Marian Spielberg's reflection points out that 'learning' through 'empathetic unsettlement' happens on two levels: on the one hand, one

learns about what happened to others, in another time and space. On the other hand, one learns 'within the disturbances and disruptions inherent in comprehending these events' (Simon et al 2000:3). According to Schlender (2002:138), 'estrangement' plays a crucial role in this context: one willingly and unwillingly estranges the experiences of oneself or another human being. Simon et al (2000) argue that this kind of pedagogy provides a 'remembrance as a difficult return' instead of the redemptive myth that the future will be better if one remembers; it provides an alternative for a 'total(itarian)' understanding of past and present.

### ***Challenge 2: Imagining an understanding community in museum narratives***

Space is often understood as one of the tools of remembering and imagining (Nora 1989:9,13; Winter and Sivan 1999:37). Space shapes social and individual identities. The narratives of the facilitators at the District Six Museum exemplify this. With the destruction of the space and community that was District Six, the inhabitants lost their *place* that created and was created by their cosmopolitan identity as individuals and as a community (Field 2001; McEachern 2001; Rassool and Prosalendis 2001). Similarly, the Jewish community in Europe was destroyed – not just their community as a physical and social entity as the majority of its members were killed (Young 1988).

This social meaning of 'place' also relates to those who visit the museums. As Richard Rive (in Rassool and Prosalendis 2001:31) amply explains, there cannot be a place without people and without the capacity to empathise. Empathy is about putting oneself in somebody else's place. Empathy is not identification but an appreciation of the very place another person is in (LaCapra 2001:27,211-3; Bauer 2001:17,19). And space has also a metaphorical meaning: sense is made of events in reflections and the narrator 'unifies his vision in the knowledge of its outcome' (Young 1988:30).

These literal and metaphorical meanings of 'place' can work in contrasting ways. The District Six Museum facilitators stressed that the identity of the museum is in an important way shaped by the open, physical space of the District. The physical space, especially in correlation with the stories told in the museum, is a vehicle for outsiders to feel the lost space, to feel what it is like to be thrown out of your neighbourhood. It is a space one needs to commemorate by making it a heritage site. This however might conflict with the realism of human empathy for the victims who want to rebuild their

home in that very same space. Gillion Chapell\* was very aware of this and tried to relieve the tension by stating that a ‘realistic’ point of view is pivotal:

So there I sit in a catch-twenty-two situation, from where I look at it from both sides. I put myself *in their place*, and I want to get out, I got a family and I want to get out of here, and here is an opening. And it is being offered. I would take it! So, [...] that is where I sit in a catch-twenty-two situation. So I haven’t got a problem with people coming back, but I’ve also got a problem with, you know, with what you’re going to be losing. The [...] heritage [...] of the open space of District Six. Where the sorrow and the pain happened. Maybe it is a healing process! [...] I want to be realistic about it, and people want to come back, then that’s the way it is then. You’ve got to be prepared to sacrifice.

One can say that the museum is a living space, contested and ever changing (see Soudien and Meltzer 2001). And this for two reasons: narratives are constructed around dynamic practices of forgetting and remembering, and constant shaping and reshaping of insiders and outsiders (see Davison 1998). Both practices happen within the survivors, in interaction between survivors and their descendants, and in the interaction between survivors and the general public, including learners and teachers. Let us explore these two practices in both museums:

### ***Forgetting/remembering***

The District Six Museum facilitators who were evicted from the district were cut out of the place they belonged to and this lost place ran the risk of being erased from their memories. This happened in two ways: apartheid officials named streets and housing complexes in the new areas after the names of streets and flat buildings in the destroyed neighbourhoods, such as Hanover Park and Lavender Hill (Delpont 2001:39; Hart 1990:128-9). On the other hand, the people who directly experienced eviction often tried to erase their memories in an attempt to overcome the trauma of having lost that very space that made their home, their identity as an individual and as a community. This trauma is expressed in the constant tension between wanting to remember and wanting to forget (Zur 1999:50). Julie Abrahams and her family for example never spoke about ‘the change’; they cut it out of their memory ‘like we wanted to forget’. Stephen Ackers expressed the tension between wanting and not wanting to visit that world where people do something like that to one another as follows:

(Y)our place and space [...] is significant to you because it *is* your identification [...] I wanted to just, to pull it out of my mind. But I *had* to, for my own healing, *come back* to it, and say ‘yes, but that is exactly where I lived’ [...] So, I had to [...] re-look at myself again and say ‘well, no, I can’t [...] compartmentalise my mind!’ you know. And I think because apartheid already wanted to do that! [...] So what we have to do now is to create this in our mind again. [T]he fear about forced removals, [...] one sometimes don’t know how they could have actually [...] done something like this, you know. And, yet, [...] the world out there, [...] it’s possible today.

Stephen Ackers’ reflection and the very language he used clearly points to the tension of wanting to forget, and wanting to remember. Traumatic memories have the potential to recur irrespective of the individual’s will to recall (Rogers et al 1999). Stephen Ackers perceived the (re-) ‘creation’ of the mental place as pivotal for his ‘healing’. Shutting out the memory would mean to surrender to the ideology of apartheid and a denial of his own identity. This healing does not entail a solution of all that was or is forgotten.

Remembering the Holocaust was, and still is, difficult. The Nazis destroyed not only the physical witnesses of their crime; the atrocities were such that both the survivors and secondary witnesses did not want to or could not believe it really happened (Felman and Laub 1992:80). I had the following dialogue with Isabelle Lagrange about how she got to know about the atrocities committed in the extermination camps in which her parents died:

SG: How did, how did they tell you, because you were only 12 or something.

IL: I was 12. It is not only how I was told, [...] I didn’t know my parents were in Auschwitz. [...] How did we know? Because at the end of the war, when all the atrocities became known, it was *shown* on huge big pictures, it was shown in the *movies* [...]. *You heard* about it! And amongst the Jewish community, we all heard about it. And I actually saw pictures, of you know the emaciated bodies, and [...] that’s how I heard about it. And I hoped that my parents weren’t *among them* [...]

SG: How did, how does it feel?

IL: Well it was for me very, very traumatic. [...] I really looked once, and didn’t look again. I, I really didn’t want to, to see them. I had to see them, because I *had* to know, but I didn’t want to see them.

SG: I understand.

IL: I mean, I could understand that people were so thin, because I knew we were hungry in the camps and there wasn't food and, and it wasn't an ordinary *life* style, it was not the one I had been living before. But I didn't know exactly, I didn't know about the extermination camps, that I didn't know about, until after the war. Most of the *world pretended* not to know about it. But we, we as a child, I really didn't understand and I think I was also shielded from being told.

This dialogue points at the interactive character of forgetting and remembering. It also points at how people did not have a language (and schemata) to talk about such a seemingly unprecedented atrocity. Isabelle Lagrange referred to things she did experience herself but everything that went beyond her own past experiences seemed difficult to fathom, not only because she did not experience it herself but also because of the dynamics of forgetting and remembering within herself and within and between the people around her (see Iorio et al 1997).

### ***Insiders and outsiders***

There is yet another reason which makes the process of representing and empathising a complex one. Both visitors and facilitators constantly reshape identities of insiderliness and outsiderliness for themselves and those they talk or listen to (Soudien 2001:125-6). The possibility of 'understanding' and 'imagining' needs, in the words of Simon (2000:13), 'a much more dialectical and uncanny conception of what constitutes a "point of connection", one that initiates an ongoing attentiveness to identification and difference, to ordinariness and the shock of the un-ordinary'. This is not only the case in the facilitators' relation to younger generations. It is also the case in the facilitators' relation to people who have 'other' memories of atrocities.

There are people who lived in District Six but benefited from the forced removals and have 'other' memories. Their position and memories are one of the most contested and un-represented areas in the District Six Museum. The dialogues in the museum contain stories in which agency and a good feeling are central (Soudien and Meltzer 2001:66-68). These 'good old times' stories are an attempt to deal with loss, to reclaim the ability to make individual choices and to retain a sense of morality (Field 2001:118). They are also part of the museum's role in reshaping public memory for a new and better South Africa (Davison 1998:147). In these stories idealisation and demonisation of characters give clues to unrealised hopes or hidden fears (Samuel and Thompson 1990:7).

In the Cape Town Holocaust Centre the need to imagine a progress towards an ideal society without racism and prejudice is equally strong. Magda Goldberg\* highlighted ‘the extra dimension’ that the Cape Town Holocaust Centre gives to the teaching of history by exploring the links between the ideologies behind Nazism and apartheid:

[...] even though there are people who know about the Holocaust, who know about apartheid, it’s the way that it’s done here that gives them that extra dimension. So, they possibly haven’t *thought* about, they know the history of both, but they don’t realise what the stepping stones were all about. They don’t process what the stepping stones to all this was all about and hopefully and really what I always say to whoever I take around: the history is one thing that’s there but what you learn from the history you know. [...] I hope that whoever comes and whoever leaves goes away and really just looks at themselves.

She was however aware of the ‘sermon’ quality that teaching about these ideologies might have:

I hope by the time they leave, they don’t feel that they’ve had a good dose of church, sometimes they think, maybe I’m giving them a sermon along the way.

This contrasts with her wish that learners will reflect on their own attitudes and practices. Anne Hartmann\*, another secondary witness facilitator, pointed at the challenge of reaching an understanding within the museum by mentioning the sensitive question ‘how could the survivors have faced coming to an apartheid state’ that listeners ask and that she finds only the survivors can answer. Eric Williams\*, also a facilitator at the Centre, pointed at the different positions amongst Jewish and non-Jewish people on whether or not one can compare the Holocaust with apartheid. Facilitators also regularly mentioned questions relating to the factuality of the Holocaust (Holocaust denial) and the current Israeli-Palestinian conflict. These sensitive questions point to the possible uncanniness within the interaction between primary and secondary witnesses. They highlight the historical trauma the primary witness went through and the ‘post’-encounter of this trauma by the secondary witness. The uncanniness evolves around the accountability of one’s agency in different historical and social contexts.

This tension between insiders and outsiders highlights the crucial balance between empathy and critical reflection. Kris Holmes\* of the District Six Museum pointed out the possible dangerous pedagogical impact of conveying only ‘good’ stories in the museum:

It's affecting the children [...] The children think that only heroes lived in District Six when they come to our museum [...] [but the District Sixers] still have memories of these people [...] [and the collaborators'] children are alive, hey? It's like take the white, no white person comes now in South Africa today, you know 'I voted for the apartheid government', nobody voted for the apartheid government! And there again, you've got a problem with memory, selective memory, you see? (Sigh) So, all these things are taken into consideration, you know. And maybe history has to be reviewed every ten years, you know, and retold in a relevant way for its time.

This reflection on the selectivity of memory exemplifies the tension between wanting to forget and wanting to remember and the ever changing process of making history. As a remedy, Kris Holmes argued that the museum should put up a rogues' gallery, to show the kids of today that in that time there were bad people as well. He was, however, aware that his stance contrasts with that of other District Sixers who do not want to talk about 'memories that might reflect negatively on others' (Field 2001:123). Stephen Ackers, for example, wants to 'pay tribute to the ordinary men and women who sacrificed much in the quest for freedom'. To him they are role models for the present society. Those who did not fight for justice and peace do not have a place in his narrative. As Henry Anderson\* stated it: 'Well I suppose the best way to [...] protect the future is to keep as far as possible away from all the potential enemy [...] who overrun us'.

However, this 'keeping away' can be questioned when it is linked with Stephen Ackers' reflection on the dialectic between wanting to forget and wanting to remember: in how far is this potential enemy or Other not part of 'us'? Is this not what we are afraid of, namely imagining the other inside us, *being the other* (Kristeva 1991:1,13)? The District Six museum facilitators want to represent their old District Six as a good place, and not represent it as a 'slum'. This selectivity, however, seems to create a tension between the remembering of the District Six survivors and the imagining of the younger generations. The younger generations, growing up in post-apartheid South Africa characterised by poverty, crime and unemployment, might think that good and bad people only exist in their present and that 'District Six' as remembered by the facilitators is an unreachable, 'foreign' place. Similarly the Holocaust as an event that happened as a result of uncontested stereotyping and prejudice on another continent, in another time, might be regarded as 'foreign'. As Baum (2000:95) states: 'Survivor stories are irreplaceable in their witness of the event [of the Holocaust], but they do not

provide models of remembrance for those who did not experience the destruction primary’.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, I have explored unsettlements in the pedagogical interaction between museum facilitators, who are primary or secondary witnesses to the Holocaust and/or the apartheid forced removals, and younger generations, who visit the museums as part of their formal education. Laws and policies have changed post-1994 but changing practices and attitudes remain a daily struggle. While defending an anti-apartheid and anti-Holocaust pedagogical stance, stakeholders in the field of education drew and still draw on the rich alternative histories developed since the 1970s as an alternative to the dominant, apartheid school history. However, then and now, these stakeholders might be tempted within the process of pedagogical justification of remembrance to create ‘grand narratives’ in which ‘bad people’ are not represented or are put in a clear non-transcendental box of ‘perpetrators’.

This reflection on the complexity of historical change and pedagogy suggests that as teachers and museum facilitators we need to be careful with terms such as ‘the new South Africa’ and unquestioned exclamations such as ‘We need to learn from the past’. Looking at unsettlements within pedagogical interactions and unpacking the claim that ‘we need to learn from the past’, change might have to do more with reflecting on education’s illusion of understanding and the actual performativity and undecidability of learning. Museums in this sense are not only safe places where redemptive narratives are mediated around historical events that seem to be beyond experience for both primary witnesses and their listeners. They can also, and need to, offer a safe space to question these constructions. In this space learning might take place – a learning that opens the possibility of unknown and hopeful futures.

## **Notes**

1. This paper is based on a presentation at the Kenton Khahlamba 2004 conference. I would like to thank the interviewees of the District Six Museum and the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, and Dr Sean Field, Dr Crain Soudien and Ines Meyer for sharing their insights with me and for giving feedback on this paper. I also wish to thank the University of Cape Town, the Oppenheimer Institute and the National Research Fund for funding this project.
2. See for a discussion on the history of museums and their current role in offering a forum on representations of the past: Boswell and Evans 1999; Davison 1998;

Dubin 1999; Roberts 1997; Spalding 2002; and the various papers presented at the University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop 'Myths, Monuments, Museums: New Premises?' 16-18 July 1992, Johannesburg.

3. Jews were a minority in Nazi Europe and were as individuals and as a community nearly totally eliminated during the Holocaust. Black South Africans were a majority and were denied citizenship and literally displaced during apartheid but gained political power with the transition to democracy in 1994 (LaCapra 2001:45).
4. In daily language the words 'trauma' and 'traumatic' are often used interchangeably with words such as 'painful' and 'sensitive'. It is important to remain aware of the easy slide between these words. Not all painful experiences are traumatic, but traumatic experiences and memories have painful legacies (Benezer 1999 and LaCapra 2000:64). In addition, painful narratives can reflect some of the 'trauma signals' that Benezer (1999:34-36) has distinguished (such as self-report and 'hidden' events), without necessarily being traumatic. Trauma is difficult to define and there is no consensus amongst academics. Trauma was originally a medical term meaning a physical wound. In the late nineteenth century, the meaning of trauma was transferred from the psychical to the psychological with the ground-breaking though contested work of Freud (Hacking 1996:75-76). Since then the discussion has evolved around the question: is trauma an external and/or internal reality? Psychologists such as Benezer (1999), but also researchers in history (LaCapra 2001 and Portelli 1991, 1997) and in literature studies (Caruth 1996; Felman and Laub 1992) choose to work with the notion of trauma as a temporary or permanent rupturing of the boundaries between a person's sense of her external and internal reality. This notion assists one to look at the role of narratives in the sense making practices of individuals who have experienced trauma. It is this notion of trauma that I choose to use in this project because it enables one to look carefully at two historical events that cannot be equated.
5. While it is important and valuable to study the perceptions of these younger generations, being born 'post-apartheid' and 'post-Holocaust', this article focuses only on the perceptions of the museum facilitators. A study of the reactions and perceptions of grade nine learners on these museum interactions will be part of future research.
6. Namely the educational programs for learners of Jewish background, and the programs for adult visitors (correctional service, teacher students ...).
7. Transcription conventions used are: '(silence)' stands for pauses taken by the narrator. '[...]' are editing and cutting interventions by the author. *Italic* indicates author's emphasis, or interviewee's raised voice. Asterisk with first use of a name indicates pseudonym.
8. See for an epistemological analysis of looking at unsettlements or 'estrangements' Nora 1989:17-18.

