**ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION
OF SOUTH AFRICA**

Oral history:
Heritage and identity

Proceedings of the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth
Annual National Oral History Conference

White River, Mpumalanga (2010)
Mahikeng, North-West Province (2011)
&
Mangaung, Free State (2012)

Editor
Christina Landman

Table of contents

Eighth Oral History Conference 2011
(Mahikeng, North-West Province)

Past distortions, present realities:
(re)constructions(s) and (re)configuration(s) of oral history

Ninth Oral History Conference 2012
(Mangaung, Free State)

*Oral history, communities and the liberation struggle:
Reflective memories in post-apartheid South Africa*

Foreword

This volume contains three sets of OHASA Conference proceedings for 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively. OHASA stands for the Oral History Association of South Africa and its conferences, as well as the publication of its conference proceedings. These are sponsored by the Department of Arts and Culture.<<Author: Is my interpretation correct? (NT)

This is the third of three volumes of conference proceedings that have been published during 2013. The first volume, *Culture, memory and trauma*, contains the proceedings of the third OHASA conference held in 2006 in Richard's Bay, KwaZulu-Natal. The second volume is entitled *Oral history: representing the hidden, the untold and the veiled,* and represents the fifth and sixth OHASA conferences, held in 2008 in East London, Eastern Cape, and in 2009 in Cape Town, Western Cape.

The title of this volume, *Oral history: heritage and identity*, reflects the contents of the three most recently held conferences of OHASA. In 2010 the seventh OHASA conference was held at the Protea Hotel, The Winkler, in White River, Mpumalanga from 12 to 15 October and was entitled *Oral history and heritage: national and local identities*. The opening of the conference was indeed a festive occasion. Words of welcome were spoken by the MEC for Culture, Sport and Recreation of Mpumalanga, Mr VR Shongwe, as well as the Executive Mayor of Mbombela (Nelspruit), Mr Lassy Chiwayo. The keynote address was delivered by the (then) Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Paul Mashatile. Day one and two were opened with the wisdoms of organic intellectuals, Monica Zwane and Abby Maloma. On days two and three the keynote speakers were Mathole Motshekga and Ikosa Mahlangu. Apart from that, a total of 40 papers were delivered during the conference as well as four workshops on oral history method. Learners from the local secondary schools also presented their oral history projects.

The eighth OHASA Conference was held from 11 to 14 October 2011 at the Mmabatho Palms Hotel in Mahikeng, North West province. The conference theme was *Past distortions, present realities: (re)construction(s) and (re)configurations(s) of oral history*. The president of OHASA, Professor Sekgothe Mokgoatšana, opened the conference, a ceremony that was enriched with the contributions of the Executive Mayor of Mahikeng, Nontsama Lenah Miga; the MEC for Sports, Arts and Culture of the North West Province, Patrick Chauke; the Premier of the North West province, Thandi Modise; and last but definitely not least, the Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, Joseph Phaahla. A total of 49 papers were read during the conference and a workshop was hosted by Radikobo Ntsimane and Thandeka

Majola. A high point of the conference was the contributions from the North West learners' Family Tree Project.

From 8 to 11 October 2012 the ninth OHASA conference was held at the Black Mountain Hotel in Mangaung (Bloemfontein) in the Free State province. The theme was *Oral history, communities and the liberation struggle: reflective memories in post-apartheid South Africa*. Welcome speeches were made by the Executive Mayor of Mangaung, Thabo Manyoni; the MEC for Sport, Arts, Culture and Recreation of the Free State, Dan Kgothule; and the Premier of the Free State, Ace Magashule. Contributing beautifully to the opening ceremony was the performance of the Bochabela String Orchestra. There were 45 papers read at the conference and the guest speaker was Professor Philippe Denis, a founding member of OHASA.

From these three conferences a total of 27 papers are published in this volume. Again, it was a privilege to be involved with these manuscripts as the editor of this volume, and the series editor of all three volumes. This volume, too, testifies to the fact that oral history is alive and well in South Africa, that work of quality is delivered by oral historians and that novel research is being conducted locally.

Prof Christina Landman

Editor
Research Institute for Theology and Religion
University of South Africa

Daring to challenge the mightiest:
voices and acts of bravery found in the oral history of the Zulu people

Themba Qwabe
uMngeni Municipality Museums and Heritage Board

Introduction

From time immemorial the Zulu people have paid allegiance to their kings. They showed enormous respect for their kings: it was most undesirable, in fact taboo, to challenge the authority of the king. The Zulu kings were known as "*Imilomo engathethi manga*" ("Mouths that tell no lies"). There were however some instances when the king or his authority was challenged or undermined. This paper therefore looks at some of those instances and gives background on why they happened and what the consequences were.

Instances of undermining or challenging the mightiest

Challenging a particular king or his authority meant challenging a particular order, which would normally affect the entire nation profoundly, directly or indirectly. Let's look at some of these instances, since their stories still form part of the rich oral narrative of the Zulu nation.

The poets

The poets were the only people who could rebuke the king or his actions without fear of reprimand or punishment. This they did by creating poetry that would tackle whatever concern they wanted to address, any wrong they wanted to right, and so on.

Magolwana of Mkhathini Jiyane created two lines in reference to King Dingane running away when his army was about to be defeated:

> *UNomashikizela*
> *Umashiyimpi yakhe*
> (The restless one
> The one who runs away and leaves his army)

Nqetho

Nqetho was the poet of the Qwabe people in the Mthandeni royal residence. It is said he was highly respected by King Shaka. He would perform his

1

traditional dance before King Shaka during the uKweshwama ceremony and would spit in front of the king, but received no punishment or rebuke. This might be because Shaka and Nqetho were "brothers" since they were great-grandchildren of Zulu and Qwabe, the sons of King Malandela.

Ngomane Mdletshe

Ngomane was the only person who could calm the king or even respond to him when he was angry. This is because King Shaka saw him as his "father" since it was Ngomane that took care of him when he arrived at the place of the Mthethwas. Ngomane was also instrumental in helping him ascend the Zulu royal throne. He was among the trusted men sent by King Dingiswayo to alert King Senzangakhona that Shaka was in his care, about which he wanted an explanation. Even when Shaka went back to take over after his father's death, he was accompanied by Ngomane. When Shaka became king, he made Ngomane his chief induna.

Mzilikazi kaMashobane

Mzilikazi was an army general of King Shaka. He was ordered to raid cattle and bring them to the king. On returning with them he drove them to his kraal and it is said that one night he decided to run away from Shaka. He took his people along with him, driving the cattle until he reached the place that is today's Zimbabwe.

Gala kaNodade

Gala, the son of Nodade, was from Biyela, some kilometres away from eMbangweni (eMpangeni). He was a very brave advisor to King Shaka at a time when the whole nation had been ordered to mourn the death of Queen Nandi. During this time no one was allowed to practise farming and devastating hunger was threatening to wipe out the population.

As he approached the king he said to him: "Ndabezitha! Kings passed away but left their people behind." He advised the king to allow things to return to normal. King Shaka took his advice and gave him some cows as *umxoshiso*, a reward for bravery, and gave him the right to wear a head ring, a symbol of being highly respected.

Hamu and Sigcwelegcwele kaMhlekehleke Mngadi

There was conflict between Hamu, induna of the uThulwana/aMamboza regiment, and Sigcwelegcwele of the inGobamakhosi regiment under King Cetshwayo of Mpande. InGobamakhosi was much younger than uThulwana

and they shared the same residence. It was normal practice that whenever an uThulwana man was visited by his wife an inGobamakhosi boy would give them space and find an alternative place to sleep.

Things suddenly changed and the boys refused to leave. The boys told uThulwana and both regiments vowed to decide their superiority in the field on the day of the *ukweshwama* ceremony. Indeed the battle took place right before the king; they fought with sticks first, but when Hamu realised uThulwana was being overpowered by the boys he shouted: "Stab them with spears!" The uThulwana regiment started stabbing the boys of the inGobamakhosi regiment right before the shocked eyes of King Cetshwayo.

After the incident Sigcwelegcwele ran away to escape punishment. Hamu was not punished but his relationship with the king was never restored.

Mpande defying himself

King Mpande was blessed with many sons. His friends the Afrikaners asked him to show them his successor. Having decided it was going to be Cetshwayo, he showed him to them and they marked his ear so they would not be confused because the king's children looked almost identical. However, as the king developed a greater love for Mbuyazwe's mother and started spending more time in the warmth of her arms, he changed his mind and chose Mbuyazwe as his successor.

He defied the advice of the council members who were concerned that he was starting a war between his children. Eventually the Zulu nation was divided into two, the supporters of Cetshwayo called Usuthu and Mbuyazwe's called Izigqoza.

King Mpande had to suffer the brutal acts of uSuthu that killed Queen Nomatshali, the mother of Prince Mkhungo who was said to be in the line of succession himself, the death of Prince Simpoyiyana, another son of Queen Nomatshali who was snatched from the King and murdered before his eyes, as well as threats and intimidation by the warriors led by Mnyakanya.

As they tortured the king it is alleged that in fury he said to Mnyakanya: "You have come here to demand Mthonga from me, [and] nothing will ever be right for you."

It is alleged that he also wanted to be given a spear so that he could stab himself to death. When the king received the sad news of the passing away of his beloved wife, Nomatshali, it is alleged that he cursed Prince Cetshwayo, saying: "Cetshwayo will not rule for five years, [and] uNdi will be burnt down." Indeed during the Anglo-Zulu war it was burnt down by the whites.

In the war between Cetshwayo and Mbuyazwe, Izigqoza were defeated and King Mpande lost Mbuyazwe, Mantantashiya, Dabulesinye and

many others. He died a bitter man as this scar stuck in his mind and memory, haunting him to the end.

Cetshwayo killing Mbuyazwe

Before the war of Ndondakusuka between Prince Cetshwayo and Prince Mbuyazwe, King Mpande often warned Cetshwayo never to kill his brother. This was ironic for it was King Mpande who had said the king of the Zulu people is not anointed because of his bulging stomach, specifically referring to the body shape of Prince Cetshwayo.

In the war, in which all of 20 000 people died, Prince Mbuyazwe perished together with the other princes fighting on his side. It is said King Mpande was devastated to hear the bad news and cursed Cetshwayo.

Hearing this King Mpande was very bitter. It is said King Mpande cursed Cetshwayo. The Zulu people believe that it was that curse that resulted in King Cetshwayo losing the Anglo-Zulu war, after which, having seen his nation dismantled he eventually died, a bitter and tormented man.

The girls of iNgcugce regiment

The mature girls of the iNgcugce regiment were ordered by the King to marry the men from an older regiment. The girls objected because the men were much older than them and decided to defy the king, declaring "*Ucu Alulingani*" ("The necklace does not fit"). This was seen as an insult to the king and the punishment for that was death. Many were killed while others ran away.

Zibhebhu kaMaphitha

When the war council met to discuss whether the Zulu people should engage in war with the English, Prince Zibhebhu was against war. He openly disagreed with the king and councillors. However the war started and Zibhebhu and his people of Mandlakazi became fully involved in a war against the English. The king gave him the position of junior commander behind Mavumengwana kaNdlela kaSompisi and Ntshingwayo kaMahole Khoza.

King Cetshwayo and Zibhebhu were brothers and had great respect for one another. Even when the king was exiled he requested Zibhebhu to look after his young son, Prince Dinuzulu. So when he disagreed with the king, it is obvious why the king did not take it as a sign of disrespect but just as straightforward advice about the war.

Warriors that defied Zibhebhu

When war broke out between Zibhebhu and the other royal princes like Ndabuko, Zibhebhu had given clear instructions to his Mandlakazi warriors not to stab King Cetshwayo. However a warrior stabbed him and he later died. Zibhebhu was very angry with the culprit because his order had been ignored.

Conclusion

This paper has looked at the people that dared to challenge the mightiest and also at the background to their actions and the punishment some of them suffered. It has also brought to light some of the historical narratives that have been passed on orally from one generation to the next in the Zulu people's history, hence preserving them.

References

Makhambeni M.N. & Ntuli D.B.1998. *Izimpande*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
Nyembezi, S., 1962. *Izibongo Zamakhosi,* Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter.
Nyembezi, S. & Nxumalo, O. 1966. *Inqolobane Yesizwe.* Pietermaritzburg: Shuter & Shooter.
Zulu B.Z. 2005. *Umongo KaZulu.* Cape Town: Lotsha Publications.

The people of Onverwacht

Sandra Rhode
Librarian: Voortrekker Monument and Heritage Foundation

Onverwacht is a small settlement, approximately 65 kilometres north of Pretoria and near to the mining town Cullinan, where "*swart*" Afrikaners live and for years have attempted to draw the right kind of attention to their plight for survival. For this group of people it has become a struggle to keep an identity amidst the influx of people whom they consider "foreign" and who look upon them as "odd".

Some articles on Onverwacht have been published, but a scientific approach in documenting the history of the community has not yet been attempted. Oral history practitioners of the Northern Flagship Institute (NFI) embarked on an oral history project, interviewing the few elderly residents of this hamlet and recording their stories. Cecilia Kruger was employed with the NFI at the time and formed part of the group who took on the project. When she left to re-join the Heritage Foundation (Die Erfenisstigting) – a Section 21 company whose aim it is to try and conserve that heritage of cultural significance to the Afrikaans-speaking community – she decided to complete the project with the help of the staff of the Heritage Foundation.

The *Oral History Manual* states that "[o]ral history provides an opportunity to document information that otherwise would be lost" (Sommer & Quinlan 2000, p.7). One emphatic thing emerges from the attempt to record the history of this community: facts become blurred and history is lost if we wait too long to record it. It becomes clear that the real (factual) history of this community was lost one or two generations ago. Because of a fire that destroyed valuable documents in 1955, there is also no documentation to substantiate the history as is verbally noted by the inhabitants of Onverwacht. When consulting history books, no reference to this piece of history is given either.

According to tradition, the inhabitants of Onverwacht are mostly descendants of the free slaves who accompanied the later migrants (*nátrekkers*) into the interior and who settled on farms in the area in the mid-1850s. During the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), land was promised to them if they sided with the Boers and should the latter win the war. Despite the Boers' defeat, they were still able to purchase their own "erven" at an extremely low price. This is how the settlement was born. This was a rare event as black people did not own their own land at that time. Because this to them was unexpected, they called the settlement Onverwacht, which means "Unexpected". The settlement can hardly be called a town. It has the feel or appearance of a farm. In fact, indications are that it originally was part of two

farms, and people have demarcated plots with dwellings which they, according to tradition, own. It makes them a small minority who seek survival under a beautiful Bill of Rights our country has become known for.

For this oral history project, eight "narrators" were identified with the assistance of Patricia Machobane and the local minister, Hein Holder. The interviews (in seven of the eight instances) were conducted in Afrikaans. (These interviews have been transcribed and they will be submitted to the National Archives to form part of the National Database.)

From these interviews and according to tradition, we learn that, when the free slaves were promised ownership of the land, they were asked to change their surnames, and to take the culture of the Boers. They also started speaking Afrikaans. They proceeded with this tradition into the generations that came after, so that the members of the Onverwacht community today still speak Afrikaans. Afrikaans is their mother tongue. They even call themselves *swart Afrikaners*" ("black Afrikaners"). Jan Monare also known as Oom Jot – the oldest member of the community who was interviewed (who has passed away since) – mentions that he has spoken Afrikaans even before he could walk, as did his father, and his grandfather before him. To this day this generation raises their offspring in Afrikaans, although the young ones now communicate with their peers who speak Sotho and Pedi.

From the interviews a story emerges of a black community that once farmed the land, and were taught in Afrikaans at the local school, but have become impoverished and whose very identity is threatened because of this extraordinary history and culture, one that is foreign to the "incoming" "new settlers/squatters" who are black and speak languages other than Afrikaans.

For the Onverwacht community, referring to their land as "*bloed-grond*" (land earned with blood of their forefathers), it has become a sore point that RDP houses have sprung up in the area, and that squatters have come to stay. They lament the fact that they had to watch how the school, that was built from scratch by their forefathers (according to tradition), was demolished to make space for a community centre which they do not care for. The prefabricated building that is the new school is no longer an Afrikaans-medium school, but one where kids are transported to the school by bus, and are taught in English/Sotho. The freshwater tank that was erected for the benefit of the Onverwachters is shared by the new inhabitants and is more quickly depleted now. The "foreigners" are even buried in their cemetery.