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## Article

# Oppositional intellectualism as reflection, not rejection, of power: Wits Sociology, 1975-1989

Shireen Ally

### **Intellectuals and power: explaining South African sociologists' critique of apartheid**

The history of sociology in South Africa and its relationship to apartheid is turbulent and complex. At first, intellectuals were intimately related to power, as sociologists were in direct conversation with the administrative and political interests of the recurring racially repressive regimes. Sociologists assisted in segregationism's 'native administration' and 'social planning', and then became key apartheid ideologues (Jubber 1983, Groenewald 1991). Hendrik F Verwoerd, South African prime minister and the widely-recognised architect of apartheid, was South Africa's first Professor of Sociology, concerned with proactively planning and organising social relations. Geoffrey Cronjé, the 'mind of apartheid' (Coetzee 1991) was also a prominent Professor of Sociology, who effectively provided 'the first comprehensive fundamental exposition of the apartheid idea' (Rhodie and Venter 1960:174). Sociologists were key members of the *Suid-Afrikaanse Bond vir RasseStudies*, and the Afrikaner *Broederbond*, which were some of the pivotal institutions in which the apartheid concept was developed, refined, and popularised (Ally, Mooney, and Stewart 2003). Sociologists were therefore at the centre of attempts to theorise and activate the racial, cultural, and economic ideas that birthed the project of apartheid.

By the 1970s, however, sociologists' relationship to the political and social order changed dramatically. Ideological intellectualism was overtaken and replaced by a dramatically different, oppositional Marxist sociology. Harold Wolpe (1972), Martin Legassick (1974), and other historians launched a revolutionary critique of apartheid through a thorough revisionist

history of South Africa (see also Johnstone 1976; Trapido 1971). They theorised and demonstrated racial discrimination in South Africa to be rooted in the structural requirements of its capitalist economy. An entire generation of South African scholars in history, political studies, anthropology, and sociology, embraced the Marxism introduced to them by these revisionist scholars, and began systematic critiques of apartheid, showing its genesis to be located in the class interests of Afrikaner and English capitalists, and consequently advocating a class revolution to restore justice to South African society.

This radical Marxist social science overtook the existing sociologies at English-medium universities, reconstructing the relationship between sociologists and the apartheid state. Forging direct and revolutionary links with the emerging social movements, sociologists became agents of revolutionary change. The vibrant and engaged ‘public sociology’ that resulted has garnered much valorising attention lately, inspiring Burawoy to a reflexive re-engagement with mainstream sociological practice in the United States (Burawoy 2004).

While Burawoy documents and celebrates this ‘public sociology’ of the 1980s, the genesis of the ‘critical sociology’ of the 1970s that laid the basis for it, is not analysed.<sup>1</sup> How did this oppositional intellectualism emerge out of a discipline whose historical role was to service the interests of the apartheid state; and what explains its content and spread? This paper argues that the general theoretical literature on intellectuals and power, and the specific literature that explores that relationship in South Africa both assume that oppositional intellectualism is the rejection of power, made possible by freedom from its constraints. By reconceptualising power, and re-examining the case of the shift to a Marxist oppositional sociology in the 1970s in South Africa, through an analysis of the Sociology Department at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits), this paper argues that the radical intellectualism of the 1970s was a reflection of power, not the rejection of it.

### ***Explaining oppositional intellectualism***

In the long tradition of scholarship exploring the relationship between intellectuals and power, intellectuals are argued to either exist in a relationship of ‘ideological subservience’ or ‘moralistic resistance’ to state authority.

Some scholars have understood oppositional intellectualism as the natural role, function, and tendency of intellectuals. Intellectuals have been theorised

as engaged in a ‘disinterested love and search for truth and justice’ (Benda 1969:19), to be ‘disturbers of the peace’ (Havel 1985), those who ‘speak truth to power’ (Said 1994), those in the ‘humble and courageous service of truth’ (Silone 1960:261), etc. ‘Much of the analytic literature dealing with intellectuals’, conclude Lipset and Basu, has emphasised the ‘inherent antipathy between intellectuals and the powers throughout modern history’ (1976:112). This tradition understands oppositional intellectualism as ‘moralistic resistance’ – where antagonism to structures of power issues from some naturally normative orientation or moralistic impulse that is the de facto relationship between intellectuals and power.

But, an opposing tradition suggests that intellectuals, far from exercising their critical independence from the state, actually exist in a relationship of ‘ideological subservience’ to structures of authority. Marx pronounced that intellectuals are mainly allies or members of the ruling elite, while Weber too identified intellectuals as the group ‘predestined’ to ally with those who control the polity (Weber 1968). Mills continued this line of thought arguing that ‘there is a close connection between the prestige of culture and the prestige of power’ (Gerth and Mills 1946:448), and Shils has argued that there is always a mutual interdependence between the intellectuals and the powerful: ‘The powerful require the intellectual and the intellectual requires and constantly finds himself beguiled by the powerful’ (1972:22). In one of the more intriguing explanations of this seeming tendency for intellectuals to ally with the powerful, Bauman argues that there is

a mutually gratifying love affair between the professors and their employer, the state. They need each other: power without knowledge is headless, knowledge without power is toothless...Far from being natural enemies of power (a dominant, high-handed, intolerant power), the educated classes need power to perform their duty as defined by the nature of their competence and social function. (Bauman 1987:83-84, 91)

Karabel, therefore, importantly concludes that:

*what needs to be explained is less why intellectuals reach accommodations with the status quo than what it is that causes some of them, at certain historical moments, to rebel.* (1996:209; emphasis added)

This paper recognises the necessity of explaining oppositional intellectualism. But, not because ideological tutelage is the norm, and oppositional intellectualism the aberration to be explained. Rather, it is to

reject the flawed logic that underpins both approaches to intellectuals and power, which sees oppositional intellectualism as the rejection of power – as the ability of intellectuals to free themselves from the constraints that structures of power exercise to either force them (according to the ‘moralistic resistance’ strand) or keep them (according to Karabel and the ‘ideological subservience’ strand) allied to authority.

Without fail, the lack of an oppositional intellectualism during the early phases of apartheid is explained as a product of such power, and the constraints it imposed on critical thought. Webster argues that South African sociology did not produce a critique of the state under apartheid because ‘authoritarian regimes of whatever kind generally suppress or severely restrict the scope of sociological thought and research’ (Webster 1985:48). ‘The authoritarian nature of the society’ in the South African case, suggested Hare and Savage, leads to ‘restraints on freedom of social research in South Africa’ (1979:347). They suggest that ‘[c]umulatively, these restrictions make social research into “sensitive” areas of the society an art both hazardous and difficult’ (1979:347). Taylor highlights the ‘restraints on doing *critical* research’ (1988:11) more specifically. The brutality of the regime, and its absolute intolerance for any potential threat to its legitimacy, exposed oppositional intellectuals in particular, it is argued, to the wrath of the apartheid state (Savage 1981, Welsh 1981).

There was police surveillance, mail and telephone tampering, and confiscation of research materials (Savage 1981, Welsh 1981). There were bannings, detentions, arrests, and trials, and many academics were forced into exile (see Hirson 1979). The most egregious and devastating repression by the state was the government-sponsored assassinations of intellectuals they viewed as a threat: Richard Turner was mysteriously shot, David Webster was assassinated, and Ruth First was killed in Maputo. Black researchers, such as Fatima Meer and Herbert Vilakazi, amongst others, were harassed by the government for their criticisms of apartheid. Meer was banned, and Vilakazi deported, specifically for teaching Marxism at the University of Transkei. The apartheid state was therefore particularly intolerant of Marxism.

The failure of a critical sociology in the 1950s and 1960s is therefore attributed to state repression and constraints, and in its corollary, the development of an oppositional sociology, is attributed to the loosening of these and other constraints, as well as the removal of other, more broadly inhibitory forces that had prevented its emergence prior to the 1970s. In so

doing, this literature ends up reproducing the logic that oppositional intellectualism is made possible by freedom from structures of authority, and the rejection of power. Summarising the sentiment, Wolpe argued that radical opposition to a government and its policies issues from 'resistance to the state's attempts to limit fundamental and critical research' (1985:73).

For Adam, the waning cohesion of Afrikanerdom by the 1970s forced the state to focus exclusively on securing Afrikaner survival, making anything that threatened the 'traditional morale of the *Volk*...far more dangerous to a conformist group existence than political criticism' (Adam 1981:116-7). He argues that the 'repressive tolerance' towards English-speaking intellectuals that this gave rise to widened 'the scope of freedom for dissenting intellectuals compared to the past' (Adam 1981:116).

Jubber (1983), too, in the first direct attempt to explain the development of an oppositional Marxist sociology, argues that the Marxist 'Kuhnian revolution' can only be explained by the relaxation during the 1970s of constraints to an oppositional intellectualism. For Jubber, what was defining was the removal, at that time, of various factors that had 'conspired to keep Marxism out of the English language social sciences' throughout the preceding decades (1983:59). Various forces, he argued, 'served to suppress Marxist sociology in the English-speaking world', and when these were relaxed by the 1970s, space was created for intellectuals to pursue their assumed natural inclination to resist power (1983:60). Jubber concludes that:

[i]n the case of white English-speaking sociologists, it is their comfortable and protected context which frees their thought from a rigid determination by material factors. (1983:59)

In other words, white, English-speaking intellectuals who articulated an oppositional sociology did so because they somehow managed to escape a 'rigid determination' by power.

Webster is more willing to concede a social determination of ideas in his explanation of the rise of a 'critical sociology', arguing that a 'number of separate but dialectically related factors came together in the late 1960s and early 1970s to explain this shift' (1985:45). But, Webster still argues that '[t]he early apartheid state had all but removed Marxism from South African social science in the 1950s and 1960s' (1985:45), and the relaxation of the state by the 1970s explains the development of a 'critical sociology'.

***Re-explaining oppositional intellectualism***

Both the general literature on intellectuals and power, and the specific literature that seeks to explain the critical sociology of 1970s South Africa, share a specific theorisation of power that produces an unsatisfying explanation of oppositional intellectualism. The rise of an oppositional intellectualism in South African sociology is pervasively explained as a product of the freedom from state repression and constraints: that Marxism emerged in the 1970s out of the removal of constraints on intellectuals to pursue a critical sociology, and as an expression of their rejection of power. This explanation is undergirded by a theory of power, that once reconceptualised, allows for a greater appreciation of the extent to which the oppositional sociology at Wits was a reflection of power, rather than a rejection of it.

First, for the existing literature, power is exclusively imbued in the state and in its repressive capacities. The state is seen as the producer of knowledge in the first instance, either by directly sponsoring it as in the 'ideological subservience' strand, or inspiring a direct critique as in the 'moralistic resistance' strand. Any intellectualism opposed to the state is therefore, by necessity (in both instances), intellectualism disconnected from power and from repression. Second, and relatedly, in functionalist efforts to specify the mechanisms through which state power installs effects on the content of knowledge, existing explanations equate power with instrumental 'interests'. That is, intellectualism that reflects power is seen as that which functions as 'instruments of particular political and economic interests' (Erwin 1992:4). As a result, intellectualism that is defined by opposition to the state is immediately recognised as challenging instrumental interests and is therefore seen as the rejection of power, and in order to connect knowledge to power, it is essential to demonstrate its instrumentality for particular interests.

This paper deploys a more nuanced conception of power to re-examine the development of a critical sociology in 1970s South Africa. First, power is liberated from an exclusive association with the state and recognised as operative throughout the social space, amongst all actors who seek to make political claims, and redefine political practice. Intellectualism that defines itself in opposition to the state can therefore still be implicated in power, if it is involved in processes of political claims-making by other actors in the society at large. Second, functionalist requirements for the specification of the exact mechanisms through which such diffused power translates into the

content of ideas is abandoned in favour of a more processual understanding of the relationship between power and the ideas it constructs. Power is therefore understood as providing a conditioning for ideas that, while not instrumentally connected to specific political interests, implicates the development of those ideas in a context shaped by a more broadly circulating politics of the time. The resulting conception of power, disembedded from the state and from instrumentalism, applied to the history of the Department of Sociology at Wits University, suggests the ways in which the oppositional intellectualism of the time was not a product of a ‘freedom from social determination’, and power, but instead was deeply implicated in the emerging politics of race and class at the time.

### *Sociology at Wits*

Wits Sociology is an important site for analysis since it was central to the Marxist revolution in the discipline in South Africa. The department had been dominated for the better part of a decade by a standard variant of the intellectual and political project of ‘liberalism’ that had found an institutional home at white English-medium universities, in opposition to the ideological intellectualism at Afrikaans universities. In 1975, however, an oppositional Marxist sociology suddenly took over teaching and research. Dunbar Moodie,<sup>2</sup> the Head of Department from 1975, recruited a generation of radical Marxist intellectuals and sought to establish an oppositional, critical sociology based on a hermeneutic, interpretive social science committed to demonstrating the inequities of apartheid (Moodie 1976). Using new theoretical and methodological resources, this oppositional intellectualism claimed to uncover the real basis for apartheid in the interests of capital, and thereby launched a thorough critique of the apartheid regime.

The liberalism that had dominated the department for the preceding decade, remained for a short time during the take-over, but it atrophied in significance and numbers before the decade was over. Within a few short years, Wits Sociology witnessed a radical overhaul of its theoretical and political orientation, as the department secured sufficient resources to expand the teaching staff, support academics’ research, and further develop the department’s infrastructure (Interview, October 20 1998). Student enrollments kept soaring (Wits Mark Summaries, 1970-1980), teaching and research expanded considerably (Wits Calendar, 1970-1980), and the department (together with Sociology at Natal) began to develop a reputation as being central to the Marxist revolution sweeping through the English-medium universities (Jubber 1983). Vigne argues that, for this ‘new, radical

generation...Marxism was the new religion and the Freedom Charter holy writ' (1997:227).

As the influence of this emerging 'critical sociology' spread widely beyond the academy, it became the basis for the expression of a 'public sociology' by the 1980s. The idea that apartheid was really a form of capitalist exploitation, defended in racial terms, led many Marxist intellectuals associated with the department to ally with, and struggle alongside, the emerging labour and social movements. This deep commitment to radical social change was the expression of what Burawoy (2004) calls 'liberation sociology'. The phrase is consistent with the explanations of this shift, reflecting a moralistic rejection of and freedom from power. But, the content of this class-based critique of apartheid was not disconnected from the characteristics of its producers – white, English-speaking intellectuals. To revise the dominant explanation for the rise of a Marxist oppositional intellectualism, it is necessary to recognise that what Marxism's class analysis offered this group of intellectuals was not just a powerful theoretical lens to explain apartheid, but a powerful political tool for white intellectuals to deal more comfortably with questions of race.