It sounds as if there is no acceptance of one another from either the original or the new settlers – the original settlers because of their strong sense of ownership and the history behind it, and the new settlers maybe because of the "unacceptability" of blacks who speak a language that they have regarded for years, and in their history, as the language of the oppressor, and who do not exactly welcome them to their midst? In-between all this seeming intole-

rance there is a community who long for their history and culture to be preserved.

When visiting the community, one becomes aware of a sense of hopelessness among the original Onverwacht residents; yet by the same token a spirit is present that seeks to strive to preserve. The settlement unfortunately shows no sign of development – dirt roads and dilapidated houses are the order of the day. The children have moved away to work in the surrounding areas, and there they find spouses who do not necessarily represent the culture they were brought up in. This leaves the older people in a community where it is only the church that presents some activities to create a sense of real community and identity (a Dutch Reformed Church).

Hope comes with the efforts of Patricia Machobane, a descendant of the original settlers, who has actively campaigned for Onverwacht to be noticed by the outside world. She was approached by the local authority of nearby Bronkhorstspruit to arrange a day whereby Onverwacht plays host to tour operators and guides as well as other interested and affected parties. She appealed to the Heritage Foundation to help her to teach the children at the local school traditional "*Boeredanse*". The Heritage Foundation got in touch with a dance group called Wapadrand Boeredansgroep, who went and taught the children the basics, which they enjoyed tremendously.

Attempts at luring tourists to this rural settlement just outside Cullinan include donkey rides through the town, and coffee, tea, lunch and other refreshments offered in homely setting. (A website on Overwacht shows beautiful pictures of the tourist activities: (http://www.cullinanmeander.co.za/Product_Holders/K_O/Onverwacht/Onverwacht.html). Several journalists have visited Onverwacht with its colourful people and have published interesting articles in magazines such as *Lifestyle*, and according to the website, the Gauteng Tourism Authority supports the development. Of the people and groups who visited and listened to the plight of Patricia and her people, none so far have come forward with substantial financial aid to develop this hamlet into what the inhabitants dream of – an eco and heritage destination of note.

References

De Vries, Anastasia 2005. Dié swart Afrikaners woon al jare op hul 'bloedgrond'. Onverwacht se lap aarde was geskenk van ZAR. *Rapport,* 27 Februarie, p. 18.

Onverwacht, a living monument. Available: http://www.cullinanmeander.co.za/Product_Holders/K_O/Onverwacht/Onverwacht.html.

Sommer, Barbara W & Quinlan, Mary Kay 2002. *The Oral history Manual.* Walnut Creek.

Introduction to Oral History 2006. Pietermaritzburg, Sinomlando.
Stryd is nou teen plakkers 2005. *Rapport*, 27 Februarie, p.18.

The fire and the crowd, a case study of Sharpeville

Zdena Mtetwa
Khulumani Support Group

Towards the 2009 Human Rights Day celebrations, Sharpeville was a very busy township. What an experience it is, to watch communities take ownership of their own history! The dynamics that come into play are fascinating. The old make several fires in containers, (*Imbaula*) at the sides of the roads. The young are invited to come and hear the stories that are told around the fires. Others, who may not know, pass by, in cars or on foot and see the fire and the crowd. They stop to see what is going on and in the process, they hear.

Around those fires, the history of Sharpeville unfolds and the unsung heroes are celebrated. Each tells a story of his or her life at a certain time. The roads that the young walk and the buildings they see suddenly take a different form. They see them for what they used to be as the stories unfold and the crowd goes back in time. The power and passion in the voices of the storytellers are towards one ultimate goal. The goal is to pass on the history of Sharpeville to the young, to tell it like it was, and celebrate what their blood was shed for. In the process, one experiences the township being split into two in so many ways. The young and the old, the new and the ancient, the present and the past. The old tell the story, the young stand and listen. They point to the buildings and the places, ancient to them but new to us, seeing them both as they are and as they used to be. And meanwhile, cars pass on a tarred road, portraying the realities of the present. The storytellers and the audience are reminded that because of the past, this present on the other side of the road was made possible. They hope that this knowing remains; they hope simply that we remember.

The richness and realness of this oral history sends a shiver down one's spine. One is assured that indeed this history will pass on, as long as *Imbaula* stories are told.

Just then a young man raises his hand. He speaks, loudly and power-fully, and captures the crowd. He makes a comment about the history, but he also makes a comment about his political party. He wins a cheer from the crowd, followed by a song from the struggle. We are reminded that this is an important time for South Africa. We are reminded that while we celebrate Human Rights Day in March, the 22nd of April brings the time for South Africa's General Elections of 2009.

The storytelling continues. Another young man raises his hand. Again he acknowledges the story, and again, manages to endorse his political party, a different one from the former endorser, before the next storyteller.

The past and the present are taken care of. The past is remembered and the present is experienced. But one has to imagine the future.

Questioning the future of *Imbaula*

One has first of all to answer the question relating to whether the *Imbaula* storytelling will continue in Sharpeville in the coming years. From the perspective of an optimistic member of the audience, one would say that the fire and the crowd may very well continue to exist. But what will be the nature of this fire and crowd? What will happen when these elders, who are the primary storytellers, have passed on?

These determined young people may take over. But will the agenda be completely the same? In the midst of political rivalry and personal interest, will these young people, as secondary storytellers, use this platform of the fire and the crowd solely for the purposes of passing on the history of Sharpeville? Or will the endorsement of political parties occur at shorter intervals between the storytelling, until eventually the stories are told at intervals of what will have evolved into sophisticated political rallies?

Imbaula, 2010

2009 ended and a new year began. The time came for *Imbaula*, only this year there would be no *Imbaula* at Sharpeville because of the violence accompanying the March service delivery protests. The determined survivors found an alternative place to have the storytelling. Eventually the *Imbaula* was held in Heidelberg, a small town close to Sharpeville, which is also part of the Vaal Triangle. The consolation in this was that a meaningful part of the Sharpeville people's Human Rights Day celebration was not completely lost, although for Sharpeville this was indeed a lost opportunity to pass down the history of Sharpeville to its residents.

A few days later, on 21 March 2010, the actual day of the Human Rights Day celebrations, the story of the Sharpeville massacre, as survivors who bear the scars in their minds, hearts and bodies remember it, was to be distorted for political reasons when Julius Malema declared that the march in 1960 was organised by the ANC and not the PAC, as history has told us for so many years.

After his declaration, the community later stated that this particular distortion of history was unnecessary and had no real relevance because, when they celebrated the Human Rights Day as a community, they honoured those who had died fighting for the nation. They swept the graves as parents of the deceased; they told their stories as survivors of a terrible time. All this they did in a spirit of oneness, as parents, as friends, as survivors: not as members of a certain political party, but as South Africans.

12

The relationship between remembering and forgetting

Memory contributes to the identity formation of a society. Through the telling of stories about what happened to them and who did what, societies are able to answer questions such as these: Who are we, who are they, where have we been, where are we now and how did we get here? The heart of the issue as far as memorialisation (of which oral history is an integral part) is concerned lies in how these events should be remembered.

At an individual level, people's memory is influenced by their social environment and, to some extent, their social affiliations both at the time of the event and presently. The PAC members from the time of the massacre may remember the march as a PAC initiative. Its commemoration may be regarded as an event that should acknowledge the PAC's place in the struggle. ANC affiliates at the time may or may not remember who was responsible for the march. This may be regarded as selective forgetting. According to Sharpeville residents these different perspectives are irrelevant in present-day celebrations of Human Rights Day. The day is celebrated as a heroes' day for those who died and those who were wounded in the massacre. Societies, therefore, regardless of individuals' position in events of social violence tend to generally agree on the atrocity of the events. In the case of Sharpeville, there may be those who opened fire claiming that they were simply taking orders; there are those who say that they were not warned that the police would open fire, and some who say that the police gave a warning. However people describe their position, or defend themselves by stating what was known or unknown, what is common is that they all agree that this was an act of life-denying social violence which should not have been. The remembrance of the general story of the Sharpeville massacre therefore serves the purpose of informing people of what should not be repeated.

The distortion of history as we saw earlier this year for the sake of what seemed like a political agenda clearly becomes irrelevant once societies themselves have agreed on what the commemoration of this day means to them. It is expected therefore that had there been adequate communication and consultation of political leaders and community members to whom such commemorations are supposed to be directed, it would be understood that they have gone beyond the point of political affiliation to the point of simply celebrating and remembering their different stories of the same event in unity.

The intergenerational silence that follows after traumatisation indeed contributes to the process of forgetting. This should be taken into account when considering that oral history, because of factors such as forgetting for various reasons, is not always precise. Yet in the case of Sharpeville, it is clear that victims have come to understand storytelling as an integral part of the healing process. They tell stories even as a way of remembering those

13

who passed on during the struggle. In as much therefore as the period of silence contributes to the process of forgetting, when victims finally speak out, there is an existing official truth, or official memory, in which their personal narratives are not accommodated. This lack of accommodation comes from that, while the traditional transitional justice framework provides for memorialisation as a component of symbolic reparations, reparations as an agenda is seen as the domain for the political actors in power in the new dispensation. This terrain with its possibilities for contributing to the genuine transformation of society becomes very limited and is often subverted to the political propaganda of the dominant political party. Those who have powerful roles in the control of technology that portrays public memory, such as television and other forms of media and those able to fund commemorations of events, and dominate the political arena, typically influence how the story is narrated to the public, and therefore influence public memory.

At a collective level, therefore, the part of the story at least the majority of the public remembers is the one that the powerful voices narrate. The dominant political party oversees a kind of reconstruction of the history of a site of special significance in a country, rather than creating an opportunity for all those who were participants in the historical events to share their own experiences and understandings of these events.

The tendency of governments to occupy the entire territory in the domain of memorialisation inevitably creates a situation where memorialisations have one meaning for government and another for the people who were directly involved in the event. The result may be a breakaway of the people from public commemorations. Survivors and victims' next of kin may choose to commemorate the event in a way that they deem meaningful, separate from the public events, which are essentially perceived as the pursuit of a political agenda.

In the case of Sharpeville, residents have a full programme of activeties that they engage in to commemorate all the massacres and the gross violations of human rights that occurred in Sharpeville between 1960 and 1992. These activities include storytelling, candle lighting and the cleaning of graves. The activities are held throughout the month of March, leading up to 21 March, when the nation celebrates Human Rights Day. This presents a situation where the government and the victims have different perceptions of the tone that must be assumed at such a commemoration, and possibly different perceptions of what exactly is being commemorated. Is it a commemoration of the triumph over the dark days of apartheid, or a heroes' day for those who died in Sharpeville during the struggle? Sometimes a commemoration becomes a political rally that is not in any way informed by the history of the event. Such situations present the risk of distorting history as we saw in the 2010's Human Rights Day celebrations.

Conclusion

In the process of remembering through storytelling, individuals with a different agenda manage to interrupt the remembering process in order to push their agenda forward. In this respect, things may get even worse when the primary storytellers are gone. Also, we have seen how political figures can distort history for their political agenda, practising individual selective remembering and imposing forgetting onto the listening crowd.

These processes lead to less remembering and more forgetting on a social level. The social effects of forgetting history are beyond the scope of this discussion. It is however interesting for us to build on this thought by investigating these effects in order to understand factors that threaten national memory and what their implications are.

Recommendations

In violent conflicts – whether of an overt and full-scale nature or of a low intensity and long-standing nature – multiple victims are created on all sides. The unpacking of these stories becomes necessary if an "authentic reconciliation" is to be achieved, as opposed to a "wallpapered" and sanitised version of the events that took place. This points to issues such as the fact that the action that might have led to a particular massacre (such as the 1960 Sharpeville massacre) resulted from the action of a political formation that was different from the present political rulers'. This part of history should not be seen as a general story that is malleable depending on who is in charge. It should be acknowledged as it is, bearing in mind that this part of history forms an integral part of people's personal narratives --- to distort it for whatever reason would be to deny people their personal stories.

Following the 2010 Human Rights Day celebrations, Sharpeville residents acknowledged that this year they received some support from both local and national government. It is important to unpack the meaning of "support" in this context so that understanding may contribute to its continuation. The kind of support that is most appreciated and sought by residents is based mainly on consultation. It is based on the acknowledgement that memorialisation is about people as first-hand victims of events or about people's loved ones. The people should therefore be the primary consultants when determining the tone that should be acknowledged at commemorations. This can only be done through consultation and by abandoning the tendency to dominate this terrain, subsequently sidelining the people on whom the agenda should be based. Only through proper consultation can the interpretation of the tone and meaning of the event be consistent between the government and the people.

In the case of Sharpeville we find that as far as Human Rights Day is concerned, government participation focuses more on the 21 March celebrations. While this is commendable, it does not entirely acknowledge the oral history that is passed on to the younger generation, and the personal narratives that give a human face to the historical event. The storytelling seems to still occur as a Sharpeville affair, largely driven by Khulumani members, and dependent on them in order to continue. Without any interfering or taking over, this important part of memorialisation needs to receive more support and structure in order to ensure its sustainability and protect platforms such as *Imbaula* from being used for reasons other than those of storytelling, even after the primary storytellers are no longer present. This would also greatly contribute to the healing process that is attached to storytelling. It should be emphasised that this can only be achieved through excluding personal and political agendas and acknowledging people's narratives as narratives of South Africans, despite their political affiliations then and now.

Re-hearing the homelands:
Hammanskraal stories

Sarah Godsell
Master's student, University of the Witwatersrand

Introduction

It's a life story. It's a lot to tell.[1]

Within one life, from the perspective of the person who lived it and those around them, there is a lot to tell. Years and years of experiences translate into memories now interacting with the present. It is this layering, this richness of experience, memory and lives, that I want to explore in this paper, since it is precisely this that challenges the perception of homelands as understood by current historiography.

These alternative memories contest the homogeneity of how the homelands have been understood. Using individual interviews, this paper explores these narratives, focusing on both the ordinary and the exceptional, the everyday and the unexpected. Various themes will be focused on in the narratives: growing up in Hammanskraal, women and work, violence, Bophuthatswana as separate, and transition and post-homeland experience. These themes allow an initial sense of the depth of narrative and experience from people who lived in this specific area in this specific homeland.

Hammanskraal, a peri-urban area located 40 kilometres north of Pretoria, provides a useful space to explore narratives of lived experience in the homelands, and post-homeland experience. The emphasis in this paper is on individual agency: looking at the ways lives were constructed and remembered in terms of personal, rather than political, imperatives.

> Human beings can choose. They are not sucked into the future
> by stimuli which they have to respond to in specific ways.
> Rather, human beings are continually making choices. They
> can stand back and look at alternatives.[2]

This choice pertains both to lived experience in apartheid South Africa, and how that is presented or constructed in the interview. In this reconstruction of memory and lived experience the initial presentation of positive or negative is both important and layered. What is selected as important in each interview is different and also changes over subsequent interviews. This process of the

---

[1]   Interview with ZS.
[2]   Turner, R *The Eye of The Needle: Towards participatory democracy in South Africa*, p 7.

interviewees selecting what to say, how to construct their experience and memories, illustrates the depth of both experience and memory. This again challenges the understanding of the homelands as places with only limited levels of reality or experience, those of resistance, repression and complicity with elite leadership.

The importance of doing this is to afford **people** in the homelands the same importance as they have been given in other South African historical literature, for example the rural transformation literature, or the literature examining processes and experience of township life or urbanisation.[3]

Interviews conducted suggest divergent narratives emerging from the current understanding of homelands as places of deprivation and repression only. These narratives necessitate another way of understanding people's lived experience. One way of framing this perceived "nostalgia" towards the past has been discussed by Jacob Dlamini as an affirmation or perhaps reclaiming of people's own lives beyond the struggle against apartheid.[4] Nostalgia is in itself a problematic word. There are no illusions about people longing for the injustices of the apartheid system. However, the interviews point to a complexity of lived experience in Bophuthatswana, a complexity of current context, and a complexity of narrative.

In viewing social history especially solely in terms of the struggle against the unjust regime, historiography makes it very difficult to view people's lives during that period as at all removed from the context of apartheid.

> What does it mean for a black South African to remember life under apartheid with fondness? What does it mean to say that black life under apartheid was not all doom and gloom and that there was a lot of which black South Africans could be, and indeed were, proud?[5]

Dlamini observed that many people were not involved in the struggle, and were simply involved in their own lives. That "their own lives" were inherently part of the process of both apartheid and the struggle against it will form part of the theoretical structure of this study. However, it is my aim to investigate the area and the interviewees without explicitly looking for struggle or resistance themes, to rather build a picture of everyday lives, within the lived context.

---

[3]   Delius, P *The Lion Amongst the Cattle.*
[4]   Dlamini, J *Native Nostalgia* Introduction.
[5]   Dlamini J *Native Nostalgia* p 13.

This paper explores these ideas through close reading of the text of interviews, in the specific space of Hammanskraal, as falling into the ex-Bophuthatswana.

Oral history presents interviewees a very specific opportunity to both review and unpack their own stories. Their histories can be treated as malleable, the shape being given by what is spoken or unspoken – by what is presented in that specific moment.

> The result is narratives in which the boundary between what takes place outside the narrator and what happens inside, between what concerns the individual and what concerns the group, may become more elusive than in the established written genres, so that personal 'truth' may coincide with group 'imagination'.[6]

This does not detract from the meaning presented by interviews in which histories (and specific temporal identities) are constructed. Interviews will be explored in terms of these themes, to separate out different experiences and the presentation of these memories in interviews. The emphasis in the selected quotes is on individual, personal experience and memory, and where this intersects with general or collective memory describing more of a homogeneous or general experience of life in the area.

Growing up in the homelands: "But that was life"[7]

This section and discussion are crucial to understanding the homelands in a new way.

> But when I started, I was attending under a tree. It happened that as we were busy with whatever then we see some clouds coming and everyone would go home, you know what I mean.[8]

This may seem such an ordinary observation about an ordinary experience in South Africa that it may hold no weight or have no extraordinary meaning in South African history or historiography. However, its weight is held particularly in its ordinariness. Dlamini has argued that life was also ordinary and enjoyable and, most importantly, that it was lived in all normal and abnormal dimensions during apartheid.[9] I would argue that life, under apartheid, was both ordinary and extraordinary, the two often weaving into each other

---

6   Portelli, A What Makes Oral History Different in *An Oral History Reader* p 35.
7   Interview with ZS.
8   Interview with LM.
9   Dlamini J *Native Nostalgia.*

inextricably. The extraordinary parts of everyday life have been explored, albeit not in terms of the homelands. But the ordinary, and then the interaction between ordinary and extraordinary, between the apartheid/homelands structure and everyday experience has not been. This is why the above observation, an ordinary story about school beginnings, but against a backdrop of lack of resources, and then again interwoven into how that was actually experienced by the pupils, gives an example of the layering of experience.

Everyday life was experienced and lived in its progression from young to old, through school to job, through marriage. These are the markers which are used to discuss everyday life, and explore life histories and stories in the interviews. Bophuthatswana emerges as passive backdrop and occasionally active agent.

ZS moved to Leboneng (an area in Hammanskraal) when she was ten, but she doesn't speak about the move, the reason for it or the trauma of it. Rather she gives her first impressions of the area:

> Well it was a very rural area, there was lots of forest.[10]

The homelands (like much of rural South Africa) are closely associated with lack of resources. However in the narratives, even when this is evident, it is often not what is stressed.

> We started in a shack. A shack that didn't have a floor, a concrete floor or a cement floor. It was a shack that was … you know, the cow dung. The old ladies used to, during the weekends, spread the cow dung. That was those first years in 1964. But as time went on they started to plaster, you know, parents started paying school funds so that the floors can be made.[11]

Memories in this narrative centre on experience and change; in this case a community building a school, rather than the structure in which a school was not provided.

In Bophuthatswana's organisational system, the fact that there were primary, middle and secondary schools made a more marked imprint on individuals' early lives than any larger structural creation.

> The school was from grade one, sub A, the primary school was
> up to standard two. But we used the same room. One group

---

[10]   Interview with ZS.
[11]   Interview with ZS.

20

> would face this direction, the other one would face this direction … What I loved most is that we used to eat soup, they used to cook and we used to eat soup.

Dlamini also discussed the importance of memory through the senses, as shown by the memory of eating soup, as superseding more dehumanising, and more documented, apartheid experience. The benefit of these narratives is in stressing the personal rather than the structural. This, as is shown below, can often incorporate both senses and experiences of brutality or repression in the homeland, again intermingling in a personal narrative.

These narratives, although they may subtly incorporate the deprivation (and later in this paper the brutality) of the homelands system, are not about the homelands, apartheid or repression. These things are factors that weave in and out of the story in relation to the interviewer, the interviewee, the questions asked or the memories evoked.

> Ja, I went to school at Leboneng, even my primary school. It is then that the development started, those four rooms were then erected. That was before Bophuthatswana, it was still the South African government. But you remember, or you know, it was at that time they were using black authorities … I don't know, regional authorities, but it was before the TVB states, the development of Bophuthatswana, Venda and all that. It was before that. And then the area was developed by then, by the former South African government. Four rooms were built, roads were constructed but the roads were not tarred, toilets were outside, people have to wake up at night when you need to go to the toilet. But that was life.[12]

> Ag, when I started, everyone was still talking Bantu education. Yes, and being in a village, you know, the schools are under-resourced, or were under-resourced, because at least you know these days there are companies, the Department is trying to provide this and that.[13]

This works towards the point of seeing the homelands as inhabited by people, living out lives not unconcerned or unconstrained by the homeland system, but certainly not completely dominated by it, as is the continuing narrative, which involves the collective and the present. Past memories are recounted as

---

[12] Interview with ZS.
[13] Interview with LM.

parts in a life that existed in and through the homelands, in a continuous flow to the present.

> So I remember this teacher, even though the name is gone, he walked into my class one day, and then he started doing a mathematics exercise on the chalkboard. He wrote everything right up to the final answer, and then the next question was 'How many of you think this is correct? I want to see those that think this is correct, and those that think it's not.' But because in those years you couldn't say a teacher was wrong, everybody said 'No, it's correct.' I was the only person who did not raise my hand. And he wanted to know why. But the approach as he was asking me the question, it was not a nice approach, it was like, 'Are you saying I'm wrong with this?' and I said 'No, that's not what I'm saying and unfortunately I don't understand, I can't tell if it's correct or not correct.' And I was punished for saying that. And I was still very young, but somehow I took a decision to say I will grow up one day and I will become a mathematics teacher and I will teach it in such a way that my learners will understand me.[14]

This narrative is also informed by the success that this interviewee has had as a teacher, and later in the post-1994 department of education. This small (but large for this particular "life") memory again contains traces of Bophuthatswana where corporal punishment was promoted. However, examination shows clearly that the individual experience (and memory) of embarrassment and anger had nothing to do with Bophuthatswana, but is now being chosen as a seminal point in this interviewee's life.

Thus, Bophuthatswana provided the framework within which people operated. This either helped or hindered, from school to workplace, in financial and family life, in safety and security and community and identity. What is clear, what emerges, is the complexity of the narratives of what was experienced.

Women and work

Even with Bophuthatswana as one framework within which life was experienced, the small ramifications of the system and the ordinary difficulties experienced have not been explored.

---

[14]   Interview with LM.

It was quite difficult because whenever you had problems concerning maybe salary issues, you had to write a letter, that was taken to the second office which was nearest the office. It will stay for months and months in the second office without being attended to. By the time they attend to it, maybe it will be, maybe four months. Then it was sent to Mafikeng where it will take another 3 months. You know it was difficult. As a teacher when you first got employed, you'd stay up to close to four months without salary. And then you got to the nearest, it was then called 'circuit' office, the district office. You'd go there and enquire, they'd say we'll phone, simply put down your particulars, we'll phone. A month would pass, you'd go there again, and they'd say they forgot to phone. It was difficult … If your husband wasn't working, if you were a breadwinner, it was chaos.

This story, this "chaos" sounds mild, even banal in comparison to the larger picture of South African history. However these small stories, this inter-weaving that draws us away from a blood-drenched and starved view of life in the homelands, help to reconstruct and understand people's everyday realities in a way which allows people more agency, more choices to build and experience their own lives, in the telling of them, to rebuild and re-experience.

Homelands were also notorious for being places of unemployment, especially for women, while men worked on the mines. However, as narratives explore this, and touch on this issue, employment was found --- at least in Hammanskraal. It also emerges that the companies found in Hammanskraal, in Babelegi, were renowned for low wages. This again emerges in the narrative, but it is remembered through the personal (and through the senses) rather than through any political means.

Yes, they said they deduct something for tea and I don't know what else but eventually every Friday you'd get R7. R7. A loaf of bread today. But you know, thousands of people used to work there. They were working there; they were working for their families. You know the factories are not the same, salary wise, others were better. And then because I was a student and a temporary by then, maybe that is why I was getting R7. But there was no person who used to get R50 per week. Even those who were permanently employed. It was quite very little, it was exploiting people. It was very very much unfair. It was exploiting people. But because there was no other source of work, people couldn't all go and work in Pretoria as domestic

servants. And yet here they are, they were no longer ploughing, their yards are small, they are staying in those houses called the matchbox houses, where the yards are quite small. They had to make a living for their children. Children had to go to school. So it was better to work for R25 a week, so that you can buy mielie meal for your children, you can pay school funds for your children, you can keep the life going in your family. It was tough. And then men used to work in the mines, gold mines, so they would go there for months without coming home. And then the whole load is carried by women. That is why women, most women, were compelled to go and work for that small amount.[15]

This contrasts starkly with the orthodox view of the homelands, as shown in this abstract by journalist Alistair Sparks:

> The economic dependence on the cities was total, for those who managed to acquire permanent rights to work in urban areas, for the migrant workers who came and went on a contract basis, for the women and children in the reserves who waited, hopefully, for remittances from their men folk working in the cities, and even for the elderly and the disabled who survived on meagre state pensions. The Bantustans themselves supported hardly anyone, aside from the swelling armies of civil servants and their hangers-on who were themselves paid from the coffers of the central government.[16]

The homogeneity of the narrative is clear in this description. Even the "swelling armies of civil servants" experienced their lives in layered and complex ways. This homogeneity also set very starkly the roles of either being victims, or of actively resisting, or of being complicit. Actual people and their experiences (both exceptional and ordinary) are missing from this narrative.

Violence in Bophuthatswana/Hammanskraal

> In Bophuthatswana it was peaceful and very quiet because of the police, everyone was afraid of the police.[17]

---

[15]   Interview with ZS.
[16]   Sparks, A *Beyond the Miracle* p 49.
[17]   Interview with ZS.

Bophuthatswana has been known for its violence and repression and the presence of police. This is the area that has been most explored from a personal point of view, as "people" were the victims of this violence. Even in this exploration, the end of Bophuthatswana has been focused on the violence that was experienced in Mafikeng. Violence has been explained as part of Mangope's power and how he maintained his regime. However, in describing this violence, and speaking of it as emanating solely from Lucas Mangope, it is implied that it was experienced by people living in Bophuthatswana solely as imposed on them, who therefore received this violence as victims only.

Adopting this approach only undermines the complexity of the narratives that emerge. Both in interviews where I specifically asked about violence, and when I avoided that word, different narratives emerged around violence, some people speaking about how quiet Bophuthatswana was, some speaking of the brutality of the police, and some people linking the two.[18]

There was also a difference in narratives about personal violence, how the interviewee experienced violence personally, or generalisations about collective experience at the time. Where the violence or repression was personally experienced, this also goes some way to challenging the homogeneous framework within which "people" living in the homelands have been seen and addressed, or not addressed. One interviewee spoke of repeated raids on his house by the Bophuthatswana police, looking for his Bophuthatswana ID. However, having been denied a Bophuthatswana ID document, the invasive and violent raids continued. He described how this affected not only him, because it occurred along his whole street.[19] When asked how the area had changed he replied shortly: "It is better now because people are not dying."[20] This forms one strand, perhaps the most explored strand, of the narratives.

Personal repression is not only experienced as the state encroaching to control people's lives, where people experience (or present themselves to the interviewer) as victims. This is only one strand of the complex narratives that are woven around experience and the perception of violence and repression by people who lived in Bophuthatswana. This is evidenced when, in interviews, the brutality of Bophuthatswana is sometimes pulled out as the framework against which some kinds of repression framed everyday life. But they were experienced in the spheres of personal aspects of life (parties, curfew, safety) in different ways.

> What I liked most about Bophuthatswana again, was that there was a lot of discipline. People were very disciplined. The Bophuthatswana police were very good disciplinarians. The

---

[18] Interview with ZS, LM and LS.
[19] Interview with MK.
[20] Interview with MK.

crime rate was very low … It was easy for people to move around during the night because when you were doing a wrong thing people would sjambok you. Sjambok you. Very much … Everybody was just guarding himself not to do wrong. So there was discipline. There was no way that boys would be smoking dagga, or even drugs, there was nothing like that. If there was a party, they would tell you that by this time your party must be over, say around ten o'clock, the party must be over, and it was done. So people were already used to parties must be over by this time, and then people would go home. There was discipline.[21]

Even when described as a positive thing, the extent of the sjamboking is emphasised, both in repetition and in pausing around the statement. The weight of experience is not lessened in the telling; however how the interviewee speaks allows them different levels of distance from the event, from the present, or from the interviewer.

The experience of violence has been linked, like that of deprivation, to the homelands system, and to Bophuthatswana in particular. However this experience too was populated, was not homogeneously experienced in one place by one group of displaced Africans, as is shown by the "peaceful" or "positive" narratives shown later in this paper.

Furthermore, the experience of violence, and the expression or memory of this violence (or indeed the perception or memory of nonviolence), reveals important complexities in the narratives of the everyday.

The difference between the quotidian experience and the experience at an ideological, moral or political level was mentioned in one interview. The interviewee explained that even though they thought everything was fine, it was because "we are not politicians. We didn't know."[22]

This aspect of Lucas Mangope's rule is probably the best known: his police, his paranoia and his tight control. "Too many people died there in the streets. Others died because of the police who were shooting."[23]

This diversity of experience recounted also guards against homogenisation of stories and experiences but allows a perspective on the various ways systems were absorbed into people's lives, and are retold now.

Bophuthatswana as separate: experiences of national/ethnic identity

You know, Bophuthatswana was more like an island, and then one thing that was remarkable in those days was the peace that

---

[21]   Interview with ZS.
[22]   Interview with EM.
[23]   Interview with SM.

prevailed in Bophuthatswana. Crime was minimal and most of these things that we see today were not there in Bophuthatswana. Hence we saw other people from other places as the kind of people who are coming to our country to come and contaminate the kind of peace we had.[24]

It is these narratives, even more than the narratives around violence, which demonstrate the complexity of understanding and experience. Bophuthatswana, as a legitimate and functional state, has been shown to be false by historians and politicians. However, the discussion around Bophuthatswana as a country, as a separate entity from South Africa, has not included the experiences of the people who lived there. In these narratives, interviewees were asked specifically about Bophuthatswana and their experience on the border of Bophuthatswana and South Africa, and in Bophuthatswana as a country.

Well at that time we didn't really feel part of South Africa. We felt that we are owning our own piece of land, we were indoctrinated that this is good we should live here.[25]

The two quotes above show two different experiences of feeling separate from South Africa, both with different political understandings and nuances. Both of these two diverge quite drastically from the more explored understanding that Bophuthatswana was bad, and that people wanted to be re-incorporated. These narratives also emerge in interviews, but coming from inhabitants different things are stressed as important, rather than the common political themes.