### ***The race-class reconstruction***

South African sociology during apartheid reflected the imprint of the state's racialised politics, as the discipline had at least three different institutional personas. Afrikaans-medium, English-medium, and historically Black universities each had distinct disciplinary histories. Marked by internal debates and divisions, the result was a rich history of different versions of sociological practice that were configured very differently in relation to the state, both between and within institutional contexts, as well as over time (see Webster et al 2000).

This institutional differentiation was to provide the necessary organisational framework for the dual transition in the discipline by the 1970s. First, the dominance of the ideological intellectualism practiced at Afrikaans-medium universities was displaced by a sociology at English-medium universities that had begun more firmly to voice itself. Second, within English-medium universities, the intellectual priority of Marxism was displacing the existing tradition of liberalism.

Liberalism, which argued that apartheid was caused by pathological racial attitudes that would be proven dysfunctional with the growth of capitalism and the extension of modernisation, dominated white English-medium sociology prior to the 1970s (O'Dowd 1974, Horwitz 1967).

Marxism refuted the liberal claim that industrial capitalism would erode the apartheid system in South Africa, by arguing that race was only an ideological justification for the class project of apartheid. ‘Marxism has thus penetrated the “appearance” of social reality in which race is thought to be the primary social cleavage and has shown that class is the fundamental social cleavage’, claims a commentator (Sekgobela 1994:47). The result was that race was theorised from the 1970s in a different way – the liberal understanding of race as attitudes was replaced by a structural understanding of race that firmly enmeshed it with the materialism of class. As a commentator argued, this led to a curious paradox:

In a country such as South Africa with its strong tensions between the various social groups, one would have expected sociology to have been directed largely to the study of race relations. (Pauw 1958:1095)

But, from the mid-1970s, class analysis dominated, and in ‘the crucial confrontation between Marxist and liberal social thought’, the analytic primacy of race was reformulated (Archibald mimeo, Wits Sociology, August 9, 1978).

This was not coincidental. An analysis of the types of discourses at Wits Sociology demonstrates that far from being the disinterested search for truth, the shift towards a Marxist oppositional intellectualism was as much about the politics of race. It re-configured the theorised relationship between race and class in a way that gave white English-speaking intellectuals a comfortable discourse with which to interrogate structures of power that were beginning to exclude them. The embrace of a Marxist sociology, actively critical of apartheid, can be shown, at the level of the department, to be a reflection of power.<sup>3</sup>

### **Explaining Marxist oppositional intellectualism at Wits Sociology, 1975-1989**

The Marxist revolution revolved squarely around the intellectual and political reconfiguration of the race-class debate. That reconfiguration was implicated in the complex politics surrounding both race and class at the time.

The reformulation of race issued primarily from racial identity politics, as white English-speaking intellectuals articulated a Marxist oppositional intellectualism as a critique of liberalism, and as a response to the racial politics inspired by Black Consciousness. Both movements, liberalism and Black Consciousness, were critically organised around antagonistic

conceptions of 'race', making them each a target of the other's political and intellectual manifestos. Positioned crucially at the confluence between these contradictory discourses of race in the early 1970s, a generation of white English-speaking intellectuals was forced to carve out a space of intellectual and political relevance. On the political and intellectual battlefield of the white student movement and in the academy, a response was articulated that reformulated the analytic of race, favoring a class-mediated approach instead.

The acceptance of class was conditioned by the availability of an alternative non-racial discourse through the emerging labour movement. Once again a product of the politics of social movements, labour provided white English-speaking intellectuals a language for intellectual and political engagement as they developed a close relationship with labour, through confrontations between the black and white student movements. It was this combination of processes that solidified a critique of apartheid based on Marxism amongst this group of intellectuals. The content of the oppositional intellectualism they embraced was therefore not simply the product of a removal of constraint and a rejection of power. Instead, intellectuals resisted structures of authority as an expression of racial power struggles in the context of late apartheid.<sup>4</sup>

***The triangle of racial politics and intellectualism: Liberalism, Black Consciousness, and Marxism***

Liberalism has a long history that is recounted well by others (van den Berghe 1979, Rich 1993, Kane-Berman 1994, Wentzel 1995, Husemeyer 1997). As a political and intellectual movement, liberalism went through many mutations attendant to changes in the structure of the state, and consequently, the place white English-speaking intellectuals envisioned for themselves in relation to it. By the 1960s, however, liberal political economy was fairly developed and had articulated a critique of the state that revolved around the apparent irrationality of racial prejudice, and its incompatibility with the liberalising and democratising imperatives of the capitalist market. Within sociology, liberalism had defined itself in opposition to both Afrikaans sociology, and apartheid. It was dominated by concerns to establish and promote the racial and group integration they imagined would promote more harmonious relations between the races, and with it, the dismantling of apartheid. Hamish Dickie-Clark, and Henry Lever were liberalism's main representatives at Wits Sociology.

Lever, head of department at the time, in particular, became the spokesperson for liberalism's obsessions with a particular configuration of race as an analytic and political tool. Lever noted that 'South African sociologists have made very few concerted efforts to develop the study of race relations' and concluded that '[o]ne can only marvel at the workshyness of South African sociologists in the field of race relations' (1975:31). Despite Lever's lamentations, however, liberalism was crucially defined by a focus on race and inter-group relations and on the social-psychological dimensions of conflict in South Africa.

O'Dowd (1974) and Horwitz (1967) had theorised the relationship between racial attitudes and capitalist development quite extensively. Within social science, van den Berghe (1965) and Kuper (1974) had both engaged race, albeit the subjective, ideological articulations of apartheid, focusing on prejudice and nationalism. And, in sociology, a relatively comprehensive list of sociological writings up to 1975 revealed that the largest section was 'race and ethnic group relations' (*Bibliography of South African Sociology* 1978). But, the study of race was devoted to the 'comparative application of social distance scales, marginality perspectives, and other empirical studies of ethnocentrism and authoritarianism' (Adam 1981:121). It was the critique of *this* theoretical conceptualisation of race, and understanding of its role in apartheid and resistance politics, which inspired a defining set of politics in the 1970s.

It provided the first motivation for the development of an oppositional sociology that reformulated the relationship between race and class. This was precipitated in the late 1960s by the first of many crises that would destabilise liberalism. Marked by internal and external pressure in the 1960s, it was in 1968 that political liberalism 'received its death blow' (Robertson 1971:230). Internal state politics led to the *Prohibition of Improper Interference Act* which made interracial political activity illegal. The Liberal Party, which had been a key political space for liberalism was disbanded, while the activities of the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), a critical institution in mobilising liberalism's intellectual resources, had to be refocused. This inspired a dramatic shift in South Africa's political and intellectual landscape, as Rich documents:

The early 1970s can in this regard be seen as a watershed period in which the ethnic cohesion of the English-speaking intellectual community, fostered as it had been throughout the post-war period by organizations like the SAIRR and the Liberal Party, began to fall apart.

New avenues for political and intellectual engagement began to emerge over the following years as the domestic political crisis continued to mount. (1993:118)

The attack on liberalism by the state created space for the articulation of a different politics by white English-speaking intellectuals. Many young sociologists who had been introduced to Marxist theory at foreign (particularly British) universities returned to South Africa in the early 1970s, concerned with the ethical and moral problematics of apartheid, to a context in which the competing discourse for white oppositional intellectual and political engagement – liberalism – was being eroded. A former member of staff who returned to the department in the early 1970s commented:

When we returned, liberalism was weak, and...new positions were being defined...It was the politics of the time. (interview, July 14, 2001)

The weakening of liberalism, a product of various political processes at the time, therefore conditioned the possibilities for the expression of a radical intellectualism and politics. Douglas notes:

At the English universities, which for years provided the space for a thriving liberal tradition, the government's illiberal attack, although serious, failed to dislodge liberalism in any fundamental way. Instead, the main assault on liberalism at the English campuses comes from the left. (1993:12)

So began the reconstruction of race in South African sociology and the birth of an oppositional intellectualism. It was to be cemented by the dramatic entry of Black Consciousness onto the political landscape, which by refiguring the analytic and politics of race, not only further undermined liberalism, but with it, secured the shift to Marxism.

It began in 1968 when Steve Biko and Barney Pitso (two African students) walked out of a National Union of South African Students (NUSAS)<sup>5</sup> meeting and founded the South African Students Organization (SASO), a political movement based on the philosophy of Black Consciousness. Biko said at the meeting: 'Blacks are beginning to realise the need to rally around the cause of their differing – their black skin – and to ignore the false promises that come from the white world' (*Wits Student*, November 4, 1984). SASO, together with the Black People's Convention and the Black Community Programmes, formed the Black Consciousness Movement, and changed the landscape of South African politics. Its overt

concern with the revival and reconceptualisation of race fired the consciousness of a range of social groupings, from youth to women (Gerhart 1978, Lodge 1983, Pityana et al 1991). Hailed as ‘the single most important development in the internal politics of South Africa in the period 1967-76’ (Nolutshungu 1982:147), it marked the beginning of an intellectual and political refashioning that would, by the end of the following decade, revolutionise not just South African society, but, in a paradoxical way, also South African sociology.

Black Consciousness launched an unforgiving attack on liberalism. Themba Sono, SASO President in 1971, put it poetically:

Black Consciousness at its birth came out kicking and lashing furiously at liberals and liberalism, the breast from which it suckled its mother’s milk. (1993:7)

By directly challenging liberalism’s conceptualisation of the political role of white intellectuals and activists, Black Consciousness became the catalyst for accelerating a series of internal re-configurations of the white, English-speaking community of intellectuals.

It was no coincidence that Black Consciousness was borne directly out of frustrations with the liberal-dominated NUSAS – the representative organisation for white English-speaking student activists. It was a reflection of the complex politics that had always animated the relationships between black and white oppositions to apartheid, and the extent to which this set of politics found expression within the university and amongst students and intellectuals. Given its location, and content, it seemed inevitable that the politics of race it inspired would shape the emerging oppositional intellectualism.

Immediately, Black Consciousness was a direct threat to English intellectuals because it made race ‘the center of political discourse and Blacks the only legitimate spokespersons for race’ (Rich 1989). ‘The emergence of Black Consciousness unleashed a torrent of contradictory emotions and passions in the white society,’ observes Sono (1993:66). Liberals were ‘stunned and shocked’ (Sono 1993:66), and their reaction was one of defensive engagement. Black Consciousness was seen to be advocating ‘reverse racism’ and it was challenged on that basis (see *Reality* 1972). The attack by white liberals issued from the sense of isolation the Black Consciousness Movement had generated amongst them:

Excluded from power by the racist white majority, and excluded from the camp of the underdogs by blacks bent on going it alone, liberal

whites felt a sense of isolation and weakness. (Gerhart 1978:268)

But, this was not true for white liberals only. White radicals experienced the same sense of threat from the philosophy and politics of Black Consciousness, and if liberals had reacted through a defensive engagement, radicals displayed a reactive disengagement.

Black Consciousness presented serious dilemmas for white radicals, since it challenged the legitimacy of oppositional politics by whites. Therefore, argues Nolutshungu: 'The dilemmas that arose, in consequence, for white radicals were real' (1982:147). Those dilemmas reflected the political terrain and would eventually shape the embrace of a Marxist oppositional intellectualism.

Black Consciousness challenged the authority of white intellectuals' participation in a politics of liberation, which threatened their relevance. Richard Turner, who critically influenced the Marxist oppositional intellectualism at Wits Sociology, reflected the feelings of irrelevance that Black Consciousness had generated amongst white radicals, and his unwillingness to accept it:

It is said that change will come from the blacks and therefore any processes of change that happen to be occurring within the white group are essentially irrelevant. It seems to me that this is a very serious mistake to make. (1978:111)

Thus, for whites, in the face of the phenomenon of 'black consciousness,' to believe that they must now simply shut up and leave it to the blacks would be a serious mistake. (1972:21)

Turner is critical to the narrative of the development of an oppositional sociology for two reasons.<sup>6</sup> First, along with Webster, he was the only 'sociologist' who directly engaged Black Consciousness. And second, he was one of two 'leading public sociologists during the apartheid era' (Webster 2004:6), and of all the social scientists at the time, the one who was 'particularly influential in the new generation of sociologists' (Sekgobela 1984:47), especially at Wits.

The first reaction to this perceived irrelevance generated by Black Consciousness, reflected by Turner, was to attempt to restore the relevance of white radicals. He suggested that Black Consciousness had 'confused' (1972:20) different categories of white critical politics, and had to differentiate between 'racist, liberal, and radical' whites. 'The introduction of the third category enables us to clear up these confusions' and restore relevance to some categories of whites, insisted Turner (1972:20).

Edward Webster, former chair of Wits Sociology, attempted a similar exercise in a paper on black consciousness delivered to a special seminar organised by NUSAS at Elgin Farm in December of 1973. The seminar was organised to discuss how the white left should respond to black consciousness, and was itself confirmation of the type of reaction the spread of the black consciousness idea was inspiring amongst the white left (Lobban 1996). In a very sympathetic account of Black Consciousness that both recognises its validity and really attempts to deal with its challenge, Webster attempted the same disaggregation of white activists. He suggested a category of 'committed radical' to differentiate white radicals from 'traditional' and 'despairing' liberals. But, despite Webster being arrested by the apartheid state and put on trial for delivering that paper, the Black Consciousness movement had never accepted the validity of these attempts to distinguish between radicals and liberals.