Everyone wanted a change. Everyone wanted something better.[26]

The emphasis on "better" here removes the narrative from being interpreted as speaking solely of repression or resistance. But Bophuthatswana as being separate was experienced personally in other ways:

Ja, I think that one thing that the Bophuthatswana government did especially to contain our behaviour, as youth in those days, was the fact that they encouraged the movements like the scouts movements, the wayfarers, to be part of the schooling activities. Hence I was a boy scout for many years, and we used to compete with other countries. I remember, when was

---

24   Interview with LM.
25   Interview with ZS.
26   Interview with ZS.

> that, 1980, I can't remember the year, but we had what was called the Mafikeng Boy Scouts Jamboree, it was in Mafikeng and all countries of the world were represented. There was a competition and I was representing Bophuthatswana and I had to compete even with boys from RSA because I saw them as people from another country, understand what I mean. To me it was like they are from RSA, which is a country outside Bophuthatswana.[27]

This partaking, buying in to Bophuthatswana, experiencing it as positive, would in the present dialogue around the homelands, make the interviewee complicit with the apartheid system, like civil servants who benefited from Bophuthatswana (and the interviewee was in fact a civil servant). The research being conducted questions the simplicity of these interpretations.

The geographical position of Hammanskraal, with the white sleeper town Hammanskraal (to house the white factory owners or managers for the Babelegi industrial area) meant that crossing the border was a regular experience in people's lives.

> Ja, you know the demarcation in those days were somehow funny, those who wanted to be part of the riots would cross one street to be in RSA and start doing their thing. But we never did that, we would stand on the other side of the street and watch them because it was not happening in Bophuthatswana, and we never wanted to be part of that, hence we didn't cross. Only those who wanted to be part of those riots they crossed just one street. The Bophuthatswana police they would come in their big cars and just wait on the other side of the street, and watch those people on the other side of the street.[28]

In some narratives the proximity of the borders reinforced a sense of the otherness of Bophuthatswana. This term has produced a narrative of "the other" coming from South Africa.

> [People were coming from] townships like Mamelodi, Soshan-guve, Atteridgeville; you would find tsotsis in those places. And their behaviour was so different from how we used to conduct ourselves in Bophuthatswana. Education has always been a priority, all meetings in Bophuthatswana, whether it was, you were at the tribal offices or maybe at school or

---

27 Interview with LM.
28 Interview with LM.

wherever were opened with a prayer. It was a given in Bophuthatswana, and then these 'amandla' stories were not there, we saw them in RSA and somehow they shocked us, because I think Mangope instilled a mindset that said to us, you must learn to respect yourself, respect other people, be proud of who you are being a Bophuthatswana citizen. Where there are no riots, and remember we were not paying tax in Bophut-hatswana.[29]

Homelands, while being constructs of the apartheid government, were used by some inhabitants as a space where the laws of petty apartheid did not apply.

We didn't have resources. For you to get resources you had to go to town, but at the same time the sun must never set whilst you are in … the workers, the domestic workers, were only allowed to go to town and they were supposed to come back every evening. It was just quite difficult. People wouldn't sleep as domestic workers in town. It was painful when you go to town and you need to go to a toilet, and there are no toilets provided for blacks. You'd only find *blankes*, maybe in one café they'd write *nie blankes/blankes*. It was difficult. You'd only feel happy when you were here at home, you'd go into any other store, you wouldn't see all those signs. But when you go to town, you go to Pretoria, and the buses, city buses. We didn't ride city buses we were not allowed to ride the city buses. You go by train to town, if you alight at the station, even though the station is far from town you had to walk from the station, you go and do your shopping and go back to that. And city buses were just moving around the town. Blacks were not allowed. And then, you know but at that time, you'd feel happy when you arrived home. You'd feel that now I am home. So … But anyway that was life then, that was life. At that moment even we were still young, it wasn't so much painful for the young ones. But as you grow older and your mind becomes broader, you know. I think for the elderly then, it was difficult for them.[30]

Or homeland development schemes allowed easier access to resources:

---

[29]   Interview with LM.
[30]   Interview with ZS.

… [W]hat I liked about Bophuthatswana is that, you know, many schools were built, shopping complexes were built. You know, that at that time, before Bophuthatswana, we used to travel to Pretoria and were using a train, taxis were not even there. We were using a train to town. If you want some groceries, supposing you've got R200, you had to go to town. So it was quite difficult. But then, with the development of Bophuthatswana, then a new shopping complex in Temba was built … So it was easier, life became easier for us.

However this strand of narratives is also not homogeneous, with narratives within one interview expressing different emotions about Bophuthatswana really as separate but more impinging on people's lives.

But however there were some things that were not really good about it. Apartheid was practised in Bophuthatswana. Because we are in Bophuthatswana everybody was expected to speak Tswana. Whether you are a Shangaan or a Venda or a Zulu or what. You are not a Motswana by birth [but] you are forced to speak Tswana. Even at schools the medium of instruction was Tswana, irrespective of all the groups that were there. Some of the people even went to an extent of changing their names into Tswana surnames. Say supposing you are Nguni. And then you want your things, say you want business … Say you want to open a business like a filling station. They would simply look at your surname. If your surname is a Zulu one you don't qualify.[31]

… [I]n those days, because things were better in Bophuthat-swana, everybody saw himself or herself as a Motswana, even the Shangaans called themselves Bophuthatswanan in those days because everyone wanted to be a part of the calmness that was prevailing in Bophuthatswana.[32]

The sense of Bophuthatswana as other, as separate, when emerging in oral history narratives, serves to enforce the idea that we do not have a complete understanding of the homelands and how the policy played out in communities and in lives. The quotes used were chosen to illustrate some of the less explored or analysed narratives. This is not to present these narratives as dominant, merely as existing. Once again the complexity of the narratives

31   Interview with ZS.
32   Interview with LM.

challenges the way that the homelands, even Bophuthatswana, have been understood as one entity.

Transition and post-homeland experience

> If I have two rand, I don't want the two rand, I want ten rand. So I throw away the two rand to get the ten rand, but I don't realise that the ten rand comes with conditions. When I see the conditions of the ten rand, I would maybe have rather had the two rand. This two rand is good but I can't see it because I have it. If I throw it away I'll remember: that two rand was good.[33]

The transition period was violent and post-1994 brought many changes to the area. The narratives of the transition, and the post-homeland Hammanskraal, broaden further an understanding of individual experience of Bophuthatswana and its after effects.

Talk of the transition, if mentioned explicitly, again elicits complex answers. Violence was experienced in Temba, when Temba City mall (built by Mangope) was razed to the ground. However, this event and its consequences are remembered in different ways.

> Things were bad, because somehow people from the former RSA came in now, it was a chance for them to come and show us in Bophuthatswana that they can do whatever … People looted you know, looted till the shops were empty, they took almost everything. Tires were burning, for the first time in our lives we saw certain situations.[34]

> On Friday! Yo! Everything was free again. The police have done nothing on Friday, we took everything freely. We took everything. We burnt the crèche because it was so expensive … Friday night we were so excited, we got everything, we eat we drink, everything was *mahala*. So everything went well until our food got finished. And then we saw where are we going to buy, because we bought from CBD, so if we broke it … we took a long time suffering there before they built it.[35]

---

[33] Interview with LS.
[34] Interview with LM.
[35] Interview with SM.

Here, themes tie in with themes dealt with above, such as violence, Bophu-thatswana as separate, and personal memory. In this instance, the interviewer is drawn into the memory, doubling the personal impact:

> By then you [as a white person] were not allowed to come into a black person's house. You wouldn't sleep there, you wouldn't go to a black church. Even in a taxi, you wouldn't get in. It was difficult, very difficult, life was difficult by then. But, you know we thank God things have changed.[36]

This narrative is also important because it involves the interviewer in a personal way. Also, however, by stressing that in this situation it would have been difficult for the white interviewer rather that the black interviewee, the interviewee highlights the simplistic interpretation that things were difficult for black South Africans only. "Life was difficult" for different people in different ways and in different places.

The process of the transition through which the homelands became incorporated into South Africa has been discussed in the general South Africa dialogue as the normalising and naturalising process that united South Africans and defeated corrupt homeland leaders and elites. This process has not been explored in terms of the experience and consciousness of the inhabitants of the area.

> We were tired about him. We were very tired about him. We wanted our freedom. We wanted to be free. His police were hitting us, they were hitting us every day.[37]

> I'm [with] Lucas Mangope right until I die. He was a very good man.[38]

The direct oppositions shown in these statements clearly show the need for a new, more nuanced kind of understanding.

In Hammanskraal, when the process is remembered, it is often linked to perceptions and experience of the current situation. This again ties in with Jacob Dlamini's writing in *Native Nostalgia* as the present shaping ideas of the past.

> Right now, there is no control. At the moment, there is no control at all. It is quite difficult.

---

[36] Interview with ZS.
[37] Interview with SM.
[38] Interview with GM.

And most of the learners, most of the youth, let me say the youth, most of the youth are so much involved with drugs that there is no future for them. If you can just take a walk into the taxi rank here, just the taxi rank … you'll see things, you'll feel bad, you'll feel sad. To see the youth who are in here, who are already drug addicted, they are no longer staying home, boys and girls, they are sleeping in the taxi rank. It's very painful. Right now? It's very painful.[39]

However this is not uniformly (or even consistently) relayed in the narratives. This, because of the complexity of the narratives which still requires examination and further research, may be seen as only going as far as showing that experiences were not uniform. When viewed in relation to the past dialogue about the homelands it makes an important assertion: life in the homelands was not, in everyday terms, defined by the homeland superstructure, any more than everyday life in South Africa is defined by the democratic ANC-led government of today.

You know what. At that time of Bophuthatswana, the people they were respecting the law of the government and there was no crime like these days. I remember Bophuthatswana. At that time it was really, really, really good days compared to these days, because at that time our parents some of them they were working here at Majaneng and getting a smaller salary, but with that salary they would manage to feed their family, to send their family to school and do many things at home with that little bit of money. And this type of crime you know whatever, there was no guns.[40]

It is gradually changing because we have almost all nationalities here, you find the Tsongas, you find the Zulus, you find the Ndebele, the Swazis, almost everybody. It is now that these people are claiming their nationality …[41]

For instance the funeral parlours, It's the nearest funeral parlour, so when there's a dead person, you know it's the nearest, it's easy. Unlike at that time you had to phone SAFAS in Pretoria, to come and collect the deceased, and to come and offer the services. You know the transport going to Pretoria … people are poor, black people are poor. Especially at that time,

---

[39]   Interview with ZS.
[40]   Interview with LS.
[41]   Interview with LM.

the poverty level was just too much. Imagine phoning, just to phone was a problem. There were no cellphones by then, only a few houses had landlines. The rest, you had to go to a shop to plead to use the phone, and you had to pay for it. It was difficult by that time.[42]

Conclusion

The master narrative would have us believe that black South Africans, who populate struggle jargon mainly as faceless 'masses of our people', experienced apartheid in the same way, suffered in the same way, and fought the same way under apartheid.[43]

Oral history's ability has been to explore people's everyday lives and contexts and then to fit this exploration into larger historical narratives – and, more than this, "oral sources [can 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".[44] The line between objectivity and subjectivity in oral history is always a difficult one to navigate. The interviews that are the basis for this study will be understood both for what they add to an understanding of a history of the place and period, as well as what the narratives speak about both individual and group experience.

These different illustrations of violence, of insiders and outsiders, remain to be explored in detail, so complete narratives can be constructed. However these personal interactions and perceptions do allow the conclusion that the process of exploring personal narratives in the homelands raises questions of complexity, of different strands in society and culture that respond to different inputs in different ways, which need to be examined in much more depth.

References

Dlamini J. 2009. *Native Nostalgia.* Auckland Park: Jacana Press.
Portelli, A. 1998. What makes oral history different, in Perks, R and Thompson A (eds.), *The Oral History Reader,* London & NY: Routledge.
Sparks, A. 2003. *Beyond the Miracle.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Delius, P. 1977. *The Lion Amongst the Cattle.* London: Heinemann.

---

42 Interview with ZS.
43 Dlamini J *Native Nostalgia* p 18.
44 Portelli, A What Makes Oral History Different in *Oral History Reader* p 36.

Turner, R. 1972. *The eye of the needle: towards participatory democracy in South Africa*. Johannesburg: SPROCAS.

Jeffery, A. 1992. *Conflict at the crossroads in Bophuthatswana* South African Institute of Race Relations.

Kennedy, R. 1998. Stolen Generations testimony: Trauma, Historiography, and the question of 'truth', in Perks, R and Thompson A (eds.), *The Oral History Reader,* London & NY: Routledge.

Butler & Jeffrey 1977. *The black homelands of South Africa: the political and economic development of Bophuthatswana and KwaZulu,* Berkeley: California University Press.

Bophuthatswana at Independence 1977. Bureau for Economic Research re Bantu Development.

Lawrence, M. & Manson, A. 1994. The 'Dog of the Boers': the rise and fall of Mangope in Bophuthatswana. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 20(3).

Lipton, M. 2007. *Liberals, Marxists, and Nationalists: competing interpretations of South African history.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Moerdijk, D. 1981. *Anti-development: South Africa and its Bantustans*, Paris: Unesco Press.

Mangope, Lucas 1978. *A place for all.* Via Afrika.

Rogers, B. 1980. *D.I.V.I.D.E. and rule: South Africa's Bantustans* International Defence & AID Fund.

South African Institute of Race Relations 2010. *Fast Facts,* February.

Thompson, P. 1998. The voice of the past*,* in Perks, R and Thompson A (eds.), *The Oral History Reader,* London & NY: Routledge.

Land appropriation and expropriation in Zimbabwe: selective memories

Kennedy Gondongwe
Doctoral student, University of KwaZulu-Natal

Introduction

The issue of land has been at the centre of Zimbabwean politics for over a century. To be precise the problem came as an inseparable twin of the invading column popularly known as the Pioneer Column.[1] Rhodes and his company fought wars of conquest and their victory paved the way for a rapacious period of speculation and violence in which African cattle were looted, land alienated and labour coerced (see Alexander 2006:1-3). The indigenous people tried to regain their land through petitions and delegations, but to no avail. The first war of resistance was waged between 1896 and 1907. The indigenous people were defeated in this war and for a long time the indigenous people engaged in passive resistance. The second war of resistance only came in the 1960s and it continued until 1980 when the country attained its political independence. This political independence came as a result of the Lancaster House Conference. One thing that this conference failed to deal with was the issue of land. The constitution agreed upon at the Lancaster House spelt out that the land was to be traded on the basis of "willing buyer, willing seller" for a period of 10 years. The 10 years expired in 1990 but the government did not begin to expropriate land from the white minority. Land expropriation only began in 2000 when the government's popularity was on the wane. The white community which constituted one percent of the country's population resisted this land redistribution exercise. The white commercial farmers claimed ownership on one hand and the war veterans with the support of the government claimed ownership on the other. In this way, farms in Zimbabwe became contested sites, which was a result of contested memories. These clashes lead to an unprecedented economic decline in Zimbabwe. For the government, land reform was a matter of restorative justice because land had been stolen from the black people without compensation. For the white minority and their black sympathisers land belonged to the title deeds holders. The task of this paper is to demonstrate that farms were indeed contested space in Zimbabwe. This study will endeavour to show why this was the case. The other task of this paper is to discuss the conflicting memories that characterised land ownership in

---

[1]   This was a force raised by Cecil John Rhodes to annex the territory called Mashonaland now known as Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe. In order to achieve this, the study will trace the administration and value of land in pre-colonial Zimbabwe. We will relate this history to what transpired during colonisation and in post-independent Zimbabwe. The paper will make an analysis of the situation and demonstrate how the findings of this research contribute to issues of oral history, historiography in general and the art of remembering.