Biko consistently refused to admit that the radicals and liberals were sufficiently different to save the former from his critiques. In fact, he was forceful in registering Black Consciousness' inclusion of radicals in their definition and critique of liberals:

We now come to the group that has longest enjoyed confidence from the Black world – the liberal establishment, including radical and leftist groups....Who are the liberals in South Africa? It is that curious bunch of non-conformists who explain their participation in negative terms; that bunch of do-gooders that goes under all sorts of names – liberals and leftists. (Biko 1972:192)

It was in this context of negotiating a relevant oppositional politics between liberalism, on the one hand, and a Black Consciousness threatening to exclude them, on the other, that a Marxist oppositional intellectualism was adopted. In the context of an alienating politics of race, and the 'dilemmas' it produced, Marxism offered a re-positioning of race in the explanatory equation of apartheid in ways that constructed an intellectual and political role for this group of white, English-speaking intellectuals. Webster, one of the critical figures of the Marxist turn at Wits Sociology, explains this absolutely clearly:

Liberal institutions were to come under sharp attack by the Black Consciousness movement in the late 1960s because of their ineffectiveness within the white power structure. The emphasis of Black Consciousness on the need for blacks to mobilize as a group, left white liberals with a deep uncertainty about their role in change in South Africa. *Marxism, with its bold claims of class as the motor of*

*history, offered a new generation of white academics an intellectually coherent alternative to Black Consciousness. (1985:45, emphasis added)*

In their contradictory location between the liberal tradition, and Black Consciousness, this group of intellectuals found security in the intellectual and political repertoire with which they were already familiar. Marxism and the new left politics they had encountered at the British universities where they studied preserved their legitimacy as activists and intellectuals in a context where that was being challenged. One of them said:

We tried to construct a different politics than Biko. A different scholarship too. Marxism was much more appealing. Both in terms of politics, and theory...We really didn't have any direct relationship with the BC group, but I think it was because we really saw what we were doing as an alternative. (interview, August 8, 2001)

By redefining white opposition and the intellectualism attached to it, Black Consciousness, and the politics of race it engendered, compelled a generation of oppositional white intellectuals to protect their intellectual and political identity. The class analysis and new left politics they had been exposed to in their studies abroad offered that protection. Moodie, the first chair of Wits under this redefined political and theoretical project, is explicit about this:

I mean if you want to hear the honest truth, I think that the Marxist turn in Southern African studies...was the result of the formation of COSAS and SASO, the BC organization, the BC student movement. Because white students were finding themselves isolated. They were no longer welcome...And it was a very legitimate movement, the BC movement, and at that particular time it was absolutely essential. But it did mean that radical whites felt incredibly alienated. And Marxism was a way of talking about class, and avoid talking about race. So, it kind of still gave people a chance to get involved ....Again, because it was a way of avoiding the racial challenge... (interview, October 20, 1998)

This was certainly the way Black Consciousness leaders understood the Marxist turn. In a revealing direct reference to the Marxist radicals, Biko offered his explanation for the type of racial politics that their oppositional intellectualism reflected:

A number of whites in this country adopt the class analysis primarily because they want to detach us from anything relating to race in case it has a rebound effect on them because they are white. (interview with G Gerhart, cited in Nolutshungu 1982:158)

Nolutshungu explains that the way Black Consciousness understood it, white radicals responded to its challenge by reducing race to an ‘epiphenomenon of class struggle’, (1982:147) ‘as essentially a form of false consciousness’ (1982:62). He argues that an oppositional intellectualism, unfettered by self-defence mechanisms, would have understood race ‘as something more than “mere ideology” – a cover for economic exploitation, or a false understanding of it’ (1982:62-63). Indeed, two commentators reflected a similar understanding in a discussion of the ways in which this research agenda may have betrayed specific group interests:

‘the race question’ is suppressed in much intellectual debate on the left – partly, it seems, because of the racial make-up of the intellectual community (predominantly white), partly because of the hegemony of the political tradition of non-racialism, and partly because of the Marxist insistence on class as the fundamental contradiction, with its associated critique of the liberal insistence on ‘race’. This denial of ‘race’ can become dangerously self-serving for whites. (Hassim and Walker 1992:79-80)

Faced with an influential assault on the existing forms of white oppositional intellectualism and politics, Marxism was understood as the ‘self-serving’ discourse of protection. In the intellectual and political fallout of the war over race waged by Black Consciousness on liberalism, white radicals articulated a political and intellectual programme that negotiated a space for themselves between these competing politics of race. In so doing, they reflected power, rather than rejected it. Marxist oppositional intellectualism did not emerge out of the vacuum of social power that resulted from the removal of various constraints during this time. Instead, its genesis was securely located in a configuration of power, one in which its reformulation of the relationship between race and class represented a politics of survival and self-defence. Biko explained in an interview:

in terms of the liberal-leftist axis...we get a whole lot of reaction and self-preservation mechanisms from them. (interview with G Gerhart, cited in Nolutshungu 1982:159)

Turner had himself admitted that the challenge of the Black Consciousness movement for white radicals would depend on the extent to which they could ‘develop intelligent strategies of self-defence’ (Turner 1978:130). Marxism, offering young white English-speaking intellectuals a viable language for both an oppositional intellectualism and politics, could therefore be understood as a ‘self-preservation mechanism’. The oppositional

intellectualism that emerged amongst white English-speaking sociologists in the 1970s was therefore quite determined by the philosophy and politics of black consciousness, even if it was through a reactionary disengagement. Jubber, having argued that white English-speaking intellectuals articulated a Marxist oppositional sociology because they were ‘freed from a rigid determination by material factors’ (1983:59), actually admits the same:

White liberal and radical students and staff members were left in a political limbo, marginalized from white politics they were also marginalized from radical black politics...Through Marxism many concerned white English speakers found a way out of their doubly marginalized political position and sense of intellectual relevance. Class identity and class struggle were the key concepts, not race or ethnicity. (1983:61-62)

This intersection of the politics of race and social movements that fashioned the shift to a Marxist oppositional intellectualism at Wits Sociology, as an alternative to Black Consciousness, was refracted through the institutional politics of the white student movement. Represented on the Wits campus by NUSAS (National Union of South African Students), their struggles defined the challenges Black Consciousness posed for white intellectuals. With a distinctive history, marked by many twists and turns, NUSAS became, by the late 1970s, one of the more influential political organisations for white intellectuals (Kane-Berman 1990) – of both the liberal and radical varieties. Many of the Marxists who made up the sociology department at Wits were student activists in NUSAS and continued to maintain strong links with the movement on campus while lecturing. NUSAS furthermore dictated campus climate and the institutional milieu in which the department was situated and functioned (*Wits Student*, 1976-1984).

The effects of Black Consciousness on NUSAS were recognisable, and its responses represented the institutional context within which white scholars were partially located, reflecting and shaping their theoretical and political orientations. Brendan Barry, a former Wits SRC president, explains the effect of the movement on NUSAS:

Biko challenged NUSAS to define a political role for itself in South Africa. The walkout caused a crisis in NUSAS. It didn't know where to go from there. But it forced NUSAS to face reality. (*Wits Student*, November 4, 1984)

While NUSAS had considered a revolutionary role before, it had nonetheless, immediately prior to Biko's challenge, taken ‘a definite swing to the right,

and went back to liberal multiracial wine and cheese parties' (Sono 1993:23). SASO's walkout forced NUSAS to reassess its role.

That reassessment involved the staking out of a discourse that made the Black Consciousness challenge less threatening. It came in 1977, when NUSAS President Fink Haysom declared a new campaign for the organisation – 'Africanisation'. The Africanisation campaign was influential at Wits, and it was formed in dialogue with Wits Sociology. The Industrial Sociology programme had just been given a boost in 1976 with the appointment of a new lecturer, but the programme was under threat by the university because of its attempt to close down all two-year majors in the Arts Faculty due to 'budget constraints' (*Wits Student*, March 16, 1984). NUSAS students used their 'Africanisation' campaign strategically to assist in gathering enough student pressure to upgrade Industrial Sociology as a three-year major through additional courses (*Wits Reporter*, May 12, 1979). It worked, and the result was a continuing dialogue between sociology and NUSAS through the concept of Africanisation.

But the Africanisation campaign was formed in direct opposition to Black Consciousness. Haysom declared in his announcement of the campaign that its 'seeds . . . were sown in the walkout by black students in 1969' (*Wits Student*, November 4, 1984). The *Wits Student* editorialised on the Africanisation campaign: 'Black students called on their white counterparts to clearly define their role in opposition' (*Wits Student*, November 4, 1984). And, Max Price, a former NUSAS leader, was quoted in a student paper article titled 'Black Consciousness Re-Assessed' as saying: 'Africanisation started off as a lack of identity in English-speaking students... when they felt themselves lost between two powerful conflicting powers', one of which was Black Consciousness (*Wits Student*, May 24, 1977).

NUSAS, supplied with intellectual resources by the sociologists at Wits, began to theorise the racial project of apartheid as a class project. NUSAS newsletters contained many features by members of staff in the department that began articulating a Marxist understanding of apartheid, and by 1977 the organisation adopted the position that 'apartheid is an unjust system of the highest order, motivated by the capitalists and their desire to extract profits from the hard labour of the African peoples of this country. Apartheid can only be understood using Marx, and can only be overcome with a socialist revolution' (*Wits Student*, October 19, 1979).

A later NUSAS newsletter made the direct link between the rise of a Marxist intellectualism and the influence of black consciousness: 'in

contrast to the Black Consciousness period of the late 1960s and 1970s, people are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that conflict in South Africa is not simply between Black and White. Inequality is far more deeply rooted in a fundamentally anti-democratic system of exploitation and oppression' (NUSAS 1981:1).

It was the Africanisation campaign that galvanised this perspective, and was infused by the politics of race and identity that Black Consciousness had inspired. In fact, in the most telling statement, Haysom (the NUSAS president under which Africanisation was pursued) called the Africanization campaign an expression of 'White Consciousness' (*Wits Student*, October 19, 1979). It was a telling phrase, given that Turner was generally perceived 'as a radical political figure, who was concerned with formulating a notion of "white consciousness" to meet the ideological challenges presented by the emergence of black-consciousness doctrines' (Rich 1993:103).

If the reactive disengagement of the Marxist oppositional intellectualism in relation to Black Consciousness was conceptualised as 'white consciousness', it was more than just white English-speaking intellectuals seeking to secure their intellectual life by finding refuge in the concept of class. Black Consciousness made race an illegitimate area of inquiry for whites.

Webster, while still in England, had begun a PhD on the 1949 Durban Race Riots, in which Africans and Indians had clashed resulting in massive riots, death, and destruction. But, he was consistently urged not to pursue the topic – by the most prominent Black woman sociologist in South Africa, and two influential Black students who were later to become senior members of government:

The person who listened when I talked about these interests in England was the Pahads – Aziz and Essop. They were very disparaging of my work on the race riots saying what...are you as a white person looking at conflicts amongst the black people for...and Fatima Meer who was a colleague in the sociology department was also quite adamant that there was no way, I absolutely could not do this research, saying this was not appropriate for a white person to be doing this stuff on race, on conflicts between black people. (interview, June 29, 2001)

Similarly, students at Wits interested in pursuing research on race were discouraged by their Black colleagues, 'because they really, they really believed that whites had no business trying to interrogate race' (interview, August 8, 2001). White intellectuals were therefore pushed by Black

Consciousness as much as they were pulled by the alienating effects of the politics of race:

The relationship between Black Consciousness and the sociology in the department was one of push and pull...they pushed us away from dealing with race...we saw Shula Marks' seminar come alive in communities, and that pulled us towards class. (interview, August 8, 2001)

The Marxist oppositional intellectualism that captured the department in the 1970s was therefore a response to the tensions between liberals and leftists, black and white. It was not simply a removal of constraint that allowed a Marxist critique of apartheid to emerge. It's development was, instead, implicated in the racial politics of the time. The struggles and tensions surrounding race to which this gave rise made neither the content of the oppositional intellectualism at Wits Sociology – a reformulated analytic and politics of race – nor the particular identity of those who propagated it – white English-speaking intellectuals – coincidental. The reformulation of race was reflective of the emerging challenge of Black Consciousness. Threatening to make irrelevant this group of intellectuals, and their critique of apartheid, Marxism presented a viable alternative to Black Consciousness for this young generation of activated intellectuals, and together with the emerging labour movement, secured the shift to a Marxist oppositional intellectualism.

***The triangle of labour politics and oppositional intellectualism, Black Consciousness, trade unions, and white activists***

It was in the context of Black Consciousness that the emerging labour movement came to have decisive effects on English sociologists at Wits, helping them carve out an intellectual tradition for themselves that reformulated the equation between race and class in both an oppositional politics and intellectualism. The intellectuals who launched a critique of apartheid were not simply moralistically renouncing power, and the shift was not made possible by the simple removal of constraint. Instead, a very specific set of conditions in which power was implicated actively enabled them to define themselves in an oppositional relationship to the structures of authority. It was not freedom from social determination that made a Marxist oppositional sociology possible, but various politics that had emerged during the period conditioned the shift. Black Consciousness was the first of these politics that forced a reconsideration of race in analysis,

and whites in politics. The emerging labour movement represented the second of these politics by making available a viable alternative analytic and politics of South African society. With it, the shift to a Marxist oppositional intellectualism was cemented.

By the 1970s, being the only black organisations with any political recognition by the system, trade unions became the only legal way to secure political gains for blacks, and became substitutes for the political parties that had been banned. The phenomenon of ‘social-movement unionism’ was born and unions became the vehicles to secure not just labour, but social, political, and economic rights as well (Webster 1988). The importance of the labour movement lay, in part, in its nonracial struggle for national liberation, both in the sense that it was a class-based movement, and in the sense that was a voice for nonracialism.

The doctrine of nonracialism became a defining language for political incorporation in the 1980s. It eventually facilitated the establishment of what became the most important and influential political grouping in South Africa– the Alliance, between COSATU (Congress of South African Trade Unions), the ANC (African National Congress) and the SACP (South African Communist Party). The attractiveness of the labour movement for white intellectuals at that stage lay in the fact that its oppositional politics was based on this discourse and politics of nonracialism. In the context of its major expansion in the 1970s sociologists at Wits and Natal began forming crucial linkages with the labour movement. According to a former member of staff at Wits Sociology:

Nonracialism was a very important thing – there was a mutual interest amongst the workerists and those with a more ANC politics, and it became *the* catch-phrase. (interview, June 17, 2001)

Labour was an active oppositional politics. When the young students who were to join Wits Sociology started coming back to the country after having been exposed to New Left politics in Britain, they returned to a context where the transformative power of class was being enacted in the public sphere. The widespread labour unrest of the 1970s – the Durban Strikes, the strikes on the Reef, and the continued stay-aways and go-slows in the factories on the Witwatersrand – were absolutely critical in solidifying the shift to a Marxist oppositional intellectualism amongst this group (interview, June 29, 2001). One of the former heads of department expressed the rationale for pursuing a PhD on labour processes, and describes this process well:

Shortly before I arrived in March 1973, a wave of strikes took place in Durban. I could not resist being pulled into this unfolding drama – first, as a teacher and later, as a researcher. (Webster 1983:i)

Rich also argues that ‘Marxism and methods of class analysis... would only start to make a renewed impact in the late 1970s in the course of the development of the trade union movement and more militant methods of struggle in both the factories and the townships’ (1993:116). The nascent labour movement, birthed during that critical moment in the 1970s, was therefore critical to the oppositional intellectualism that took hold at Wits Sociology.

Various institutional initiatives gave expression to this ‘critical sociology’ and assisted in converting it into a ‘public sociology’. At Wits, the Industrial Sociology programme was influential, as was the Fosatu Labour Studies course which ‘rested on a Marxist analysis of the situation’ (Webster 1992:90), and the establishment of the Sociology of Work Programme (SWOP), attached to Wits Sociology. At the same time, the Institute of Industrial Education (IIE) in Natal, organised by oppositional intellectuals attached to the University of Natal, was important in its hosting of worker education programmes, and the *South African Labour Bulletin*.

A ‘public sociology’ was activated in which strong and active links between oppositional intellectuals and the labour movement were forged, as academics became involved, students became involved, and the boundaries between intellectualism and activism slowly withered away (Webster 1992b). The politics that surrounded this shift were not disconnected from the politics that had begun to frame a ‘critical sociology’ though. Some Marxists deny the role of the Black Consciousness movement in precipitating the 1970s explosion of labour mobilisation. Hirson, in particular, is vigorous in his denial of the role of Black Consciousness in the strikes of 1973. ‘The BPC [Black People’s Convention] had little influence on the working class, and the one trade union they controlled had little effect on the strikes of 1973-76’, he argued (1979:156). But, Douwes Dekker, one of the authors of a long review on the new trade unions and the strike wave of the early 1970s, claimed that the flurry of union activity possibly lay ‘in the stirrings of a “black consciousness” movement...which emphasised the need for independent black organizations’ (Douwes Dekker et al 1975). Furthermore, Webster, as an influential participant in these processes, actually argues that of the two intellectual projects that influenced the ‘Durban moment’, ‘the first ... was Steve Biko’s attempt to formulate the political discourse and

practical programmes of black consciousness' (Webster 1992:89). Since SASO 'had no influence amongst workers' (Fisher 1977:333) and the BPC's efforts to establish a union through Drake Koka had failed, how could Black Consciousness so decisively influence the strike action of 1973? The answer lies, in part, in the ways in which Black Consciousness cemented the links between the emerging labour movement and the developing oppositional intellectualism. Marx summarises:

prominent among those who helped found the current unions were increasingly radicalized white intellectuals who had been excluded from BC in the 1970s. Lacking alternative avenues of involvement, [and]...at the same time that the BC movement was encouraging the development of racial identity and establishing its own unions, these white service organizations helped workers develop a class consciousness and organize unions independently of the BC movement. (1992:194)

While Marx presumes a particular 'directing' role for white intellectuals in the labour movement which may be both unfair and inaccurate, he captures the extent to which the strikes and its infectious activation of the black working class, was implicated in the politics of the relationship between Black Consciousness and white Marxist intellectuals. Sociologists at Wits were genuinely struggling with how to define their political role given the Black Consciousness intervention, and the labour movement offered an expression of a viable liberation politics, in a language they were comfortable with. The conversation between labour and academic sociologists played a role in cementing the embrace of class analysis, but it was facilitated, in part, by the reconfigured politics of activism and race inspired by Black Consciousness.

It was no coincidence that the two most influential initiatives undertaken by intellectuals in relation to black worker organisation issuing from the 1970 industrial action, were by Edward Webster and Richard Turner, the two intellectuals who most publicly and directly engaged Black Consciousness and admitted its role for framing an alternative class-based politics. But, it was in the relationships between NUSAS, the unions, and the intellectuals, that this process was most visible.

NUSAS was to prove very influential in the wave of trade union activity that revolutionised labour history in South Africa. It was the Industrial Wage and Economic Commissions set up by NUSAS, together with SRCs on some of the campuses, that played a critical role. As Hirson (1979)

argues, the Commissions were very influential for the labour movement. A former chair of Wits Sociology explains the linkages:

I wanted to go back [to South Africa], and Lawrence Schlemmer came to interview me, and I was still waivering in my mind about whether to come back, but it was 1972, and he said that there were these wage commissions the students had formed... it was an exciting time, and that's how I got drawn in. (interview, June 29, 2001)

The Durban Wages Commission, in particular, was important in its establishment of the General Workers Benefit Fund. Together with the Johannesburg-established Industrial Aid Society, it helped form what became the Federation of South African Trade Unions (Fosatu). But, these initiatives were, in part, inspired by the Black Consciousness movement. It was shortly after the Black Consciousness critique that NUSAS at Wits, alienated by it, sought to develop a space for white activism by constructing a relationship with labour on the Witwatersrand. Its newsletters show a growing concern with and awareness of labour activity in Johannesburg's factories, and quite self-consciously recognised it was a way to express themselves politically and could neatly reconstruct the relationship between race and activism that Black Consciousness had imposed: 'The labour movement in this country is making great strides in promoting a non-racial unionism that we need to support' (Nusas Newsletter, February 4, 1979).

By 1979 NUSAS and labour activists in the department had lent their support, decisively, to the Fatti's and Moni's consumer boycott which proved very successful: 'It showed students that NUSAS could play a meaningful role in the movement for democratic change in South Africa' (*Wits Student*, March 16, 1984). Encouraged by the triumph they led the Red Meat Boycott of 1980 and the Wilson-Rowntrees boycott of 1981/1982, and sponsored (together with the Industrial Sociology students) the Wits African Trade Union Research Campaign. It was the nonracialism of the labour movement, and the possibilities it offered for a political role for white students and intellectuals, given the Black Consciousness critique, that facilitated the commitment to a class analysis and politics. A scholar and staff member of the 1970s therefore said:

I would say that the labour movement offered every one of us at the time, NUSAS, the white academics, the white unionists, I would say it was an alternative to Black Consciousness. It was a nonracial politics that was about radical change. (interview, August 8, 2001)

This was also evident in the History Workshop at Wits, which was established

to create a gathering that would facilitate a conversation between academics and activists, intellectuals and ‘ordinary people’, to revitalise a ‘history from below’ neo-Marxism concerned with social change (History Workshop Files, Historical Papers). The History Workshop was centrally organised by key sociologists at Wits and was so popular and successful that it became an institution in its own right, a gathering place every four years that brought students, labour, communities, and academics into conversation with each other, cementing their relationships. On the list of organisations affiliated to the History Workshop, the dominance of nonracial unions and political organisations is clear and dramatic (History Workshop Files, Historical Papers; Tatham 1992). One of the organisers remains adamant that this was not by lack of invitation to more explicitly racial organisations (interview, June 17, 2001). But the perceived hostility to organisations that seriously engaged with race is shown by Tatham (1992), in her extensive research into the History Workshop, to have been the reason these organisations declined to make an appearance. The History Workshop was understood to be an event unreceptive to those struggling to understand apartheid in racial terms. Instead, the Workshops became very important institutional locations for cementing the organisation of resources and coalition of movements that established the viability of a white English-speaking tradition of thought – a class-based oppositional radicalism.

The embrace of class analysis was therefore not divorced from a politics of race. A participant in these processes observed:

Sometimes you hear this: Marxism was the best theory, the Durban strikes proved it was the best theory...but you know, it was all in a context...whether the reality proved the theory or the theory made the reality, I think we can argue about that one. (interview, August 8, 2001)

We can indeed argue much about the history of the relationship between the labour movement and a Marxist sociology at Wits – the role of intellectuals, the role of Marxist class analysis, the role of NUSAS, and the role of Black Consciousness. What is clear, though, is that the standard narrative that understands a Marxist oppositional intellectualism having been the necessary outcome of a context in which a black working class was in formation, misses the extent to which the content of the intellectualism was influenced by a politics of race inspired by the Black Consciousness movement. In SASO’s relationship with NUSAS over worker organisation, and NUSAS’s relationship with trade unions, to intellectuals’ relationships to both NUSAS and the labour movement, various historical forces and social processes

together shaped a Marxist oppositional sociology amongst white English-speaking intellectuals that remained committed to a class politics of liberation.

## **Conclusion**

Sociology in South Africa is faced with a daunting task as it stands in the shadow of apartheid, having to negotiate its own reconstruction at the same time as it has to consider its role in the reconstruction of the nation. This requires a serious interrogation of the discipline's history, and an engagement with the genesis of some of the discipline's most pervasive paradigms, in particular the oppositional intellectualism that emerged in the 1970s. At Wits Sociology, a Marxist 'critical sociology' emerged not out of freedom from the constraints of power. Instead, its embrace amongst white English-speaking intellectuals involved a reconfiguration of race, inspired by the politics of race and class engendered by the Black Consciousness and emerging labour movements. The intersection of these racialised politics with social movements came to have decisive effects on this group of intellectuals, making possible a distinct radical intellectualism that reformulated the analytic and politics of race and class in ways that protected their intellectual and political voice. Oppositional intellectualism, in this case, was therefore not a rejection of power, but a reflection of it.

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## **Notes**

1. Burawoy (2004) argues that a 'critical sociology', which had emerged by the 1970s, formed the 'conscience of professional sociology' and 'lays the basis for public sociology's engagement with audiences beyond the academy' during the 1980s. This paper does not attempt to explain the origins of the 'public sociology' of the 1980s, but attempts instead to analyse the conditioning forces and factors of the 'critical sociology' of the 1970s.
2. Moodie was not strictly a Marxist [his major work to that point had been on Afrikaner civil religion (Moodie 1975)], but he supported the work of the emerging South African Marxists in ways that made him instrumental in

fashioning the shift to an oppositional intellectualism during the 1970s.

3. That is, it may have been the rejection of state power, but was implicated in the processes of more broadly circulating power at the time.
4. Such a nationally and institutionally-delimited explanation relying on the specifics of context may seem specious given the fact that the turn to a Marxist oppositional intellectualism was not limited to white English-speaking intellectuals, sociology, Wits, or South Africa, but actually swept across most social sciences at most English-medium, and some Black, universities across the country, and indeed, all over Europe as well. How can such a context-specific explanation account for a phenomenon seemingly so widespread and independent of context? Disciplines develop, evolve, and mutate in a number of contexts, and with a great degree of local specificity. The same knowledges, implanted in different contexts, potentially have different causalities. What is subject to explanation here is not the development of the ideas themselves, but rather an analysis of the conditions under which circulating ideas find expression in specific context, amongst specific groups of people. The genesis of Marxism amongst black intellectuals in South Africa would, for instance, have a different causality. What is being interrogated here is the embrace of Marxism for this specific group of white English-speaking intellectuals in the context of 1970s South Africa.
5. NUSAS, the National Union of South African Students, was the national federation of Student Representative Councils from campuses across the country.
6. That Turner was a political scientist rather than a sociologist was irrelevant since the distinctions between sociology and its allied social sciences were quite blurred at the time.

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## Article

# Rebels with a cause of their own: a personal reflection on my student years at Rhodes University, 1961-1965<sup>1</sup>

Edward Webster

I arrived at Rhodes University in February 1961 to register for a BA degree. I had developed a deep interest in the study of history, partly because I had recently returned from a year hitch-hiking and working as a waiter, then rapidly promoted to barman at Battersea Park Funfair in London, and later a farm-hand in Europe. I had been deeply impressed by the visible depth of Europe's history as seen through its ancient monuments. I had continued home via North and East Africa. These travels had aroused my curiosity in the process of decolonisation that had begun in Africa reaching a climax in 1960 when 12 states were to become independent. The 'winds of change', Harold Macmillan dramatically announced in Cape Town in 1960, had reached the southern tip of Africa.

Macmillan's speech made the future seem like a simple act of decolonisation – you pull down the Union Jack and you return 'home'. But this was not to be – and that is what made the journey I was about to embark on so much more difficult, more painful and, in the end, more challenging. Indeed, for me, it was the start of a long voyage, 'full of adventures, full of things to learn'.

Because of the existence of a relatively large and cohesive settler population in Southern Africa, events were to prove a lot more complex, violent and bloody than Macmillan's gentle metaphor of a 'wind' evoked. Instead of a steady march to national liberation in Southern Africa, 1960 was the start of what the veteran scholar/activist John Saul has described as a 'thirty-year war', a ruthless counter-revolution that began in South Africa with the banning of the key political institutions of the national liberation movement and only ended in 1990 when Mandela was released.

But this moment of freedom in 1990 had been preceded by large scale sacrifices as the movements of national liberation in South Africa, Rhodesia, Portuguese East Africa and South West Africa embraced armed struggle and the settler communities of South and Southern Africa dug in their heels in defence of 'white civilisation'.

Growing up in the Eastern Cape, and the Transkei in particular, and being a descendant of the first British settlers of 1820, meant that bloody conflict between coloniser and colonised was not unfamiliar to me. 'Kaffir wars', 'Frontier Wars', 'wars of colonial dispossession'; the words changed but the contested nature of our presence in Africa was part of my memory of growing up in 'settler country'. This was brought home to me sharply in my second year at Rhodes when a white family in my home village in the Transkei were brutally hacked to death by Poqo, the military wing of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). Terror spread throughout the village as the small white community armed itself in anticipation of another 'kaffir war'!

This is the context – and my memory of it – in my early years at Rhodes. Rhodes University was the logical place to be for someone from my social background. My parents were schoolteachers drawing modest salaries from the Cape Education Department and there were four children in the family; I was going to have to find my own way through university on bursaries and scholarships. I had matriculated from Selborne College in East London and, besides, Cecil John Rhodes conjured up the exploits of my 'heroic' ancestors.

Today a 'gap year' is quite common; at that time it was considered unwise and I was warned that I would be bitten by wanderlust and not want to study. Quite the opposite was the case. I took to Rhodes like a duck to water. For the first time in my life I had a room of my own and time on my hands to read. I was fascinated by the insights that I gained from an outstanding generation of lecturers led by the indomitable Winnie Maxwell. Opinionated and demanding, she inspired me to read widely, encouraging me to go on to do an honours degree in history. I was especially taken by the origins of the welfare state and the social regulation of the market through the formation of the British Labour Party (out of the 'bowels' of the trade union movement, as Atlee rather graphically put it) and its social democratic programme. Sadly, with the exception of David Hammond-Tooke in social anthropology, not many of my lecturers had time for research and seldom published. But, they took teaching seriously; a characteristic that made a life long impression on me.

Two points about the study of history at Rhodes in the early sixties need to be made:

Firstly, it was entirely about the thoughts and activities of Europeans, and the English in particular. Africans, we were told, did not have a history because they had no written language and, as a result, there were no documents to examine. 'QED', as Winnie was fond of saying.

Secondly, the approach to history was voluntarist. It was about great (white) men shaping national and world events. Marxism, I was taught, was determinist and teleological and did not allow for individual choice.

Then something happened in my honours year, which was to change my intellectual life. The honours course consisted of five papers, a paper on seventeenth century England, two papers on the Age of Anne (1702-1710), a paper on Europe between the two world wars, and a long essay which I wrote on changing patterns of land ownership in early eighteenth century England.

While reading on seventeenth century England I came across a book by the Marxist historian Christopher Hill, recently appointed Master of Balliol College, Oxford. Instead of the endless tales of kings and queens randomly being beheaded, Hill argued that the English civil war could best be understood as a transition from feudalism to capitalism. The scales fell from my eyes; here for the first time was a pattern that made sense of what previously seemed to be haphazard events. It was close to midnight when my fellow student Pete Kallaway arrived in my room. He found me in a slightly euphoric state insisting that I had found the key to history. I wrote furiously through the night and eagerly presented the next morning to the class my 'intellectual discovery'.

But the response was a put down. 'Laddy', Winnie Maxwell said, 'history is not a railroad and you should beware of simple answers to complex and individual events. This is not a sociology class and we are not socialists!'

Well that set me thinking; what exactly is sociology and what is socialism? I wrote to Christopher Hill and told him that I had enjoyed reading his book and would like to study at Balliol. Not surprisingly, Hill never replied, but I did eventually go to Balliol – not to study history but politics, philosophy and economics – known as a PPE.

To explain why I took this turn we need to step outside the classroom and the cerebral world of books to the more basic instincts that drive a 20-year-old male... And it was of course these instincts that proved more decisive in shaping the journey that I had embarked on. Let me illustrate:

It was the practice at Rhodes at that time that men and women were strictly segregated into different residences. Furthermore, the lives of women students were under tight surveillance by female wardens who insisted that all residents check in not later than 11:00pm – a practice that seems to have been widespread at universities in the English-speaking world at that time. After all these wardens were *in loco parentis*!!

It so happened that I had developed a relationship with a female student in Beit House that led us to test the limits of the rule that she should be in residence by 11:00pm. Over time we began arriving late. The wardens, mindful of their duties, had invented a disciplinary regime called ‘gating’. Essentially these innovative wardens had introduced a precursor to what was to become ‘house arrest’. If a student were a mere one minute late they would be confined to their bedrooms for one night; two minutes, two nights; and so on.

I was outraged. I decided to challenge what I considered an unjust rule. It was clear to me that I would have a lot of support in such a campaign, so I decided to run for the Students Representative Council (SRC) on this ticket. Not surprisingly I was elected to the SRC at the end of my third year in 1963.

In those days members of the SRC took themselves very seriously. We used to wear suits to our fortnightly meetings and followed the formal rules of debate. I soon found myself deeply involved in what today we would call student politics. However, we did not have the kind of access to University management that SRCs won in certain progressive universities in the seventies; we were not represented on Senate nor were seen as a part of University governance.

Sharp ideological differences had emerged a few years earlier amongst students over the process of decolonisation unfolding around us. On the one hand, there was a small group of liberal minded students – largely in the department of philosophy, many of whom were theology students influenced by Dantjie Oosthuizen, as well as Clem Goodfellow in history, and Terence Beard in politics – who were sympathetic to the claims of the African majority. On the other hand, there was a large majority of students who wanted nothing to do with politics and were, when pushed, sympathetic to a mild form of white domination.