Land and African identity in pre-colonial Zimbabwe

The original inhabitants of the country called Zimbabwe were the Bushmen who came to Zimbabwe during their nomadic travels (Shoko 2008:1; see http.www.assatashakur.org). These were followed by the Shona who settled around 1000 (Beach 1994:15). The Ndebeles only came about 800 years later for they settled in about 1830 (Shoko 2006:1; see http.www.assatashakur.org). On the eve of colonisation, Zimbabwe was under the leadership of the Ndebele king Lobengula. However, the Shona people were directly under the tribal chiefs who were answerable to Lobengula. Among the Shona people, the chief was the custodian of the land together with the ancestral spirits of the given area. Chieftainship was not an exclusively secular position: it was also sacred. Chiefs were considered to be the embodiment of tradition. Their major role was to administer the land. Disputes among the inhabitants were solved through the wise counsel of the chief. Together with a *mhondoro*[2] they would preside over religious ceremonies such as *mukwerera*[3]. These *mhondoros* could move across the cosmic regions of life and death. In this sense they were both terrestrial and celestial beings. When a chief died he was transformed into an *mhondoro* and became a source of fertility for the land (Lan 1985:32). David Lan (1985:32) further argues that a dead chief provided rain for the fields. This view is typical of the majority of missionaries, social anthropologists and armchair theorists who thought that Africans were rain makers. What this group of people failed to appreciate was the fact that Africans were monotheists who knew that rain could only come from their Supreme God known as *Zame*.[4] They only asked for rain through their *mhondoros* who were believed to be their intermediaries

The ancestors operated at three levels, namely the family, ethnic and national levels (Shoko 2006:1; see http.www.assatashakur.org). The major role of the ancestral spirits was to mediate between *Mwari*[5] and the living

---

[2] These were tribal spirit mediums who were responsible for the wellbeing of a particular group of people, whose scope was wider than the family.

[3] This was a ceremony to ask for rain.

[4] *Zame* refers to god of the rain. He is still the same god but when he brings rain he is called *Zame,* his all-knowing nature is emphasised he is called *Mazivazvose.*

[5] This was the Supreme Being among the Shona.

(Shoko 2006:4; see http.www.assatashakur.org). The Shona believed in a tripartite view of the cosmology. There is a belief in a "world above" inhabited by a Supreme God (Shoko 2008:3; see http.www.assatashakur.org). Then there is the "human world" physically located on earth. The sacred phenomena such as trees, hills, mountains, rivers and forests also form part of this world. The "underworld" is the world "below"; graves, mermaids and snakes dwell in the "underworld" (Shoko 2006:3; see http.www.assatashakur.org). Over all, the spirits pervade the worlds "above", "below" and "underground". The land was considered to be generally sacred. Its sacredness emanated from the view that it embodied hierophanies. The level of religious concentration differed from place to place. Land became more sacred when it was linked to graves, mountains, rocks, places of worship and particular types of trees. This view was not unique to the Shona people because even in Judaism land became holier as one moved towards the temple. The temple was the "centre of the world". The issue of the sacred and the profane is a well-studied area and one of the leading researchers in this area is Mircea Eliade (1958:367). The result of this perception of land was that no one would personalise land. It was held in trust by whoever owned it. In fact one could only own land as a deputy. The chief was the principal custodian of the land. He or she could remove land from anyone if that individual was considered a persona non grata. Witches and murderers were the most common victims.

The other dimension of land was that in traditional Zimbabwe the umbilical code of a newborn was buried in the ground. The umbilical code was a sign of life in the Shona religion. This signified the fact that land was a source of life. It was a place of connection and orientation (Bakare 1993:46). The other significance of land was that it bestowed some form of identity on the bearer. Eliade (1961:22) argues that when the individual is on his land, he is oriented in an orderly cosmos, and he feels at home; taken outside his land he is disoriented. The gateway to acquiring ethnic citizenship lay in owning a piece of land. To exist was to have land and to have land was to exist. Bakare (1993:46) summed it up when he said land for Zimbabweans consists of things that can be both quantified and not quantified. It offers them identity, history and livelihood, and it is sacred.

Land during the colonial era

There is scholarly unanimity that the "Rudd Concession" was a fraud. Bakare (1993:40) writes:

> After many attempts to enter and occupy the country had failed, the British land speculators finally forged a document known as the Rudd Concession which stated that Lobengula

39

had signed and agreed to the occupation of what is now Zimbabwe by the European settlers.

This is corroborated by Gibbs, who gave the following analysis:

> Rhodes and Company knew well enough that the Rudd Concession gave them no power in the land other than to enter and dig it for gold. Even Lobengula was unlikely to be so foolish as to give more. Nor had Rhodes been so foolish as to ask for it. Getting what Lobengula was prepared to give, he could take the rest without asking (cited in Mutambirwa 1980:35).

One of the key participants in this fraud was Lobengula's trusted *umfundisi*[6] by the name Charles Helm. This *umfundisi* was fluent in Ndebele and as such he was the king's interpreter. He possibly misled the king on the contents of the agreement and when the king realised what had transpired he then put him on trial. Helm was found guilty as charged and was humiliated by having his missionary status stripped. S Samkange believes that Helm was one of Rhodes's secret employees (Mutambirwa 1980:35). However, this view is doubted by N Bhebhe who argues that although Helm and Rhodes belonged to the same constituency, there is no evidence that Helm was on Rhodes's payroll (Mutambirwa 1980:36).

Lobengula thought that the whites were only asking for permission to dig a hole on the land and not that they could possess it. Gold was the prime motive behind the 1890 occupation of Zimbabwe. Land was regarded as a consolation prize for each pioneer was entitled to a free farm of 3 175 acres (Palmer 1968:6). In fact many of these pioneers disposed of their land to speculators such as Johnson and Willoughby (Palmer 1968:10). During this period 15 million acres of the country's 96 million acres of land were expropriated by the Europeans (Palmer 1968:6). In August 1893, the settlers in Victoria refused to fight, unless they were granted certain concessions. Eventually there was an agreement which stipulated that everyone who took up arms was entitled to a farm of 6 350 acres. The first war of resistance known as the First Chimurenga was principally about the land. The war ended with the defeat of the indigenous people after putting up a spirited fight that has no parallel in the whole of southern Africa.

After their victory, the settlers established the Native Reserve Order in Council which created areas that were reserved for black settlement away from white settlement; such areas became known as

---

[6]   This simply means a minister of religion.

Native Reserves (Palmer 1968:6). In 1930 The Land Apportionment Act was passed (Ranger 1985:88). This Act formally divided the country between races; the whites reserved for themselves the more fertile areas with higher rainfall and gave Africans the poorer, more arid areas (Palmer 1968:18). In 1951 the Land Husbandry Act formalised forced labour and introduced restrictions on African land use. The Second Chimurenga which was intensified in the 1970s was also about the land. The settler government argued that they were fighting to preserve commerce, Christianity and civilisation. They argued that the interests of the black people were better served by the settlers.

At Lancaster House the nationalists were adamant that the war was about the land so any resolution to the war was supposed to tackle the land issue. The Lancaster House Constitution articulated that land would be disposed of on the basis of a willing buyer and willing seller for a period of ten years and thereafter that the new government was allowed to promulgate its own laws.

In 1991 the government amended Section 16 of the Lancaster House Constitution and came up with a new law in March 1992. This law allowed the government to compulsorily acquire land, only paying for developments made on the land but not for the land itself. The government argued that Britain was supposed to pay for the land. Britain abdicated on this responsibility through a letter written by Clare Short who was the Secretary of State for International Development. Part of the letter read:

> We do not accept that Britain has a special responsibility to meet the costs of land purchase in Zimbabwe. We are a new government from diverse background without links to former colonial interests. My own origins are Irish and as you know, we were colonised not colonisers.
> (http.www.wikipedia/robertmugabe)

Between 1992 and 2000 the government was facing an enormous economic decline. The war veterans were demanding compensation for their contribution during the liberation struggle. The government sponsored the writing of a new constitution through which the land expropriation was to be legalised. Zimbabweans through the instigation of civic organisations rejected the constitution during a referendum. It was at this juncture that the government encouraged and funded land seizures by some war veterans. In mid-2000 the government passed the Land Acquisition Act that made compulsory acquisition of land possible. Consequently, 4 000 white farmers had their farms listed for acquisition. When the government was pressed by the international community to arrest the war veterans, Mugabe responded by saying that he would not wage a war against his kith and kin just as Britain could not

send troops to Rhodesia when Ian Smith announced his Unilateral Declaration of Independence. The chaos which had begun in 1890 continued unabated. Now the one-time victims were the perpetrators. Many farm-workers were left homeless; there was wanton destruction of property. Of course the question begged is whether or not this was a just war.

The reminiscences of the victors

I use the term victors to designate the Zanu-PF government, war veterans and other state functionaries. I am fully aware that this designation is problematic in the sense that one can argue that these same people can be regarded as victims, especially if one considers the history of the land in Zimbabwe. The term victor is used in this paper to recognise the fact that these people were in possession of what I will refer to as "cohesive capital". They had the state machinery on their side. This included the media, the police and the army. These were all in the favour of the state. The researcher visited Hopely farm, which is 15 kilometres out of Harare, for purposes of gathering the views of the inhabitants. This farm was formerly white owned but now has been expropriated and the land has been given to black people. Particular, identifiable motifs characterise the accounts given by the people whom the writer interviewed. One such motif is that land reform was a ritual that re-enacted a myth. The second one is that land reform was the only means to empower the formerly disadvantaged black majority.

Land reform as a ritual to re-enact the myth

When I asked comrade Shirichena[7] what the land reform meant to him as a war veteran, he responded by giving me a long lecture about the history of the struggle for land. He argued that one of the martyrs of the First Chimurenga, Nehanda, uttered an oracle just before her death. This oracle was to the effect that her bones were going to rise again (interview on 16 June 2008, Harare). This Mbuya Nehanda was executed by the colonial administration on charges of murder. She is particularly remembered for her defiance on the scaffold, which included refusal of Christian baptism. She also emphasised the need for self-rule before she died (interview on 16 June 2008, Harare). For Shirichena the land reform was a fulfilment of these oracles (interview on 16 June 2008, Harare).

During the Second Chimurenga, Nehanda, Kaguvi and Chaminuka acquired some divine status. Their names were usually prefixed by the respectful title of *Mbuya* or Grandmother and S*ekuru* or Grandfather (Shoko

---

[7]   This name and others which follow were pseudo names used during the liberation struggle, but the war veterans continued to use them even after the war.

2008:4; see http.www.assatashakur.org). The role played by the *mhondoros* during Zimbabwe's war of liberation has been well studied by Lan (1985:1-88). Shirichena further pointed out that the war of liberation was guided and aided by the family ancestors. These ancestors perished during the struggle for land. For him the revolution would not be complete as long as the blacks remained landless (interview on 16 June 2008, Harare).

Another war veteran named Muchapera Mabhunu emphasised that the land reform was a religious act aimed at fulfilling the oracles of the black prophets whose culture had been rejected by the settlers and the missionaries (interview on 16 June 2008, Harare).

This issue of culture and the settlers is very important in the quest to understand the power dynamics of the time. L Sanneh argues that when Christianity came to Africa, it took two basic directions: mission by diffusion and mission by translation. Mission by diffusion took place when the culture of the missionaries was made the inseparable carrier of the Christian message (Sanneh 1989:28-34). Mission by translation was when the recipient culture was considered to be the true and final locus of the proclamation, so that the religion arrives without the presumption of cultural rejection (Sanneh 1989:28-34). Canaan Banana in his thesis entitled *The case for a new Bible* emphasised the need to liberate the Bible from culture-specific worldviews. He advocated the inclusion of indigenous religious actors such as Chaminuka and Kaguvi into the new Bible (Mukonyora, Cox & Verstraelen 1993:29). This argument has been comprehensively responded to by I Mukonyora, JL Cox and FJ Verstraelen and I do not wish to pursue it here (Mukonyora, Cox & Verstraelen 1993:29).

Comrade Muparadzi argued that many black combatants were buried in shallow graves on the white farms so there was a need to take over those farms so that these gallant sons of the soil would not continue to be dishonoured by letting them sleep in lands fenced off by their previous foes (interview on 17 June 2008, Harare). This was corroborated by Comrade Haivhiyiwi who pointed out that taking land from the white farmers was the only way of appeasing the ancestors. Unless that was achieved the country was going to continue to experience droughts and other misfortunes (interview on 17 June 2008, Harare).

Comrade Zvikasapera who is a member of the *Vapostori veAfrica Church* pointed out that even the biblical tradition tells us about a man called Naboth who was prepared to die rather than to allow someone to take over his land (interview on 17 June 2008, Harare).

Although this seems to be a departure from the norm in the sense that it uses Christian categories to support the same cause, it is still consistent with other traditions because it employs religion to justify land seizures. This use of religious categories by land grabbers needs to be accounted for. When Zimbabwe attained political independence in 1980, the new government

43

sought to cleanse itself of the notion that it was communist and therefore against Christianity. Father Patrick Chakaipa was invited to preside over the ceremony to inaugurate the nascent government. Reverend Canaan Banana was appointed ceremonial state president.

With the economic collapse the government was facing an increasingly popular opposition, and resorted to politics of the land. Chitando (2005:220) argues that state functionaries systematically appropriated religious ideas, with concepts from Christianity and African traditional religions being culled to buttress political statements. He further postulates that the controversial land reform was couched in religious terms and notions like sovereignty attained mythical proportions (Chitando 2005:220). The biblical story of Naboth was often narrated at political rallies. The blood of the martyrs and the wishes of the ancestors became the bedrock of land reform. Stories of the massacres of black combatants at Chimoio and Nyadzonya were told endless times. Bodies of the late combatants who died during the war and were laid to rest in their areas of operation were exhumed and reburied in their respective family graveyards. This followed a Shona belief that a person who is buried among strangers or does not receive proper burial rituals would not qualify to become an ancestor but could only be an alien spirit. Reburial of these cadres meant that they would join the long line of the ancestral spirits who themselves died in the quest to regain their lost land and as such whosoever was expropriating land from the settlers was serving the interests of the spirit world.

The ritual of land reform was accompanied by song and dance. Traditional symbolic weapons were used, such as axes and clubs, and participants wore tattered clothes as fighters did during the struggle. Whenever a particular farm was under acquisition, the new landlords would sing war songs and sometimes opaque beer was made available. This was usually followed by the narration of a long history of the struggle which was often laced with mythical examples. Thereafter, individual families would perform rituals to inform the ancestors that a particular place was now part of the family property.

Land as a matter of economic justice

Mrs Victoria Chabata of the Hopely farm argued that it was imperative for black people to acquire land in order to alleviate poverty among blacks (interview on 17 June 2008, Harare). She narrated how the white people took land from black people without compensation (interview on 17 June 2008, Harare). Comrade Zivai Nhamo concurred with Chabata when he said: "We know the whites stole our land because they came with a Bible and instructed us to close our eyes for prayers, when we opened our eyes the Bible was still there but the land had gone" (interview on 17 June 2008, Harare).

When Comrade Kuziva was asked why his farm plot was not producing as much as it had under a white farmer when land was supposed to be improving black people's lives economically, his answer was that he did not have the support of the banks and as a result was struggling to finance the programmes at the farm (interview on 17 June, 2008, Harare). For him the white farmers were working hand in glove with the bankers to sabotage farming activities in Zimbabwe (interview on 17 June 2008, Harare).

This theme of land as a source of economic improvement for the indigenous black people was echoed at political rallies, in state media and by many other government mouthpieces. The people of Zimbabwe were promised that once they got the land their economic status would automatically change. This makes clear that in fact the land reform was an economic issue that was wrapped in a religious package. When the lives of the people remained the same even after land reform, the government explained this was because of the sanctions. This theme is beyond the scope of this paper and as a result I will not discuss it. What is important now is for us to examine the other side of the story.

What the victor conveniently forgets: memories of the defeated

The defeated here refers to the white farmers who lost their land to the blacks. I deliberately refer to the land at the centre of controversy as their land because they understood it to be their land. Their argument was that at law they were the legitimate owners of land. Secondly, they argued that the land reform was a sign of anarchy in as much as it was immoral. Lastly, the land reform was political.

The legal status of land reform

The white commercial farmers and their black sympathisers argued that they were the rightful owners of the land because they purchased it. They held that it was a dangerous caricature to argue that all white people were beneficiaries of the colonial land policy. Catherine Buckle observed that *The Herald* of 2 June 2000 carried a list of 804 properties which were designated for compulsory acquisition but close analysis of the title deeds numbers show that some of these farms had been purchased as late as 1994 (Buckle 2001:129). This exemplifies how the majority of white farmers acquired their properties in Zimbabwe (Buckle 2001:129).