Pressure was also building up at a national level where the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) was increasingly coming under the influence of people close to the liberation movement. This was to

culminate in a speech by the President of NUSAS in 1964, Jonty Driver, in which he called for NUSAS to become the student wing of the liberation movement. As you can imagine this confirmed the worst fears of students at Rhodes who were still smarting under an earlier attempt by a liberal-dominated SRC under the leadership of Basil Moore to pass a resolution condemning colonialism. This led to a conservative backlash and the mobilisation of the silent majority who flooded the Great Hall in large numbers to defend their heritage. Evoking the first setbacks of independence in post-colonial Africa they shouted rhetorically and aggressively, 'What about the Congo?!'

I was very much aware of the conservative views of the majority of students at Rhodes when I joined the SRC. It shaped my approach to student politics and made me aware of the limits of any liberal political project at Rhodes at that time.

Inevitably, however, my exposure to the more radically minded student leaders such as Robin Margo at the University of the Witwatersrand and Adrian Leftwich at the University of Cape Town (UCT) broadened my political consciousness. Apartheid's social engineering was being implemented under the direction of Hendrik Verwoerd, and the Transkei, along with all the other 'homelands', was being prepared for 'independence'. John Vorster, as Minister of Justice, had ruthlessly crushed all opposition. Business had been brought on side as the South African economy grew at an unprecedented rate. And Rhodesia was booming having recently declared Unilateral Independence. Arguably white domination was at its historic height in South and Southern Africa in 1965.

It was against this background that a small group of young, white, English-speaking intellectuals established the African Resistance Movement (ARM), an early attempt at the sabotage of public installations designed to 'bring the government to its senses'. One of their sympathisers was in my residence, Cory House, and, in a roundabout way, sounded me out as a potential recruit. I responded by observing that if such a strategy were to be embarked upon it would simply solidify white resistance to change. It was a sensible response that turned out to be very fortunate for me but very tragic for those who were persuaded on this strategy. One of their members, John Harris, a young schoolteacher, planted a bomb in 1964 in the Johannesburg railway station killing a civilian and badly maiming a young girl. He was found guilty of murder and hanged. The other members of the ARM were soon rounded up and given long jail sentences. The whole episode made a

profound impact on me, as it did to many others of my generation, serving as a sober warning of the consequences of badly conceived political strategies.

In 1964 an overwhelming majority elected me as a moderate candidate President of the SRC. But my commitment to ‘moderation’ was soon to be put to the test by the relentless logic of the apartheid bureaucracy. If it was the unreasonable residence rules that drew me into the SRC, it was rugby that drew me into anti-apartheid politics.

In general, rugby players at the time – and indeed today – did not have much interest in politics and were certainly not known for their liberal views. But at the start of the 1965 season, the Bantu Administration Department (or BAD as we used to call it) banned black people from watching rugby on the Rhodes Great Field as it was a ‘white area’. As a member of the team I made it quite clear that this was unacceptable and that we should protest against it. After all, I told my teammates, blacks were our keenest supporters.

I proposed to the student body – with strong support in the student newspaper, the *Rhodeo*, edited by my friend Roger Omond – that we undertake a one-day sit-in from sunrise to sunset on the steps of the library as a mark of protest at this unacceptable violation of the rights of black people. Of course we were influenced at the time by the civil rights movement in the Southern States of the USA and their non-violent desegregation struggles in particular. Not surprisingly we sang ‘We Shall Overcome’.

Of course the government did not change its mind until many years later but it was, for me and for the over one hundred students who participated, our first public anti-apartheid act. Although the protest could be dismissed as a futile moral gesture, it was part of a process of politicisation. It also brought into the open the sharp divide that was emerging among us at the time; between those of us who participated in this sit-in such as Johann Maree, Jacklyn Cock, Roger Omond, Charles von Onselen, Tim Couzens, John Sprack, and David Webster, who were now seen as rebels. Indeed, I remember being confronted by a fellow rugby player after the sit-in who said to me that he was disgusted by the behaviour of the protestors. He asked me if it was true that we had sung ‘communist’ songs such as ‘We Shall Overcome’. When I replied that we had sung this song, he said he was very disappointed in me, as he had voted for me as SRC president as he thought I was a moderate but now he realised that I too was a communist.

Yes we had become rebels, but we were rebels with a cause of our own. We were protesting on behalf of black supporters to watch *our* rugby not for non-racial rugby teams or the right of all players to participate in the same league. In fact, it never occurred to us to consult with our black supporters or to form any sort of an alliance with them. Yes we were rebels – but it was *our* cause, not theirs.

We went on our separate journeys but the directions changed somewhat; for me it was no longer primarily the past that caught my imagination, but the present. Above all, I wanted to understand how society worked and how to change it. So I decided to study further in the social sciences. I applied for the Eastern Cape Rhodes scholarship. I was short-listed but quite early on in the interview a question was put to me by a member of the selection committee that sunk me. I was asked how I felt about racial integration in schools in the light of recent experiences in the United States where white girls were being raped by ‘negroes’ and where it was leading to ‘a nation of half-breeds’.

I was offended by the question and, in spite of a subtle attempt by the chair, a liberal minded classicist by the name of Currey<sup>2</sup> to steer me away from responding, I plunged in and replied, ‘I think racial integration of our schools is inevitable, desirable and, if I get this scholarship, I would like to return and teach at an integrated school in South Africa or Southern Africa’. (A racially integrated school, Waterford, had been recently established in Swaziland after the government had forced the well known black school, St Peters in Rosettenville, to close as it was in a white area.)

My questioner responded by declaring that I was a traitor to the white race. I was given no protection from the chair, or any apology for this gratuitous insult. The incident more or less terminated the interview. Unbeknown to me I had been clashing swords for some years with my questioner, a notorious racist by the name of Harold Sampson, in the columns of the *Eastern Province Herald*, where he was a regular correspondent under the pseudonym of ‘The Reader, Grahamstown’.<sup>3</sup>

I was disappointed with this setback but not surprised. Mid-way during my honours year Winnie had warned me, in her inimical Scottish accent, ‘Laddy, you are spending too much time on the three R’s – Rugby, sRc, and Rosie’, the cause of my earlier clash with the warden of Beit House. I had been neglecting my academic work and had now to pay the price. It was a hard lesson to learn made more difficult by the fact that Sampson had abused his position as a member of the selection committee by pursuing a

private racist agenda. The fact that he got away with this sort of behaviour underlined, for me, that the racial injustice that provided the foundations of the University was of little concern to the Rhodes establishment at that time. This, too, was a hard lesson to learn!

My options were narrowing. I now doubted the feasibility of a liberal project in South Africa. I had recently read an unpublished article by Michael O’Dowd, a director at Anglo-American. In this article O’Dowd, drawing on modernisation theory and WW Rostow’s book sub-titled ‘a non-communist manifesto’, argued that industrialising societies go through stages where there is sharp inequality but they ‘mature’, reforms are introduced and a modern welfare state emerges. He suggested that South Africa was going through these stages and that in the eighties major reforms would begin and that by the end of the century we would have evolved into a welfare state.

Ironically, O’Dowd was using the same flawed teleological methodology of orthodox Marxism where history is seen as economically determined – but it was an appealing idea at a time when apartheid seemed invincible. I decided to apply for an internship as a trainee management executive at Unilever in Durban. The professor of Education, a Broederbond by the name of Koos Gerber, had vowed to block any appointment I was offered at a government school in South Africa. In this context O’Dowd’s argument seemed an attractive alternative; a career in management in a large multinational company would be a way of contributing to change while offering an exciting new adventure.

So, for the first time in my life, I boarded an aeroplane in Port Elizabeth for an interview in Durban. I was wined and dined at the Edward Hotel on the beachfront and was offered the job immediately. O’Dowd proved to be half right; the economy was to be the crucial opening for change, but not because of any change of heart by management. Change would have to be forced onto management through the power of the black working class; this was apartheid’s Achilles heel. How I was to reach this conclusion and the journey that I took to find it must be left to another occasion. I certainly would not have reached it were it not for my intellectual and political partner, my wife Luli Callinicos.

By the time I eventually arrived at Balliol a year after the student revolution of 1968, the world had changed and so had I. I immediately threw myself into reading any banned book on South Africa I could lay my hands on. It was catch-up time for me as I discovered the de-Stalinised Marxism

of the New Left with its idealistic commitment to participatory democracy. In particular Marx's notion of alienation caught my imagination and, after writing my final examinations, I took a temporary job in the Morris car plant outside Oxford, determined to experience at first hand alienation on the assembly line. This proved a learning experience for me, as it was here that I came across shop stewards for the first time and their extraordinary ability to disrupt production at the slightest grievance. Is this not, I thought to myself, the key to the non-violent transformation of South Africa? Does the power of the black majority not lie in the workplace?

This is, of course, another story, the story of how we came to broaden our rebellion beyond our 'own cause' to the cause of all South Africans for a common, non-racial and egalitarian society. Instead of speaking on behalf of black people, I was given the opportunity, when I returned from England, of building, in Durban in the seventies side-by-side with black workers, organisations of their own in which they could exercise their collective power in a strategic way. While for some white intellectuals it may have been, as my colleague Sakhela Buhlungu has so evocatively written, a case of rebels *without* a cause of their *own*, for me it was *my* cause too as my commitment was now to a class project that went beyond the narrow confines of race.

My personal journey was proving to be long and full of adventure. Rhodes had helped prepare me for the long intellectual and political journey my fellow rebels and I had embarked upon. We took different directions, encountered different challenges; but with the seven I mentioned who participated in the sit-in on the library steps in 1965 I would claim a common trajectory as critical intellectuals.

Johann Maree was to play a central role in the seventies in reviving the independent trade union movement in Cape Town and is a key contributor to a critical economic sociology in South Africa; Jacklyn Cock wrote a classic book on domestic servants in the Eastern Cape and has become an internationally renowned feminist; Charles von Onselen wrote a number of classic books on the lives of black working people and is a leading international scholar in social history, Tim Couzens pioneered the study of African literature in South African universities in the seventies and is a leading literary scholar. Roger Omond worked closely with Donald Woods at the *Daily Dispatch* and was forced into exile after Steve Biko was killed. He wrote a number of important anti-apartheid publications before he died of lung cancer in 1997.

The two participants who were not South Africans – John Sprack from Southern Rhodesia and David Webster from Northern Rhodesia – became the most politically committed. Sprack became active in the British trade union movement and a leading activist in the anti-apartheid movement in London. David Webster was a central scholar/activist in the revival of an internal democratic opposition to apartheid in the eighties and was tragically assassinated on May 1, 1989. David showed a quality seldom found in academic life, the courage to speak truth to power and act on these beliefs in a context where you are put at risk.

I have not mentioned all of those who participated in this protest, nor those who were not present, such as Peter Kallaway (who went on to write a number of important books on education under apartheid) as he had already left Rhodes.

What had begun as a ‘cause of our own’ had widened to a much broader project that went beyond its beginnings. A small group of intellectuals had emerged who were, in a modest way, to go on to influence, through their scholarly research and their actions, the way we understand South African society, and how it could be changed. Our contributions do not fit comfortably into orthodox accounts of white opposition to apartheid, but they can help build a critical tradition in our universities and, above all, at Rhodes.

The need to draw on this critical past has become urgent now that universities are being drawn more clearly into the marketplace as well as into national developmental goals. It is also important to interrogate this past; whites under apartheid were not, any more than blacks, a homogenous, undifferentiated group. There were differences of class, ethnicity, region, and above all, ideology between whites just as there were these differences among other racial groups. To over-generalise about whites – or any other ‘racial group’ – is called racial prejudice and is a product of colonialism. Indeed the dubious pseudo-scientific concept of ‘race’ is itself a social construct of colonialism.

Clearly the journey has not ended. It is a long journey, ‘full of adventures, full of things to learn’. We must not hurry; there are many surprises still to come.

The Greek poet Constantinos Kavafis (Cavafy), in his poem ‘Ithaca’, a metaphor for life’s rite of passage, captures best my feelings about Rhodes in its centenary year:

When you set out for Ithaca,  
ask that the journey be long,  
full of adventures, full of things to learn.

...

that there may be many summer mornings  
when with what joy, what delight,  
you will enter harbours you have not seen before;  
and will stop at Phoenician trade-ports,  
acquire beautiful merchandise,  
mother-of-pearl and coral, amber and ebony,  
and sensuous perfumes of all kinds,  
as many sensuous perfumes as you can.  
Visit many Egyptian cities,  
to gather stories of knowledge from the learned.

Have Ithaca always in mind.  
Your destination is to arrive there;  
But do not hurry the journey in the least.  
Better that it may last for many years,  
That you cast anchor at that island when you are old,  
rich with all you have gained on the way,  
not expecting that Ithaca will give you wealth  
Ithaca gave you that splendid journey.  
Without her you would not have set out.  
She has nothing more to offer.  
And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not deceived you.  
You have acquired such wisdom, so much experience,  
that you will have already realised what these Ithacas mean.

*The Penguin Book of Greek Verse.*  
(ed) Constantinos A Trypanis, 1971.

## Notes

1. I have written this on vacation on the island of Ithaca. I do not have any documents or contemporaries to check my memory.
2. I cannot remember Currey's first name. Currey was the author of a history of Rhodes during its first 50 years.
3. HF Sampson was a professor of law at Rhodes who had been called to the bar in London and South Africa. He was a St Andrew's, Grahamstown, Rhodes Scholar in 1910. He published, a year after I was interviewed, a deeply racist book titled *The Principle of Apartheid*. Johannesburg: Voortrekkerpers, 1966.

# Review Essay

## Living in cloud cuckooland: politics and cricket in white South Africa

Vishnu Padayachee

Bruce Murray and Christopher Merrett (2004) *Caught Behind: race and politics in Springbok cricket*. Johannesburg and Pietermaritzburg: Wits University Press and University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Rodney Hartman (2004) *Ali, the Life of Ali Bacher*. Johannesburg: Viking.

One of the things which struck me forcibly when I read accounts of the exploits of white Springbok cricket and cricketers was how little there was about politics in these narratives. I did not of course expect much reflecting issues of black and white politics, but I did expect something about the tensions *within* the white establishment cricket, the internal politics, if you like, including the struggles of white working class players to make it into the top leagues; of the battles by Afrikaans-speakers and Jewish players for proper recognition in the face of the dominant upper-class English gentiles who ruled the cricket roost for so many decades. Mike Marqusee's book, *Anyone But England* (1994), for example, brilliantly captures the racism, elitism and classicism which pervades English cricket. A few passing references to these kinds of issues are made in South African cricket literature. In a co-authored book with his brother Graeme, Peter Pollock reflected enthusiastically on the increasing fondness of Afrikaners for the game of cricket, predicting that 'such is his temperament and personality that in years to come he will become an even more faithful patron than his less volatile English counterpart' (1968:154).

While little was ever written about intra-white politics in cricket, a few white cricketers did make comments on black cricket. Thus, for example,

Dudley Nourse, captain of the white Springbok team, wrote a message of support in the brochure celebrating the Sixth Inter-Provincial Tournament organised by the South African Indian Cricket Union (SAICU) in 1951. In extolling the merits of Indian test cricketers, he only mentioned those who played for England, such as Ranjitsinji and Duleepsinji, the ultimate brown Englishmen, with ‘impeccable social credentials and total devotion to English institutions, all the way from college to Crown’. Unlike other Indians, when whites watched their exploits ‘wile became guile, trickery became magic, weakness became suppleness, effeminacy was transformed into grace’ (Appudurai 1995:31). Nourse failed to comment on the contradiction that Indian and other black South Africans could not play for the Springboks as the imagined South African nation was all-white (Desai et al 2003:12).

But there is one exception to this. In a book published in 1961, a year after Sharpeville, and in the year that South Africa became a republic and left the Commonwealth, Springbok wicketkeeper-batsman John Waite, while slamming anti-apartheid activists like the Rev David Sheppard for refusing to play against white cricketers in the 1960 to tour to England, makes this observation:

I for one believe that it would be a wonderful thing, provided the Africans, Indians and Coloureds could satisfy the whites that they are ready. I believe this because I believe South Africa can never be happy or really prosperous until there is abiding friendship between all its many races and because I believe that sport can bring such friendship in a way and to a degree that no other social activity can achieve. And inter-racial friendship alone can provide a successful foundation for a multi-racial society. (1961:48)

The rather paternalistic tone apart, this is still a remarkable commentary about race, sport and society in a South Africa where the violent policing of racial boundaries was dramatically being stepped up.

In researching *Blacks and Whites*, Desai et al concluded that there was little reason to doubt that the real history of racism and cowardice among white cricket administrators and cricketers was still to be written. On the very few occasions when white cricketers expressed their views on race and politics in cricket ‘it only reinforced how ignorant, deliberately or otherwise, they were of the conditions under which their “fellow” Black cricketers played’ (Desai et al 2003:12).

Blacks appear in white cricket annals as waiters, groundstaff and political

trouble-makers. Louis Duffus, covering white schools cricket, refers to ‘the native, Jim Fish...pulling up the last strip of matting’ (Nauright 1997:35). Renowned cricket commentator Jack Fingleton, witnessing the Timeless Test at Kingsmead between England and South Africa in 1939, which was stopped after nine days because the ship was departing to England, observed that ‘at 3.15pm, an Indian came out with a tray of cool drinks’ (Nauright 1997:35). Sometimes blacks got to bowl to whites. In the 1930s Davidson Chellan bowled to white pupils at Michaelhouse where his father was a labourer. Later he was to find fame as ‘one of the most stylish batsmen produced in the history of black cricket’ (Reddy 1999:24). Toplan Parsuramen, the great Natal spinner whose father cut the turf at Kingsmead, drawn by two oxen, remembers earning a few quid bowling to Denis V Dyer and other white Natal cricketers who came to practice at the Old Fort Road nets. They also fielded for white players. After practice, Parsuramen and his friends would stand outside the dressing rooms waiting to be tipped. It was during this time that Parsuramen developed the ‘wrong “un”’. Often he would knock off the stumps of white batsmen to the general laughter of the batsman’s teammates (interview, Parsuramen, in Desai et al 2003).

In *Blacks and Whites*, Desai et al try to avoid the bland aggregations of the racial categories that were imposed upon all South Africans and explore deeper divisions and tensions than those between whites and blacks, or indeed between Indians and coloured, Indians and Africans. They show not just how, for much of the first half of the twentieth century, Indian, African, Coloured and Malay cricket was also played separately, but that, for example, within the rubric of ‘Indian’ there was a constant definition and re-definition of the position of Coloureds and Malays. Sometimes they were in and at other times they were out. The notion of ‘Indian’ itself was rent with its own divisions, some home-grown and some imported from the ‘motherland’. There were the usual differences of place, but also teams based on religious injunctions and class and caste affinities. Clubs like Kismet, Bharat and Crescents had clear religious underpinnings. Schools were mainly the preserve of the emerging educated elite and Young Tailors and Railways reflected occupation with caste-like underpinnings (Desai et al 2003:6).

Academic studies into the relationship between sport, politics and society in South Africa is relatively new. Archer and Bouillion (1982), Booth (1998), Nauright (1997), and Gemmel (2003) are among the major exceptions. On cricket specifically, Andre Odendaal’s 1977 edited collection

written in the season when the short-lived experiment at ‘normal cricket’ was played, examines issues of race and politics in South African cricket. The slew of recent books, dealing especially with the ‘lost’ history of black cricket was sparked, as culture and sports historian Goolam Vahed (2005) correctly points out, by the United Cricket Board’s adoption in 1999 of a Transformation Charter which, among things, called for the history of black cricket to be recorded. The books in this series which have already been published include Mohamed Allie’s history of the Western Province Cricket Board (2001), Aslam Khota’s book on non-racial cricket in the Transvaal (2003), and Desai et al’s (2003) book on black cricket in KwaZulu-Natal in the period 1880-2002. Then there is Andre Odendaal’s beautifully produced 2003 (coffee-table) book entitled *The Story of an African Game – black cricketers and the unmasking of one of cricket’s greatest myths, South Africa, 1850-2003*. These books on black or non-racial cricket, though different in style and approach, do attempt to locate cricket in South Africa within a historical and (changing) political context.

In *Blacks and Whites* we made the point that ‘it is indicative of the poverty of white cricket writing in South Africa that the game is written exempt from any detailed historical and political context’ (Desai et al 2003: 12). *Caught Behind* by eminent Wits historian Bruce Murray and UKZN’s Christopher Merrett, a committed player, umpire and administrator in non-racial cricket in the Pietermaritzburg area for decades, tries to address this yawning gap. In a comment in their Preface, they refer directly to this observation by Desai et al and suggest that their book ‘seeks to provide such a “historical and political context” for the racially exclusive teams – the Springboks – that represented South Africa in international Test match cricket between 1888/89 and 1969/70’ (2005:viii).

The book examines cricket in the context of South African politics and society, from its location within the British imperial project, through segregation and apartheid. The Springboks played 172 test matches against just three ‘white’ cricketing nations, Australia, New Zealand, and of course the ‘mother’ country, England, between 1888/89 and 1969/70. Much of the first part of the book deals with little known episodes in black-white politics, such as the story of CB Llewellyn, the only player of colour to represent the Springboks in this time (15 tests), and ‘Krom’ Hendricks the ‘formidable Coloured’ fast bowler whose nomination for the first South African team to tour England in 1894 was vetoed by Cecil Rhodes, Cape Prime Minister and gold baron, on grounds of his race. Later, over breakfast

in Oxford in 1895 Rhodes is reputed to have told England's Pelham Warner: 'they wanted me to send a black fellow called Hendricks to England...but I would not have it' (Murray and Merrett 2004:16).

*Caught Behind* has many fascinating new vignettes which are revealing for what they say about race and politics in Springbok cricket. We read about how in a game between a Malay XI and a European XI in the inter-war period, Rosslyn Club's Malay spinner Taliep Salie once took ten wickets in an innings, including those of three Springboks (Dave Nourse, Xenophon Balaskas and AW Palm), and how he turned down an invitation to play club cricket in England 'out of fear that he would not find mosques close to cricket grounds' (2004:41). While some would be aware that Frank Worrell almost played in apartheid South Africa in 1959 as part of an all-black West Indian team, how many are aware that had it not been for the Anglo-Boer War the Springboks would have played the West Indies at Lords in 1900! Many observers may have been surprised – given its strong anti-apartheid stance – that India proposed South Africa's re-admission to test cricket in 1991 and hosted the South Africans in a historic match at Calcutta's giant Eden Garden's stadium in November that year, but not many will know that the then newly formed Board of Control for Cricket in India invited the South African Cricket Association to become the very first Test team to tour the sub-continent in 1928! The BCCI was chaired at the time by an Englishman RE Grant-Govan (which arguably explains things) but SACA turned down the invitation on the grounds of their forthcoming 1931/32 tour to Australia. As Murray and Merrett point out 'clearly relations with India were not a high priority among the SACA hierarchy' (2004:38).

The book offers a detailed account of the country's growing isolation within world cricket, in which the now infamous 'Basil D'Oliveira Affair' of 1968 and accounts of subsequent tour controversies and cancellations, are key. Using archival material which became available both in the UK and South Africa in terms of the 30 year rule, they provide a fascinating and important look into what many believe were turning points in the way sport became more centrally articulated into the struggles for South African democracy and emancipation, both internally as well as in the strategic plans of the anti-apartheid movement (AAM) in the UK and elsewhere. Its significance is captured in this observation by Abdul Minty, who served as the secretary of the AAM for many years: 'In those days, people told us not to mix sports and politics, so it took some time before our campaign brought

us support...In 1968 the South African government again played into the hands of the UK boycott movement when Prime Minister JB Vorster refused to allow the MCC to tour the country if South African coloured cricketer Basil D'Oliveira...who had left the country...was included as part of the UK [English] team' (Callinicos 2004:499).

The saga of how D'Oliveira was initially omitted from the tour party to South Africa; the withdrawal from the squad through injury of an English player Tom Cartwright; and D'Oliveira's subsequent selection as his replacement are well known to many. In their account of this affair Murray and Merrett attempt, on the basis of their new sources, to answer two questions: would South African Prime Minister John Vorster have accepted Basil D'Oliveira had he been selected in the first place? Secondly, if not, was this made known to cricket administrators in both countries, making this a factor in their decision. They answer the first with a definite 'no' – he would never have been accepted by the Vorster government. On the second, they found that this information was indeed communicated to both cricket bodies, but '[p]recisely how this information was handled at Lord's remains something of a mystery' (2004:90).

One other question which they ask is why D'Oliveira wanted to come to South Africa at that time? Did he feel that going to South Africa would bring pressure on the regime? Or that he owed it to his supporters, especially Cape Coloureds, among whom he was reputed to be very popular? The Anti-Apartheid Movement view, which Murray and Merrett report on, is that while the MCC/England should not have been endorsing apartheid by going to South Africa in the first place, their initial decision not to select D'Oliveira was in effect bringing apartheid principles into selection (2004: 112).

D'Oliveira's thinking about contacts with South Africa at the time were rather puzzling all round. According to Peter Osborne he had been 'very deeply interested' by an offer made just before the proposed 1968 tour by a certain Tienie Oosthuizen, an employee of Rembrandt boss Anton Rupert, to take up a post with the South African Sports Foundation as a coach for coloured South African cricketers. It would not have taken more than a call (say, to the AAM) for him to establish that despite its so-called autonomy the SASF was a front organisation of the apartheid-state. Although the money was big (and cricketers were at the time pitifully paid) the downside was that he would have to take up the post immediately and would have had to make himself unavailable for the forthcoming tour to South Africa. Some

would argue that agreeing to coach coloureds only ('his people'), he would hardly be doing much to break down racial boundaries! Osborne discusses this episode in detail in a chapter called 'A Bribe is Offered'. He points out, using evidence from Vorster's golfing partner and confidant, Gerald Roux, that the Prime Minister had indeed been involved in this plan at least six months before the offer was made. In the end D'Oliveira broke off contacts with Oosthuizen, but only after many meetings, lots of telephoning and much agonising on his part (Osborne 2004:162-80; also see Murray and Merrett 2004:96).

A significant point in this saga raised by Osborne (and strangely not mentioned by Murray and Merrett) occurred in the match against Australia in the Oval test. D'Oliveira had had a poor tour to the West Indies, and had been dropped after the first test against Australia. But he was recalled for the Oval Test where he scored 158. This good form in fact forced him back into the reckoning for the South African tour. But with his score on 31 in that match he played back to a ball from Ian Chappell, the ball took the edge, went through to Barry Jarman, and the Australian wicket-keeper dropped it! EW Swanton, the noted commentator called it 'the most fateful drop in cricket history' (in Osborne: 2004:184) and Osborne observes that '[n]o other cricket innings has changed history' (2004:185). For had he been dismissed for a low score like 31, given his general poor form, he would most likely not have been considered on cricketing grounds as a replacement for Tom Cartwright. England's lilywhite team would have jetted off to South Africa with little fuss and John Vorster may well have had the pleasure of watching them from the VIP suite at Newlands!

The Murray and Merrett book also provides useful new insights, via the lens of the D'Oliveira affair, into some of the struggles which were occurring within the National Party (between *verligtes*, *verkramptes* and *herstigtes*). Vorster was after all trying to widen the appeal of the National Party from a narrow ethnic Afrikaner base to a more inclusive white South African nationalism, and his attempts did begin to open up cracks in the previously solid walls of the apartheid edifice. In what was then described in the Press as the 'biggest Cabinet shuffle in South African history' (2004: 98) Vorster on August 12, 1968 removed leading *verkramptes* such as Albert Hertzog and PMK le Roux; but he was not going to give the hardliners any ammunition to attack him by compromising on D'Oliveira. It was too close to home, and Murray and Merrett comment that '[r]ather than provide them [the *verkramptes*] with a potentially effective rallying-

cry Vorster's concern was to cement support for himself among the Nationalist rank-and-file' (2004:98).

Despite its undoubted significance the Murray and Merrett book is a rather oddly structured one. At its core is the D'Oliveira affair, one covered at length in Murray's 2001 article in the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, and more or less faithfully reprinted here. This material is therefore known to a specialist readership, but it may well be right that it is being made available to a wider audience in book form. The early material, including the fuller stories of Hendricks and Llewellyn (largely Merrett's interest) and accounts of important post-D'Oliveira events such as the 1989/90 Gating Tour, appear sadly to be afterthoughts, not given the weight and significance or evenness of coverage which would have given the book a balanced and well-rounded feel.

Rodney Hartman's *Ali, The Life of Ali Bacher* is a more conventional biography of South African cricket's Mister Fixit (or Mister Cricket), as he was called. Hartman's book which has been nominated for a UK Sports Book award traces Ali Bacher's Jewish family back to their roots at Rokiskis on the Lithuania/Latvian border, their arrival in the eastern Johannesburg suburb of Doornfontein in 1924; his spell at Wits Medical School and his subsequent internship at Baragwanath Hospital in the black township of Soweto. It also covers his cricket experiences as player, Transvaal captain, South African captain (against the 1969/70 Australians); his rivalry with the enigmatic Eddie Barlow; his shift into cricket administration with Transvaal and then as Managing Director of SACU; his role in the unification of cricket, and towards the end his spell, as CEO of the 2003 Cricket World Cup. This is an easier and racier book to read compared to the somewhat stiff style of Murray and Merrett. But while the latter, despite my reservations about its structure and balance is academically and even politically satisfying, the Hartman book (all of 450 pages long) is hard to swallow simply because of its subject, and the way it captures and portrays the life and career of this highly controversial figure in South African cricket.

Ali Bacher did very well under apartheid. He has done even better in the 15 years since Nelson Mandela's release from Robben Island. This much is evident from Hartman's detailed biography, which has the now familiar and obligatory Foreword by the former President. What is also very evident is that Dr Bacher appears to have slid from operating under one regime to the next seamlessly. There is no epiphanous moment here, no expression of

regret, no apology for the various and highly controversial roles he played in propping up white cricket both as a player and administrator.

The claim is made repeatedly in the book that Bacher, like most white South Africans lived in a 'bubble' or 'cocoon', cut off from knowing about, let alone empathising with or actively joining the struggle for a non-racial society. In contrast people like Mike Hickson, Chris Nicholson and many others who joined non-racial clubs, such as Aurora in Pietermaritzburg in the mid-1970s, chose 'to fight together with black cricketers in organisations led by blacks, and play in conditions far removed from privileged white club houses and courtrooms' (Desai et al 2003:284). Bacher played in a team led by Springbok wicketkeeper-batsman John Waite against a non-racial team led by SA Haque at Natalspruit ground on April 1, 1961 and is quoted by Hartman as saying that the game showed how 'stupid the apartheid system was' (2004:148), but none of this appears to have led him into any change in his thinking, his cricket choices, or his politics. We are also told that he was not among the radical students at Wits but that he 'emphathised with them' (2004:36). He studied under Prof Phillip Tobias, one of our greatest scientists but appears to have imbibed nothing of the great man's moral and political commitment. He worked and lived in the Transvaal, but struggled to speak Afrikaans and rarely attempted to (2004:34). In short we are told by Hartman that, as late as 1970, Ali Bacher 'did not have a thorough understanding of the political problems bedevilling his country. He was not alone; the majority of white South Africans were living in a cocoon of ignorance or disinterest' (2004:126).