They further argued that land reform was illegal because it ignored the issue of property rights which were enshrined in the constitution of Zimbabwe. When I asked Mr James, a former white commercial farmer who is now a resident in Pietermaritzburg, about his views on land reform in Zimbabwe, he argued that land grabs in Zimbabwe were illegal because the programme did

not follow the due process of law (interview on 7 September 2010, Pieter-maritzburg). Martin Meredith (2002:198) pointed out that in November 2000 the Supreme Court ruled that the government's fast-track land reform was illegal because land seizures were occurring at a time when only preliminary steps in the compulsory seizure process had been taken. Furthermore, the Supreme Court ruled that farm occupations amounted to unfair discrimination. If it had been the case that the government had expropriated farms owned by whites to right historical wrongs, this in itself did not necessarily constitute unfair discrimination on the grounds of race, provided the process was conducted lawfully with payment of fair compensation (Meredith 2002:198).

Mugabe responded to the Supreme Court's ruling by declaring that "no judicial decision will stand in our way ... My own position is that we should not even be defending our position in the courts. This country is our country and this land is our land .... (Meredith 2002:198).

Some analysts argue that this statement marked the beginning of the end of the rule of law in Zimbabwe. This issue of compensation was also raised by Mr James who lamented that former white commercial farmers were never compensated for the development they carried out on the farms, contrary to the propaganda transmitted by the government (interview on 2 September 2010, Pietermaritzburg).

Moreover, some white commercial farmers held that even if it was to be accepted that the whites came and occupied Zimbabwe, it must be remembered that when the whites arrived the country was almost empty with a widely scattered population of half a million. There was plenty of room for the odd 3 000-acre farm. Most blacks had been unaffected by this sudden inflow of settlers (interview on 2 September 2010, Pietermaritzburg). Of course this view is very weak as it is hard to prove.

Lastly some former white commercial farmers argue that they were born in Zimbabwe and as such were also sons and daughters of the soil. They claim that they do not know anywhere else beside Zimbabwe (interview on 2 September 2010, Pietermaritzburg). Mr James pointed out that he was as Zimbabwean as anyone else. He claimed that if the rumour was true that Mugabe's parents came from Malawi it followed that Mugabe was in the same category as many former white commercial farmers (interview on 2 September 2010).

Land reform: a sign of lawlessness and immoral leadership in Zimbabwe

Gary Norman argued that the land reform signposted the beginning of the decay. Speaking about himself, he said he was a veteran of World War II and was given a farm in Mvurwi as payment for his services (interview on 9 September 2010). He did a lot of development on the farm but when it was

expropriated he got nothing (interview on 9 September 2010). For him this was a sign of anarchy because World War II was about the whole world and not just about the western countries. He argues that he was aware of many people whose cases were similar to his (interview on 9 September 2010).

Apart from this, Norman holds that the way land reform was carried out left some bad memories for the victims. He argued that even if the end was justified the means were inhuman (interview on 9 September 2010). For Mrs Christina Webster the land reform was immoral because it was a reversal of the policy of reconciliation embraced by the government in 1980 (interview on 11 September 2010).

When Zimbabwe attained its political independence in 1980, the then prime minister Robert Mugabe announced that all whites were free to stay and make Zimbabwe their home. The fact that he changed this position during the land invasions proved that he was not a reliable leader (interview on 11 September 2010).

Land reform as a political gimmick

Mr David argued that land reform was nothing but a political game by a regime whose popularity was on the wane (interview on 11 September 2010). He explained that the land reform only became a hot issue when the economy was in decline. This programme was meant to give the government political capital (interview on 11 September 2010).This view was corroborated by Mr Wellington who argued that the land reform was never about the people but was a culmination of political interests and greed (interview on 13 September 2010). The programme was characterised by wanton destruction of property and intense looting by powerful politicians (interview on 13 September 2010). Wellington further pointed out that land was not given to landless people but to powerful politicians within Zanu-PF (interview on 13 September 2010).

Analysis

This research demonstrated that history is always biased. EH Carr once wrote "that all history is history of thought; it is the re-enactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is studying" (Carr 1961:24). If someone says something happened in this way what that particular individual is saying is that he or she thinks it happened in that particular way.

This research makes clear that history can be written from above or from below. History from above is when the story is told from the victor's point of view. This kind of history is what we usually find in books and other written documents. This is usually the official history written by people who are in the position of authority. This kind of history ignores the perspective of

47

the victim. This is the kind of history that governments have promoted through state-controlled media. History from below is the history that attempts to retrieve the voice of the victim. It usually exists in oral form because it is never accorded space in official publications by those who control institutions.

This research has also highlighted different perspectives in history. The war veterans and their supporters saw farmland as sacred space. Their perspective was influenced by Zimbabwe's traditional religious thought forms as well as by politics. For them land reform was an important ritual meant to appease the ancestors. On the other hand the white commercial farmers saw land as an economic commodity. The land that the black people saw as a religious entity is the same land that the white farmer saw as a commercial entity.

This research has, furthermore, established the contribution of oral history to the historical discourse as a whole. Oral sources penetrate where written sources fail. The government never publicised the fact that there was violence during land reform but personal reminiscences of some white farmers inform us that the process was very violent and life threatening. The official position of the government was that it was compensating white farmers for the development made at each individual farm and yet oral history informs us that this was never the case.

Lastly, this study has shown that for each one of us, our memories are unique. Steve Rose postulated that if you lose your memory you, as you, cease to exist (Rose 1992:1). Memories are living processes, which become transformed, imbued with new meanings, each time we recall them (Rose 1992:1). Rose contends that for each of us our personal memories are profoundly subjective (Rose 1992:1). Elizabeth Loftus observed that political as well as religious views all influence the way people remember, let alone what they remember (Loftus 1944:160). The bottom line is that the process of remembering is very complex. The mind systematically chooses what to remember and what not to remember. In oral history interviewees usually follow a certain ideology or worldview; whatever the person chooses to tell must be able to fit into his or her own "big picture".

Conclusion

The overarching research question for this study: Who were the rightful owners of the expropriated farms in Zimbabwe? In trying to adequately answer this question, the researcher gave a historical overview of the land issue in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, this study managed to discuss the perspective of the war veterans and the Zimbabwean government on one hand and that of the former white farmers on the other. After discussing the two divergent sides given by the antagonists, this study took the position that

the issue of truth in history is as elusive as a butterfly. History is always biased because memories are manufactured by people and their perspectives play a major role in history. Moreover, it emerged from this study that although oral history may be affected by memory loss, the major contribution of this discipline is its ability to reveal suppressed memories. It also emerged in this study that farms were contested space because of their religious, economic and political value. This study did not discuss the issue of land use, which remains an important topic for future research.

References

Alexander, Jocelyn 2006. *The unsettled land, state-making of the politics of land in Zimbabwe 1893-2003.* Oxford: James Currey.

Bakare, Sebastian 1993. *My right to land in the bible and in Zimbabwe. A theology of Land for Zimbabwe.* Harare: Zimbabwe Council of Churches.

Beach, David 1994. *The Shona and their Neighbours.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Blair, David 2003. *Degrees in Violence, Robert Mugabe and the struggle for power in Zimbabwe.* London: Continuum.

Buckle, Catherine 2001. *African tears.* Johannesburg: Coves Day.

Carr, Edward 1961. *What is history?* New York: Vintage Books.

Chitando, Ezra 2005. "In the beginning was the land. The appropriation of religious themes in Political discourse in Zimbabwe." *Journal of the International African Institute* 75.2 (July 2005). Available: http: www.access my library. Accessed 12 September.

Eliade, Mircea 1958. *Patterns in Comparative Religion.* London: Sheed &Ward.

Eliade, Mircea 1961. *The sacred and the Profane: The nature of Religion.* New York: Harper and Row.

Gundani, Paul 2002. The land crisis in Zimbabwe and the role of the churches towards its resolution. *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* 28(2).

http://en,Wikipedia.org/wiki/RobertMugabe.accessed 13 September 2010.

Lan, David 1985. *Guns and rain; Guerillas and spirit mediums in Zimbabwe.* London: Currey.

Loftus, Elizabeth 1944 *Memory surprising new insights into how we remember and why we forget,* London: Addison Wesley Publishing Company.

Meredith, Martin 2002. *Robert Mugabe: power, plunder and tyranny in Zimbabwe*, Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball Publishers.

Mukonyora, I, Cox, J.L & Verstraelen, F.J (ed.) 1993. *Rewriting the Bible: he real issues,* Gweru: Mambo Press.

Mutambirwa, Chamunorwa J 1980. *The rise of Settler power in Southern Rhodesia,* London: Associated University Press.

Palmer, R.H. 1968. *Aspects of Rhodesian land policy 1890-1936.* Salisbury: The central Africa Historical Association.

Ranger Terrance 1985. *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-7. A study of African Resistance.* London: Heinemann.

Rose, Steve 1992. *The making of memory.* Toronto: Bantam Books.

Sanneh, Lamin 1989. *Translating the message, the missionary impact on culture.* New York: Orbis books.

Shoko, Tabona 2006. My bones shall rise again: War Veterans, spirits and land reform in Zimbabwe. African Studies Centre. Available: http//www.assatashakur.org/forum/carriers-torch/33795-my bones-shall-rise—again-wa…

Interviews

Chabata Victoria, interview at Hopley farm, 17 June 2008.

David, interview at Boshorf Methodist Church Pietermaritzurg, 11 September 2010.

Gary Norman, interview at Central Methodist Church in Pietermaritzburg, 9 September 2010.

Haivhiyiwi, interview at Hopley farm, 17 June 2008.

James, interview at Central Methodist Church in Pietermaritzburg, 2 September 2010.

Kuziva, interview at Hopley farm, 17 June 2008.

Mabhunu Muchapera, interview at Hopley farm, 16 June 2008.

Muparadzi, interview at Hopley farm, 17 June 2008.

Nhamo Zivai, interview at Hopley farm, 17 June 2008.

Shirichena, interview at Hopley farm, 16 June 2008.

Webster Christina, interview at Central Methodist Church in Pietermaritzburg, 11 September 2010.

Wellington, interview at 26 Chamberlain, Pietermaritzurg, 13 September 2010.

Zvikasapera, interview at Hopley farm, 17 June 2008.

Digitising and documenting the oral history

Roger Layton

Project Manager of the National Policy on

Digitisation of Heritage Project, Department of Arts and Culture

Introduction

Background and policy context

The Living Heritage Policy (Draft for Public Review: Department of Arts and Culture, December 2009) includes an entire chapter on documentation, but does not make reference to the means of documentation. Such "documentation" in the digital world of today means to capture data, information, visual, audio and audiovisual records into digital form and to structure such digital resources into digital repositories. These digital repositories serve a dual purpose of preservation of heritage under threat and provision of universal access to resources that are largely inaccessible at present.

A policy on digitisation is under development by the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) at present but has not yet reached the status of public review (Terms of Reference for the Project for the Creation of a National Policy on Digitisation, Department of Arts and Culture, 2009). This policy is expected to provide support for digitisation initiatives by prescribing parameters on preservation, access, ownership and foreign funding.

The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (Paris, 17 October 2003) identifies the need for member states to identify their intangible cultural heritage (ICH), including the need for research and the provision of access. The convention specifically identifies the need to establish documentation institutions but does not define the nature of such documentation.

Both the UNESCO Convention and the Living Heritage Policy require the creation of inventories of the living or intangible heritage which could at

its minimum be merely an index to physical archives, and at its maximum exploit modern information technologies in which these inventories take the form of digital repositories with long-term preservation initiatives and which provide access to their designated user communities.

In this paper I offer recommendations on the digital documentation of the oral history and associated living heritage in order to both capitalise on the benefits of digital media and databases in semantically rich domains and also to identify and mitigate the risks and threats associated with the rapid obsolescence of technology. These recommendations include the development of digital repositories to address the needs of the oral history.

The technology context

When framing the technology context it is essential to review the mistakes of the past in which information and reproductions were collected that are now difficult or impossible to access, while also looking forward, in hindsight of these lessons of the past, to plan a future in which digital obsolescence becomes a controllable problem.

The information technologies are evolving at such a rate that many of the electronic and digital records of 10 to 100 years ago are no longer accessible. This presents a problem that demands urgent attention in the recovery of older data and recordings. The goal is the retrieval of digital files in older media and formats or the conversion of physical, electronic or magnetic recordings into a modern digital form. There are three predominant issues concerning the handling of obsolescent records and technologies, being the media, the format and the meaning. These are the questions of "on what medium is it stored?", "what language is it written in?" and "what does it say?"

The media used by the earliest documenters of history were those who carved their words and pictures into rock, or painted their message in rock art in caves. In the past 100 years a host of different media have been used and in many cases the media cannot be used to extract the content. This may be caused by damage to the media itself, such as cassette tapes which have become unwound, or 3.25" diskettes which have been exposed to poor environmental conditions or may be caused by loss of the readers of the media. For example, disk drives for 8" and 5" diskettes are mostly unavailable, and yet this was the standard for many years of computing throughout the 1970s and 80s.

Once the content has been extracted into a generic computer file, there is an additional problem that the software that can interpret and represent the digital content may no longer be available. We have the bits and the bytes, but do not know how they are structured into the message. This is often referred to as the file format. Some file formats may only be usable by

software which was in place in the 1980s or earlier and which can no longer be found and used. This is a lesser problem than loss of media since there are many emulators[1] available to run the original software systems on modern computers.

The third issue is concerned with meaning, relevance and context of the digital content as extracted. All older formats either had no metadata, or separated the metadata from the content, so that if the content is found without the metadata then the content may be significantly devalued. We may have extracted an image, perhaps from an early digital format or a microfilm, but no context associated with that picture.

The concept of digital archaeology is an emerging discipline to deal with these three issues and produce meaningful digital heritage from the partial and damaged digital records of the past.

We are approaching a critical point in time, given that the decisions we make on technologies today will impact our ability to access and use these digital archives in the future. We may be creating a future "digital dark ages"(see the Lund Principles, Sweden, 4 April 2001) scenario in which all digital content that we have carefully created is no longer available to us due to the same mistakes we made previously in terms of older media and formats.

The largest single factor in the usage of the information and communications technologies (ICTs) for heritage is that all of these ICTs have been designed and built for transient data and information processing – essentially for records that are expected to last five to seven years --- and not for data and information that is expected to last forever, as we require for the digital heritage and other long-term data requirements that fall outside of heritage, such as health records concerning asbestos exposure and music rights information, both of which may be required over a 50 to 70 year lifetime, but which themselves do not have an eternal agenda. To address the needs of the digital heritage effectively we need to reconceptualise and redesign our ICTs with longevity as a primary goal. The implication is that most of the current technologies at our disposal for recording of heritage are inadequate and that new models are necessary that are specific to the needs of long-term heritage.

Digital technology provides surrogate objects for our human senses. It is currently limited by our senses of hearing (audio) and sight (documents, images) and technology has not yet managed to adequately capture our senses of touch, smell and taste, which are all important in documenting the living heritage. It is likely that these will be able to be captured in terms of a total sensory experience in future technologies within a 20 to 100 year

---

[1] An emulator is a computer program which is able to run other computer programs on hardware and software systems other than those the program was originally developed for. One useful website to find information about files is http://www.file-extensions.org/.

53

horizon. Haptics has for at least 20 years been a strong area for research and development that allows users to interface with computers through the sense of touch and this is already in production in modern computer games that allow for force feedback.

The context of an ageing population of subjects

One critical factor within the oral history is that the individuals who have the memories that we wish to preserve are ageing constantly, and many are lost to us from the start to finish of projects. It was reported at the 2006 SAMA Conference that an oral history project concerning Robben Island was impacted by the loss of some of the participants during the study, and before they had been interviewed.

Timing is critical, and having to wait for funding to become available or standards to be ratified may reduce the value of the project, and particularly if key people are no longer available. While we would all like to live forever the reality of ageing must be identified as a critical constraint to the success of certain oral history projects.

Positioning this paper

I argue for universal consistency in the approach to the documentation of heritage in general, and the ICH and oral history in particular. As heritage documentation is moving rapidly from the physical to the digital, there is a natural convergence emerging in the disciplines, allowing previously segregated domains of heritage to find a common basis in the digital heritage.

The digital heritage

The UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage (adopted at the 32nd session of the General Conference of UNESCO, 17 Oct 2003) addresses the specific needs of heritage converted into digital form from other analogue sources or which is "born-digital", in which there is no other form besides the digital object.

The living heritage is unique among the various types of heritage, in that it is the only form of heritage which does not have physical form, and its only realisation is through documentation or reproduction in one form or another. Prior documentation approaches produced magnetic audio stored on magnetic tapes, physical photographs, printed reports, maps and drawings. Whereas the tangible heritage of objects and sites and the physical documentary heritage of libraries and archives will live over many human generations, the living heritage only exists within specific human lives; unless this is recorded or is passed down from generation to generation through oral traditions it will be lost forever. Whereas we can delay digitisation of objects and sites, given that both are likely to still be around in 10 to 20 years time, when reproduction technologies will likely be vastly improved, this

delay is not acceptable within the living heritage which dies with the people who live this heritage. Modern technologies for digital audio, image and video have only been available for less than 10 years, and they provide a rich and widespread capability for capturing and documentation that was not previously possible. The rapid growth in capture technologies has reached the point where almost all mobile phones have capabilities for capture of images, video and audio, and it is estimated that more than 90 percent of people in South Africa have access to mobile phones.

The UNESCO Charter emphasises the risks associated with the rapid obsolescence of hardware and software, and highlights the problems posed by continually advancing technology. The Charter also identifies the needs for member states to establish policy frameworks and to consider the financial implications of digital migration.

In particular, a point on digital continuity is made in the Charter that digitisation is a long-term initiative and not short term, and this point is mirrored in this paper in terms of practical guidelines to increase the value of the digital heritage. This is achieved through giving serious attention to long-term preservation of the digital heritage, and also through capitalising on the unique characteristics of digital content that can be structured and hyper-linked in order to embed meaning into the content and to support the innovations associated with discovery of new patterns of meaning from existing content. A future computer-aided heritage tool may use the technologies of artificial intelligence[2] to help automate these innovations, just as the modern calculator has helped us to automate calculations and as computers have become increasingly used in all areas of our lives.

Capturing the "elements" of the oral history

The Living Heritage policy and the UNESCO ICH Convention both refer to the "elements" of the living or intangible heritage, but neither define this term.

I propose that these "elements" can be anything that we want them to be, and that they may be defined for specific purposes and be of various types. For the purpose of capture, or digitisation, an element may be a digital file, such as an audio or video file, or may be an interview, which may include a number of digital files as its output. For the purpose of the organisation of digital content, an element may be an entire project and the collection of all of its digital content, structured under a single name, which could be

---

[2]   Artificial intelligence (AI) is a set of technologies that attempt to replicate human understanding, knowledge and intelligence within computer programs.

the element as used for research and as produced by a team or an individual researcher. For the purpose of providing access, the elements may be the original captured content or may be repackaged content to meet the needs of users, no matter whether these be scholars, researchers or tourists.

In terms of the oral history as a specific discipline within the living heritage, there are a number of considerations to be taken into account for identifying, capturing, storing and using these elements:

- Individual "elements" need to be considered for capturing purposes – with each being uniquely identified no matter where it was created, who was the creator or what form it takes. These are the original captured content, as a raw original source.
- Elements may make reference to other nondigital materials that may need to be digitised for capturing the full context – including photographs, other audio and video files, newspaper cuttings, notebooks, maps, films, archives and diaries.
- Elements may be seen as individual heritage assets and resources, and may form part of larger wholes, such as a number of raw digital audio files from a single interview. Elements may be combined into "virtual collections" of digital content such as the complete collection of audio records or video records produced within a project.
- A single element may be referenced and used in a variety of virtual collections.
- New elements may be created by repackaging, using existing elements and for a variety of purposes and users, such as for archiving, education or for tourism.

For the purpose of this paper, I am considering that these elements include data, audio and video coupled with transcriptions, translations and associated metadata, and that these captured elements are then structured into large elements at the project level. Whereas the "element" is an abstract term, there are a number of physical representations. It is particularly useful when considering the digital heritage to work with these abstract concepts directly, since this facilitates the uniform handling of all types of elements even though they arise from different sources and are in different formats. This approach falls within the modern programming principle of object orientation – seeing the world as an interconnection of complex objects.

One particularly important approach to capturing the oral history, given the widespread availability of mobile phones, is through schools and communities, who are now able to capture audio recordings of the older members of their community, perhaps related to a particular topic of interest, and to then package these recordings to create online stories that can be viewed and shared with the world through the ubiquitous internet. Such

school-level oral history projects have been facilitated in the past through competitions, such as one conducted with the *Sunday Times* and SAHA. This approach has important potential for the future. The modern mobile phone technologies are sufficient for a minimal level of capture, and there is little need at the school level for more expensive equipment. Let's rather reposition the mobile phone away from being a pure communication device --- into an alternative role as a means for digital capture.

After the capture is completed, the learners should unpack the materials they have captured and then repackage these as part of a school project. This unpacking and repacking process is not easy but can be learnt. The first step in developing such an oral history project is to make and transcribe the recordings, and from then to codify these transcriptions in order to create the context for these elements.

Whereas I have presented this example in terms of a school-level project this same process can be followed for all oral history projects that capture and use digital recordings and other media elements.

Contextualising the oral history documentation by codification

I was invited in late 2006 to help with the gaMohle Oral History project, concerning the Women's March at its 50th anniversary. During this period I ran a workshop on codification of the oral history using a method I had developed earlier to build digital heritage resources from recorded materials. The term "codification" refers to identifying specific statements made by the interviewee and code them in order to be retrieved according to pre-set codes.

My work had resulted in the conceptualisation of a unified heritage database structure and digital resources model that are applicable across all forms of heritage, while preserving the individual characteristics for each type of heritage resource. A number of individuals and organisations had previously recognised the need for such a unified database model but our research failed to find a reference to a universal model for this data through a search of the published literature. However many models and standards were found that are focused on specific domains and disciplines of heritage. Based upon these findings I set out to design and implement this unified heritage data model and to then apply this, in a proof-of-concept approach, to different types of heritage. This work, under a programme that we call "ETHER" (eternal heritage), is ongoing at present and is driven by the goal of developing the next generation of digital heritage tools.

I applied an early version of this model to the oral history being collected on the gaMohle project, which captured and transcribed audio tape recordings and also collected associated materials. My approach in the

58

workshop with the team was to treat each transcription as a single element of the oral history, which is then unpacked by identifying the parts within the transcribed recording and what these parts refer to. The purpose is to create a formal context in digital heritage based upon the recorded timeline of the interview in which various questions are asked and various answers are given at particular points. Specific index points on the recording are then linked to other concepts. In some cases the interviewee will make a single statement, and in others they may speak for a long time, relating a particular incident or memory and during this time may make a number of statements.

Each statement made by the interviewee can be codified in a number of ways, and my approach is to create a set of vocabularies that identify the contexts of the statements, including a set of authority files that identify the people, organisations, events and places referred to by the interviewee. Place names in particular are a problem given the changing of names, as well as the usage of local names that are only known within specific communities.

During the codification process, lists of people, places, events and organisations are identified and noted, and added to any existing lists that may be available. For example, people referred to by name can be collected and can be used as a linkage between different interviews and recordings. Creating vocabularies is a more difficult task, since this requires building up a semantic model for the information gathered, which may be challenging and which may evolve during the project as new concepts are identified and structured into a consistent model.

Using this approach it is possible to formally document each statement within each interview, including metadata, in the form of coded values, for entire recorded elements and for the individual statements made within the recordings.

The coded values, identified with particular statements on the transcribed recordings, provide semantic threads that can be used to link many interviews and statements and to group them into larger stories. These coded values are used as connectors between stories and also provide a linkage to the tangible heritage in terms of physical items, historical sites, documents and posters. These coded values help us to explore the multi-dimensional nature of these recordings as authentic and original historical evidence, and as a tool for innovation to develop an improved understanding of the past and to tell new untold new stories arising from the ability to connect stories in novel ways.

Models for organisation and presentation of the digital oral history

I propose two models in this paper, which follow on from previous work conducted within the SAHRIS project (see Layton, R. Codification of Intangible Heritage for the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS), SAMA National Conference, 13 June 2006, Champagne Sports Resort, Drakensberg, KwaZulu-Natal). These models concern how the digital oral history is captured and organised, and also how this is repackaged for presentation. The first model concerns original authentic evidence and its structuring, which then leads into the second model for innovating new viewpoints on history.

The first model is what has been presented in the previous section concerning capturing of the oral history and the codification process. This is the identification of the intangible heritage as linkages between the elements, creating a "story-centric" model, as outlined above in terms of stories told by individuals who have been interviewed. These linkages are achieved through formal codification of people, roles, dates and events, places and locations, references to other elements and linkages to subject matter. These linkages help to position each individual element into a larger whole, and provide it with context. This viewpoint is thus a collective or communal ideal and it uses only the original and authentic source materials as collected within the projects. The story-centric approach starts with the recordings, and maps out timelines and relationships with other materials. The primary activity of this first model is analysis of existing content.

The second model is a "virtual collection" model, in which the intangible heritage is seen from the viewpoint of the user of the digital heritage, allowing new stories to be told using the existing elements. This is research in which the oral history records are coupled with other sources to build new stories, perhaps by isolating one or more of the threads in order to tell new stories and to make inferences. The virtual collection is then the selected source materials that are positioned together to tell a story. This model is particularly useful for education, in which school projects can be creative exercises in storytelling, finding new linkages and patterns, and presenting history in new ways and coupled with the previous suggestion of using mobile phones to capture new original source materials. Whereas there may be a limited amount of source materials available, there is an infinite number of ways in which these can be combined and no limit to the number of stories that can be woven in deepening our understanding of the past. Whereas school-level learners will have limited scope for capturing of original content, they can use existing content if this is available in digital repositories and they can then repackage these into their own stories. For tertiary-level students and postgraduate researchers it will be expected that they gather new raw information from a variety of sources, and add to the body of knowledge and materials available. This may include not only the oral history itself, but the artistic and scientific works of the past, and prior research and positions,

and the wealth of historical archives that are available for such purposes, such as university libraries, archives, museums, and the newer online archives such as SAHA (South African History Archives, www.saha.org.za). The primary activity of this second model is creativity, inference and storytelling, using the existing content as the basis.

I see this second model as a possible realisation of *The Glass Bead Game* of Hermann Hesse (Henry Holt, 1990, original in German 1943), the 1946 Nobel Laureate in Literature. This story of the Glass Bead Game takes place in the 25th century, and the game is played by finding innovative linkages and parallels that span the entire history and practice of human endeavour, from music, the arts, historical archives and the sciences, with the outcomes being novel contributions to human knowledge established through finding analogies. Whereas Hesse does not provide the rules of this Glass Bead Game, I see that our modern work in the digital heritage, where we use the power of hyperlinking, vocabularies and digital content to enable the creation of new expressions of history, is aligned to the expectations of his fictional vision. Hesse's ideological conception of the "Magister Ludi" (master of the game) represents the individual who shows the greatest power of linkage of ideas and who is rewarded by this accolade. The digital heritage is being constructed continuously, either from migration from old records, or from being created as born-digital, and I expect that this will eventually obtain a critical mass in which it is representative of the entire production of human cultural, artistic, scientific and social practices, and the entire scope of the natural world, and providing all of this in a single standard structure, which is an unrealised dream from the past. I thus argue that Hesse's fictional vision, far from being relevant in the 25th century, will be realised in practical reality within the next 10 to 20 years as the digital heritage grows and becomes accessible to everyone and as the individual "elements" become amenable to linkage in ways not previously possible.

One important consideration when creating the models is that there is rarely a situation in which there is a single viewpoint that is widely agreed, and there are contestations and challenges to positions, as well as interprettations that are required to be made on the basis of incomplete and unreliable evidence. Such is the nature of historical research. It is thus important that any attempt to capture these elements and to restructure these into personal stories also acknowledges and captures these challenges and positions as first-class data elements and allows these to be recorded and compared.

The role of digital repositories

The "digital dark ages" scenario mentioned earlier will likely result primarily from the inability of individual institutions and researchers to manage their digital resources properly. The problem is then to define what constitutes a well-run digital repository in terms of standards and practices that guarantee long-term survival and which provide the right access to trusted digital materials.

We have a recent history of not being able to look after our electronic and digital records properly. Media and formats from only a few years ago are already under threat of loss and there is no central control of these in many institutions. Older digital archives can be found in punched card and Dictabelt media and these are increasingly difficult to play back and convert to modern formats, and a large effort and cost is required to perform these migrations to digital content. The conversion of outdated media and formats to modern digital formats is an active area for work, but such facilities exist primarily in the USA (www.dictabeltrecord.com/ http://www.videointerchange.com/).

It is recommended that digital resources are maintained in well-run digital repositories, rather than within individual projects. The larger institutions, with masses of important archives, including the universities and research institutions, as well as the memory institutions of government, are more likely to be able to develop the capacity to create and manage such repositories, in terms of the skills base, infrastructure and financing.

These repositories should not only contain digital content for the purpose of current storage and access requirements, but should also be developed in conjunction with best practices and standards for digital preservation, such as the OAIS Reference Model (Reference Model for an Open Archival Information System (OAIS), CCSDS 650.0-B-1, Blue Book, January 2002; this has also been published as ISO 14721:2003), which treats an archive in terms of its preservation needs. However, being OAIS-compliant is insufficient and it is also necessary to ensure that the repository is trusted and that risks are being identified and managed.

The OAIS Reference Model has been used as the basis for a measurement model to measure the level of trust and authenticity in digital archives. This model has been developed by the National Archives and Records Services (of the USA) and the Research Libraries Group (RLG) (Trustworthy Repositories Audit & Certification: Criteria and Checklist, Version 1.0, February 2007; jointly published by the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) and Center for Reference Libraries, CRL) and it states the obvious fact that a digital archive is unable to simply promote itself as authentic without some external criteria being in place to measure authenticity.

South Africa has been slow in the development of large-scale digital archives, either special-purpose or general-purpose, and without some

common basis for the evaluation of such archives, it is tempting to see all archives are equal. Digital repositories store information from a variety of sources, including libraries, archives, museum collections, learning materials, research projects and results, as well as for commercial purposes. A risk-based audit toolkit for digital repositories has been developed by the Digital Curation Centre (DCC) and DigitalPreservationEurope (DPE) (Layton, R. Towards a digital future for museums: creating a digitisation strategy, SAMA National Conference, 23-27 September 2010, Durban, available from www.virtualmuseum.co.za) which helps repository managers to identify, manage and mitigate risks associated with the development and sustainable operation of these repositories; this builds on the previously cited OAIS Model and the trustworthiness models.

It is my recommendation that digital repositories should not be based upon a single type of heritage resource, but should rather enable the storage of all types, and with the ability to link these as outlined earlier. One key criterion for success will be the ability for these repositories to interoperate with one another, and it may be that a model as simple as the hyperlink may be suitable as an initial implementation for such interoperability, on the assumption that secure access via the HTTP (Web) protocol is possible for all repositories.

Our previously cited programme "ETHER" is directed specifically at the development of repository technologies through research and development and to provide this in an inexpensive manner using open source tools. This is ongoing work at present and is in its infancy, with attention to museums, sites and buildings, museum collections, archives and the living heritage.

Developing a digitisation strategy

The starting point for any institutions embarking upon digitisation of heritage, or the capture of original born-digital materials, is to develop a strategy that defines the choices and priorities that guide the work of creating digital heritage and preserving this over the long term.

A good digitisation strategy is (www.virtualmuseum.co.za)

- "aligned to external priorities: worldwide, national, provincial, local, sectoral
- informed by national policy
- evidence-based: using multiple dimensional sources of evidence
- readable and understandable by all stakeholders

- aligned to needs of the institution and its users
- practical, achievable and measureable"

Digitisation is about informed choices in terms what to digitise and how, and when to digitise, and should identify the particular programmes, projects and actions that take the institution to an explicitly stated envisioned future.

The creation of a digital strategy is a process in itself which requires the identification of all inputs, such as the needs of the stakeholders, and the priorities of the sector, and the formulation of a specific set of guidelines that will inform future projects. A digitisation strategy should ideally look 10 to 20 years into the future.