We are informed that 'in time' he came to criticise the government for its policies but at the only moment when a relatively mild protest by white players occurred he was strangely absent. At a match played at Newlands between Transvaal (the Currie Cup Champions) and the Rest of South Africa to celebrate ten years of the Republic in April 1971, the players staged a walk-out in protest against the government's refusal to allow two black players to be included in the side that planned to tour Australia. They returned to continue the match after they handed a statement to the media. In his absence the Transvaal team was captained by Don Mackay-Coghill. In his autobiography one of the players involved, Vincent van der Bijl, tells us that Mackay-Coghill 'was told by a national selector that he [DM-C] would never be picked for South Africa – a forecast which proved horribly accurate' (1984:5). One can only wonder what would have happened to Dr Bacher had he played on that day and been part of the walk-out. The reason

for his absence, Hartman says, is that '[h]is medical practice was keeping him busy and he did not want to leave it for what was only a festival match' (2004:133).

Let us move quickly to arguably Bacher's most notorious moment, the rebel Mike Gatting Tour to South Africa in 1989/90. Ali Bacher initiated and organised this Tour in blatant violation of ICC resolutions, in conflict with the global and local boycott and sanctions movement, and at the very moment that the country was at the cusp of its most significant political transformation. Armed instead with the view of the white political opposition that it would take another ten years for real change to come about, Bacher concluded in 1989/90 that cricket 'had to continue to find its own way along the rebel road' (2004:211).

Events around this tour also reveal that Bacher either did not have any knowledge of the history of non-racial cricket or was dismissive of it. His view appears to be that SACU's development programme represented the beginning of black cricket in this country, and of course he was its champion. At an address to the Annual Wisden Dinner in London in April 1989 (while he was surreptitiously organising the Gatting Tour) he spoke to a 'rapt black-tie audience' of the 'changing face of cricket in South Africa and the remarkable inroads that were being made by *taking* cricket to 60 000 youngsters through the development programme' (my emphasis, 2004:211). At a meeting of the SACU executive with the National Sports Congress (NSC), whose delegation included Ngconde Balfour, Mluleki George and Krish Naidoo, in October 1989, he 'addressed the meeting at length on the development programme and spoke passionately of the great benefits that township cricketers were already deriving from it...Balfour countered by saying that blacks had been playing cricket for a very long time and that their involvement with the game had not started with Bacher's development programme' (2004:217).

SACU President Geoff Dakin's view was that the Gatting Tour should not go ahead because it will 'uplift [white] people's spirit', so he argued '[I]et's not do that, let's maintain this state of depression and in this way put pressure on the government for political change' (2004:213). A remarkable opinion at the time, even vaguely 'Marxist' in its call to sharpen the contradictions of a dying system. But Bacher got his way and the tour went on. It was only called off later after President de Klerk announced the unbanning of the ANC, PAC and SACP. In the midst of the protests Dr Bacher recognised that 'I was now afraid that someone might actually get

killed if the tour continued' (2004:226). Despite his controversial role throughout the 1980s as the man behind the rebel tours, he was appointed by SACU after the Gatting tour was called off to a one-man commission to 'investigate the way forward for South African cricket' (2004:242). From there things moved rapidly and even further up for Dr Bacher, for not long after all this he was warmly embraced by the Balfours and Mandelas and heralded and feted for leading all of us back into world cricket.

But his unease in the post-1990 South Africa is demonstrated by a little incident which occurred in May 1991. The ANC had agreed to give the South African cricket delegation a letter (addressed to High Commissioners in London) which supported the (soon-to-be-formed) United Cricket Board application for membership to the ICC. Bacher was to have picked up the draft letter from Thabo Mbeki, but Hartman informs us that 'Ali Bacher could not personally collect [it] from Mbeki's flat in a high-rise apartment block in [Hillbrow] Johannesburg because of his fear of heights'. Can one really believe this of such an internationally-travelled person?

The nature of our transition and the way in which sport was appropriated by the ANC to a national political agenda may be the real reasons why the Ali Bachers and Gary Players and their ilk have sailed into the new dispensation as true South Africans, even as heroes. Gary Player should be given some 'credit' (if that is the word) for having the courage to nail his colours to the mast: remember this comment: 'This is my land. I am South African. And I must say now, and clearly, that I am of the South Africa of Verwoerd and apartheid' (Player 1966:7). In contrast, Ali Bacher is portrayed here as apolitical, non-political, living in a cocoon, living in a bubble, oblivious to the cruel daily reality which faced the majority of South Africans who lived and died under apartheid. When in May 1991 on the way to Birmingham, England, in the company of Steve Tshwete, he received a first hand account from the future Sports Minister about what life was really like for black South Africans, especially those who were imprisoned, incarcerated, and tortured, Ali Bacher was physically ill. 'When we reached Birmingham station, I went straight to the public toilets where I vomited' (2004:268).

In his Foreword to the book, former President Nelson Mandela has this to say about Bacher:

Ali Bacher is a great example of that kind of South African that made possible the form and nature of our negotiated transition. He stood back in the middle of a crisis, reflected upon the broader meaning and

implications of the course he was following, learned to understand the views of those who differed most intensely with him, sought advice broadly and then gave a decisive lead in changing course for the greater good. (2004:viii)

In contrast to this view, former Pakistan captain Imraan Khan referred to Bacher as a ‘man of double standards [who] should never be trusted’ (Hartman 2004:387), while sports historian Goolam Vahed makes this point:

There needs to be greater accountability among those who now cloak their past collaboration with apartheid. The same applies to the process that led to unity....There will be twists in the story of how Ali Bacher, who tried so hard to destroy non-racial cricket through rebel tours and clandestine tactics in apartheid South Africa, came to lead post-apartheid cricket. (2005:5)

Rodney Hartman’s biography is not uncritical of Bacher, but it is on balance very much written in the spirit of Mandela’s tribute. As Vahed suggests, others may one day offer a very different take. I would contend that even the few critical (unguarded) glimpses offered in the book about the man and the choices he made throughout his life and career do not square with Mandela’s glowing tribute. Perhaps there is something about the ‘miracle’ of our transition that I have not yet fully grasped – miracles are after all supernatural things.

I have chosen not to point out some of the factual errors in the Hartman book, but there is one which is so egregious, and so instructive of the mindset of people like the biographer and his subject that it needs high-lighting. In a footnote on page 324, Hartman notes that ‘*Until 1991* Africans, coloureds and Indians had their own *separate associations* and *national teams* which were passionately supported’ (italics added). Talk about living in cloud cuckooland!

Reservations and limitations aside, I welcome both these books not only for the new material and insights they offer into the black and white politics of our cricket, but also for adding (often unintended) new layers to the complex story of our political transition, going back to the late 1960s.

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## Review

Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed (2005)  
*The Making of a Political Reformer; Gandhi  
in South Africa, 1893-1914.* New Delhi:  
Manohar Press.

Bill Freund

In 2000, *Time* Magazine voted Mohandas Gandhi as the third most important individual to have lived in the twentieth century after Albert Einstein and Franklin Roosevelt. Until the arrival of Nelson Mandela on the scene, certainly he was the most important by a long way to have passed some part of his life in South Africa. Indubitably, moreover, Gandhi cut his political teeth in South Africa and developed his distinctive philosophical outlook at Phoenix and Tolstoy Farm. He even left part of his family here where descendants remain. Nonetheless, making the connection between Gandhi and South Africa, particularly the South Africa of dominant discourses such as the struggle against apartheid, is not so easy. Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed in this short volume join the ranks of those who attempt this task but without any very dramatic new evidence to present. Gandhism, so interesting again globally with the decline of belief in socialism as a philosophy of alternative politics, has never taken root here.

It would be nice to find that Gandhi had his feet planted firmly in the dust of the living South African community of his days, or more particularly the Indian communities, but this is simply not very true and it is least true of those aspects of Gandhi that are most distinctive and that were to make him most famous. Bhana and Vahed bring to the fore much information on the lives of Indians in turn of the twentieth century South Africa, particularly the history of their religious associations, but these connect only fitfully with Gandhi's sense of his own mission and his own concept of spirituality. His distinctive religious ideas made the most influential Hindu

contemporaries of his day very uneasy; still less did he absorb much from Muslims. The non-violent protest movement with which he has been associated was not very successful albeit inspirational. If there were some affinities with anti-apartheid resistance of the pre-1960 period, there was very little thereafter. As the late Maureen Swan noted, Gandhi's willingness to champion the 1913 strike of indentured workers, largely of South Indian origin, represented an important departure on his part and taught him something that he would use to effect in later years in India. In general, however, as he himself reiterated frequently, the struggles in South Africa were not about the overall oppression of people of colour or even of Indians in this country and were limited to the context of an immigrant minority from a British colony seeking relief from particular disabilities.

Surendra Bhana has previously written on how Gandhi perceived Africans; here this theme takes up many pages but adds relatively little beyond revealing Gandhi as a man of his time with much the same prejudices as were felt by his more liberal-minded and educated white contemporaries such as Olive Schreiner. The anxious focus here really stems from today's expectations and yet does not begin to treat the complex issue of African-Indian relations in South Africa satisfactorily.

Gandhi was the son of a Hindu chief minister in a Muslim princely state on the Kathiawar peninsula of what is today Gujarat state, India. He thus came from a cultural group and class that played a crucial role back into Mogul times. Steering through the complex social and cultural boundaries in India was nothing new to him nor was it 'unique'. However, as Bhana and Vahed say, in South Africa he had to learn to 'negotiate [sic] the narrowness he found among Indians who were absorbed with cultural and religious issues' in a rather parochial setting. One could perhaps argue that it was his reaction against that narrowness and his striving to overcome it that was South Africa's main unintended gift to the future Mahatma. Perhaps this book would be stronger if it had focussed directly and consistently on that theme. Swan did teach us how Gandhi dealt with the critical issue of class, equally important again in Indian nationalist politics. In steering us away from class and concentrating on religious identification, this book may represent something of a regression in Gandhian studies. Its chief merit lies in the glimpses it opens on Indian cultural life in Gandhi's time.

## Review

### Denis Herbstein (2004) *White Lies: Canon Collins and the secret war against apartheid*. Cape Town: HSRC Press & Oxford: James Currey

Mandy Goedhals

The HSRC Press and James Currey, neither of them publishing lightweights, have thought it worthwhile to take on Denis Herbstein's history of Canon John Collins and the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF).

Any writer of whodunits with an English and ecclesiastical flavour would be proud of the title, *White Lies*, which works of reference define as 'a well-meant falsehood' or 'a conventional phrase, not strictly true'. The rest of the English setting of this book is also redolent of the crime genre. Here is the maverick Canon of St Paul's, preacher to the Royal Family, living along Ave Maria Lane in the serendipitously named Amen Court. Here his remarkable wife assists in formulating policy, dispenses sound advice with oatmeal biscuits and strong tea to a web of international conspirators and a team of intelligent and dedicated women whose work is secret and dangerous and often a matter of life and death. There are codes and keys to Zurich banks, vast sums of money are exchanged by postal order, and a worker-priest sweeps London streets while his digs provide a secret post box for receiving letters from the network. This cloak (but not dagger) activity is a profound success and contributes to changing the face of a nation. The story has pace, the characters are vivid, warts and all, and the plot is thrilling.

It is also true. The International Defence and Aid Fund had its roots in Trevor Huddleston's appeal to Canon John Collins for money to support families of Defiance Campaigners in 1952. It grew into an international organisation as a result of finance raised in the United Kingdom to pay for the legal defence of the accused in the Treason Trial. When IDAF was

banned in South Africa in 1966 in terms of the Unlawful Organisations Act, any recipient of aid identified as coming from IDAF could receive a sentence of ten years, and so clandestine ways of getting money to those who needed it were developed. The name of the organisation explains exactly what it did. Programme One funded legal defence for those charged under apartheid laws in South Africa, through connections between law firms organised by William Frankel, 'Mr X', in such a way that the firms concerned were unaware of the existence of the others. Programme Two involved hundreds of volunteers in the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada and the Nordic countries who wrote letters to families in need in South Africa, who had been deprived of breadwinners through the struggle. Each letter contained postal orders bought by the sender from a lump sum provided by IDAF. Hence the *white lies* of the title. The organisation was highly professional yet based on common sense and concern for individuals: one wonders if it would have got off the ground let alone been sustained, in another age obsessed by managerialism.

Some may find a comparison between a crime novel and the subject matter of this book unsuitable. The intention is not to trivialise. The account has been brilliantly written, with the elaborate and intricate sequence of events laid out with clarity. Herbststein maintains clear control of the central narrative, but the chapters are fascinating and well organised units in themselves. There is a touching chapter on the correspondence between Stephanus Mpanza of P.O. Greenvale, Donnybrook, Natal and Eileen Wainwright, living in Hop Cottage, Hertfordshire, and of the friendship that grew between them. Another explains how the malevolent Craig Williamson was thwarted in his attempt to destroy IDAF, while yet another examines international support for the fund, topped by Collins' annual visit to the Russian Embassy where the handing over of a cheque was ceremoniously accompanied by tea from a samovar. The courage of Imam Abdullah Haron is set in the context of Islamic resistance to apartheid in South Africa: we also learn that the Imam's martyrdom was marked by a memorial service in the crypt of St Paul's, the first time the cathedral had commemorated a Muslim. The book has no footnotes, but a very detailed list of sources including many (over 200) interviews, and precise and useful endnotes, as well as roll call of some of those who wrote letters, from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, Holland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

South African history has in the past been the victim of omission, bias and distortion, and could be again. The winding up of IDAF in the early

1990s was not altogether a happy process. Nelson Mandela was full of praise for what the fund had achieved, but prime movers in IDAF in 1990 also sensed a desire in the ANC for it to be replaced by an organisation with African leadership, under ANC guidance. Reluctance on the part of the Fund to underwrite legal expenses for Winnie Mandela's defence on charges of kidnapping widened the breach (Herbstein 2004:318-21). When Nelson Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom* was published in 1994, neither John Collins nor IDAF was mentioned, although the organisation had provided most of the money to fund the defence in the Treason Trial and Rivonia. Luli Callinicos' recent biography of Oliver Tambo is more sympathetic about the role of the IDAF and also ensures that Collins will not be relegated to obscurity in a major account of the struggle against apartheid. Oliver Tambo and John Collins met in Johannesburg when Collins paid his only visit to South Africa in 1952, the start of a 'close, warm and lifelong friendship' (Callinicos 2004:244), as well as an effective political alliance when Oliver Tambo led the ANC in exile from 1958. Tambo's insight into the role of IDAF, where its chief usefulness lay, is most perceptive: he insisted that it 'should never become an extension of the ANC, that it should be the voice of the British people' (Herbstein 2004:497). The liberation of South Africa, though it culminated in the emergence of an African National Congress government, is not the story of one party but has many facets and Denis Herbstein's account of John Collins and the International Defence and Aid Fund is one of them.

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