In the context of the oral history, additional consideration needs to be given to the problems of access to oral sources, given the problems previously cited of the ageing population of potential interviewees and the ethical issues concerning privacy.

A number of key questions are required to be asked and answered when developing the strategy, and the answers may be obtained through various research instruments including literature surveys, interviews, case studies, focus groups and questionnaires. Some of these questions are

- What technologies should be used for capturing, including equipment, media and formats?
- What data should be captured with the digital resources, and what metadata is required to provide the context?
- How are digital rights recorded to limit reproduction and to clarify moral rights?
- Where will digital resources be stored, will you have your own repository, or will you use a repository hosting service?
- How will you assess and mitigate the long-term impacts of the repositories, including the risk of obsolescence, and the people and systems that maintain and enliven the digital resources?
- How will you provide access, and to whom?
- How will you control usage of the resources, including agreements for usage?
- What is your position on the handling of rights management, and on ethical issues?

Summary

It is important to consolidate the digital heritage in the country, in order to avoid the duplication of efforts that will result from over-competition in a relatively small sector.

No one involved in managing, collecting and organising heritage resources can avoid consideration for digitisation and the digital heritage, and it is important that each institution and funded project develop a strategy that makes explicit their position on digitisation.

The oral history is in a unique position to benefit from digitisation, if carefully managed for long-term preservation, including the ability to capture, organise and provide access to material and content in ways that were not possible without these technologies.

We are only at the start of the digital heritage; we need to ensure that it will last forever, which will be our legacy to pass on to future generations.

Oral history in the classroom: forced removals and the carrying of passes

Shobana Singh
Teacher, Kharina Secondary School, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal

The apartheid government enforced many laws that affected people's lives, separated people, oppressed people and made people feel inferior to others. One such Act was the Group Areas Act. This Act forced people to live in areas allocated to them according to their racial classification. Many people were affected by this Act. However, few of their stories have been recorded.

The Edendale area was occupied by a multiracial society, of different colours and beliefs. People lived in close proximity in harmony with one another, until the Group Areas Act was enforced by the apartheid government. Little information on the forced removals that followed has been documented.

The start of the project

The Greater Edendale development Initiative (GEDI) under the leadership of Mr Prem Singh invited educators and learners from different schools in the Pietermaritzburg area to participate in the oral history project on the forced removals and the carrying of pass books. I was informed of the project and decided to attend the meeting. Four schools from the northern suburbs participated: Northbury Park Secondary, Silver Heights, Kharina Secondary and Woodlands Secondary.

The National Curriculum Statement makes provision for inclusive history and the use of different historical sources in the teaching of oral history. The National Curriculum Statement also attaches importance to the infusion of human rights and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) into the curriculum. Educators sometimes have difficulty finding suitable topics for oral history projects. Over the past years topics such as street name changes, heritage sites and local heroes were common topics. The selection of topics requires educators to provide guidance in terms of researching, drawing up questions and identifying suitable interviewees.

The focus of the project was to research the forced removals that took place in the Edendale area. The schools in Edendale could choose the topic on the carrying of passes, and then train learners to become the oral historians who would go out to do the research and conduct the interviews. However the process was not that simple, because learners needed to be selected by educators from the different schools to do the project, to be trained how to select people for the interviews, to plan how, when and where to interview

67

the person, plan open-ended questions, and learn how to listen to the interviewee and later decode and transcribe their interview. They could also collect relevant artefacts such as old photographs and other items to use in a display later.

Marginalised people do have a voice. Their voices need to be listened to in order to understand the suffering and pain they endured during the process of forced removals that was carried out by the apartheid government. The process of carrying out such a project was one of regular meetings with educators of all participating schools in the project. Mr Prem Singh invited Ms Barbara Wahlberg from the University of KwaZulu-Natal to assist with the project.

Workshops of educators and learners

The educators met at the Winston Churchill Theatre where they were briefed on the topic and the process that would unfold to get the learners involved. At this meeting Ms Barbara Wahlberg gave a PowerPoint presentation on undertaking an oral history project. There was a vibrant discussion by the educators on the strengths and problems experienced over the past years in terms of undertaking oral history projects with learners. Discussions took place around the topics that were covered, learners' responses to topics and interest shown by learners. There were many positive comments about the successes of past oral projects, as well as about a few problems, and it was interesting to see how educators had tackled the problems encountered.

The learners were then invited to the Bessie Head Library in town as this venue is very central and would be easily accessible to learners from the different schools. Learners got an opportunity to meet one another and discuss the topic by exploring what forced removals were and how people's lives had been affected. It was interesting to see how learners shared what they understood about the topic. Ms Wahlberg then addressed learners on oral history and the topic that they would engage with; surprisingly, learners related to the topic well.

The next meeting with the learners was set up for 29 May 2009 at the same venue. This meeting was to discuss drawing up suitable questions, and discuss how learners would do their interviews and record them. Learners would then be given a tour of the library and shown how to use the resources such as the internet and the video catalogue that were available to them to use, along with the location of relevant books and librarians who were on hand to assist.

Later Mr Peter Nel, the archivist from the Pietermaritzburg archives, addressed the learners on what they could find in the archives and how to use the internet to find information. He mentioned old government records, old court records and old newspapers, as well as people's histories that had been

given to the archives for storage. He also spoke of the careful method used by the archivists to look after the stored material. Learners were very interested in what he had to say. He kept their attention by asking a few recall questions and handing out prizes to learners who had answered correctly.

The learners do the project

The educator's work did not end at the workshop, because the learners returned to school with knowledge that they would now have to be able to put into practice. I drew up time frames to ensure that learners could complete the project by the end of September 2009. The first step was to get them to do some research on the topic. It would be important for learners to find literature on the topic that would give them an in-depth understanding of the topic. The workshops had helped learners find out how to use the library --- however there were no books available on forced removals in the Edendale area in the library. Eventually learners came back with a copy of the book published by the Black Sash that spoke of forced removals, but still they had nothing on the Edendale area. This book explained how the South African government made it seem as though the people had moved voluntarily. Learners also found other books that showed the location of the "black spots" in Natal, but still nothing could be found on the forced removals in Edendale.

Learners began preparing open-ended questions, working in pairs and trying to refine their questions in terms of the topic. At this point of drafting questions, they were also thinking of whom they were going to interview. Learners discussed the criteria for selecting their subjects. They thought of older people who had lived in the Edendale area who had had to leave the area because of the Group Areas Act. They spoke to educators at school and community members to find out who had lived in the Edendale area before the forced removals.

The interviewing process

I then made learners aware of the process of setting up an interview and of using recording devices. Learners didn't have tape recorders so they opted to use their cell phones and to take notes. I also drew up a general consent form for learners to use and had to explain to them the importance of getting the consent form signed by the interviewee. It is important for learners to realise when they are interviewing that the interviewee is not just an oral source but a person, whom they need to treat with respect. The interviewees are the experts on their life stories; therefore interviewers should not impose their own ideology on the interviewee. Doing an interview is like conducting detective work. Learners prepared the questions and did trial runs with each other to check that their questions made sense. This was good as the learners

were able to correct one another's questions. The oral history method is more dialogical with the use of open-ended questions. The use of this method aims to uncover the meanings that participants reveal about their experiences.

Getting people to talk to you about their lives can be a difficult and uncomfortable process, so I explained to learners that they need to be polite when they talk to the interviewee and also first to explain the purpose of the interview before asking for consent to be interviewed. I believe that the interviewee needs to be informed about whom the information would benefit. Before they set up the interview learners explained to interviewees about which school they were from as well as that they were involved in the Greater Edendale Initiative Project on Forced Removals.

It is important to remember that oral history is not only meant to bring about emotional healing for those suffering from the apartheid legacy because it is also about social history, when ordinary people narrate what they remember of their lives, culture, traditions, and family. In order to gain from oral history one needs the participation of the community. Learners were told not to make promises that they could not keep and also to be careful not to impose their own ideas on the topic. Learners had to get the interviewee's consent in writing so it was important that learners explain that the story being told by the interviewee belongs to the interviewee and that the interviewer (learner) can only use this story if there is consent. A draft consent form that I drew up for the learners was used.

Giving educators a background to life in Edendale

Educators were taken on tour through the Edendale area by Mr Prem Singh. He showed educators the business area, the Plesislaer Arya Samaj, the Msimang house that was recently donated to the local municipality by the Msimang family as well as the monuments of the Seven Day War and the grave site of Moses Mabida and the new library that had been built recently. This route is now called the Freedom Route: visitors can take a bus from Publicity House in the centre of Pietermaritzburg for a full tour of the heritage sites in Edendale. Mr Singh also told us of the fertile land that was available for farming in the Edendale area. Indians who had completed their contracts as indentured labourers on the farms of white sugarcane owners moved and settled in the Edendale area. When they settled here many of the Indians worked as sharecropping farmers. This information was relevant to educators for a better understanding of the research and the learners' project.
A transcript is an accurate written record of the interview. The transcript must reflect what the interviewee has said and how it was phrased, even if the sentences are incomplete.

Reflection after the interviews

After learners had conducted the interview, they came together from different schools to discuss the problems they had during the interview. They complained that interviewees had talked too much, sometimes on irrelevant issues; another learner had to travel long distances to meet the interviewee; others complained that interviewees had spoken too slowly; one learner was turned away by an interviewee who'd changed his mind and didn't want to do the interview; a learner complained the person she interviewed was too old and had difficulty recalling his life in Edendale; another learner stated that he had not managed to gain the trust of his interviewee because he was a black learner and was interviewing an Indian person.

These are common problems for interviewers and seasoned interviewers can work round them; however it was amazing to see how the novice interviewers were also able to deal with the problems and work round some of them. After learners had collected the interviews, they were asked to transcribe the interviews. Transcribing required careful listening to the taped recordings of the interview. I informed learners that the actual words spoken needed to be written out so as not to change the meaning of what was said. Also people sometimes use certain words in their mother tongue; fortunately I speak Hindi and was able to translate the words for them.

Putting the project together and writing the report

After much discussion of the problems encountered in the first interview, learners were then shown how to compile their projects and how to write a report.

Learners needed to do a careful analysis of their interviews before writing their reports. All the references had to be included in the project and learners were shown a sample of referencing techniques. After the meeting learners conducted the second meeting and compiled their projects. Artefacts were handed in with the projects and these had to be scanned.

The assistance of Ms B Wahlberg certainly enriched the final product as her workshops with the learners included writing skills. Ms Wahlberg gave them step-by-step directions on report writing and on the reflective piece. For most learners this was the first time they had written a reflective piece. These valuable skills will be used by the learner in other fields of study or work in future.

Reflection by learners on successes and problems encountered

The learners came together to hand in their projects and to discuss the successes and shortcomings of the project. Much that was positive came out

of the discussion. Learners said they had benefited from the project as they had learnt how to conduct an interview and how to listen attentively, and they were also now able to decode the information and compile a project. They also spoke of the social interaction during the interview and the hospitality of the people whom they interviewed, who had offered them tea, cold drinks and meals. The black learners had not previously understood the suffering endured by the Indian people. The learners found respect for one another's culture, beliefs, traditions, dress and lifestyle.

Reminiscences of interviewees

Mr D Bundhu spoke of his life in Edendale and of the togetherness and friendship enjoyed among the different race groups in the area. He also related an important event when he was part of the all-African conference that took place in Edendale, where Mr Mandela was present. Mr Madan Singh spoke of the hardship endured by the black people and how, in spite of obstacles, the African and Indians had lived together in harmony. Businesses belonging to Indians and Africans flourished. There emerged many successful families such as the Deeplaul family, who still run their business from Edendale. Mr Deeplaul who is now residing in Perth, Western Australia, spoke of his memories of the Edendale people. Mrs Vidya Satgar spoke of how they were forced to leave and had no place to go; they had to pack overnight and burn some furniture and other things that they could not take with them. The Dookran family was one of a few families to be forced to move as they were involved in political activities that were against the ideology of the white apartheid government. Mr Dharam Cheddie spoke of the sporting activities enjoyed by both African and Indian people of the area, and of the local school sports grounds where soccer was a regular Sunday feature.

The learners mentioned the problems they encountered during the interview again and most were happy to have completed the project. However, as an educator I feel that memory, trauma, healing and reconciliation are the future themes for oral histories. The learners also need to understand that people will only remember what they want to, so there may be gaps in their memories; also learners need to understand gender issues when interviewing (women will give you more in-depth information on events than the men interviewed, who will answer the questions without elaborating). The evidence must be cross-checked with records.

Certificate presentation ceremony

Having completed the oral history projects, the educators, learners and interviewees were invited to a certificate presentation at the Winston

Churchill Theatre. This meeting was most memorable for the interviewees as the learners' work was put on display for all present to view. The interviewees, used to being treated as unimportant people, felt valued for being part of the project. It was also interesting to see old friends meeting and chatting about the old days when they had lived side by side in Edenvale, and of the friendship they had shared in a multiracial community. It gave them a new sense of importance as they thanked learners for having chosen them to be interviewed.

Learners did learn the skills that they set out to achieve: how to select interviewees and conduct an interview successfully, and how to decode information and compile a project for presentation. They received training on how to write a report and a reflective piece. These are life skills and are needed not just in the history learning area but are also important to other learning areas and to life as a whole.

Oral history is a vital part of recapturing and reconstructing the past. In spite of the lack of written sources, the spoken memories of those who experienced forced removals can be documented and preserved for future generations. People were able to talk about their individual as well as the common agonies experienced because of the forced removals and the Group Areas Act.

Future plans for the project

No research on such a topic can be completed in one year of research. Therefore Mr Prem Singh of the GEDI project met the team of educators early in the first term of 2010 to look at how we could continue with the oral history project. The team of educators decided to continue with the topic on forced removals. Mr Prem Singh also asked educators to contribute their work towards a museum display to take place later in 2010.

The partnership built between the local municipality, the schools and the community is most valuable for the future, as we can create a better generation of learners who are empowered with skills to face the world by working together. The importance of skills gained as an oral historian helps learners understand indigenous knowledge systems and show respect for other race groups in the country, in line with Learning Outcome 4 which addresses Heritage in Further Education and Training for Grades 10, 11 and 12.

Postscript

Educators involved in the project: Mr L David (Woodlands Secondary), Mr D. Govender (Silver Heights Secondary), Ms Pam Govender (Northbury Secondary), S. Singh (Kharina Secondary).

Reference

Carr. E.H, 1987. What is History? *A new approach to history for students, workers and communities.* Skotaville Publishers.

Forced Removals In South Africa 1983 Volume 2, Surplus People Project Report, Legal Study.

Hallet R, *Desolation on the Veld: Forced Removals in South Africa.* Available: http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/pdf extract/83/332/301.

Meyer E. 2007. Battle of the 'burbs'. Available: http://www.urbangreen.co.za/current/features/12-2battleoftheburbs.htm , June 2007.

Singh P. Greater Edendale Development Initiative, Forced Removals project co-ordinator.

Transvaal Rural Action Committee 2001. *The Myth of Voluntary Removals.* Trac.

The Natal Witness 2009, Initiative to teach oral history to PMB pupils*.* 19 March.

The Echo, 2008. Learn with the Echo. GEDI oral history project: We are all part of history. No. 939, 22 October.

Walker. C 1982. A Process of Dispossession: an overview of relocation in Natal. Afra, Nov.1982.

Witz L. 1988. *Write your own history for SACHED Trust and the History Workshop.* Ravan Press.

Eighth Oral History Conference 2011

(Mahikeng, North-West Province)

Past distortions, present realities: (re)constructions(s) and (re)configuration(s) of oral history

Celebration of the 150th anniversary of the arrival of

Indian indentured labourers in South Africa: "unsung heroes"

Shobana Singh
Kharina Secondary School, Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal

"The advent of democracy in 1994 marked an abrupt reversal of South Africa's image and the country came to be seen as a world leader in the art of peace-making, reconciliation and the championing of human rights. But South Africa's global reputation and the actual daily experiences of people living here are not the same thing. Furthermore, the evolution of experiences, values and dominant social attitudes has been very rapid and extremely complex" (Wells 2008:22).

So much has changed in South Africa and at such a fast pace that it has become urgently necessary to capture the past and document this for the future. The aim of an oral historian is to capture and document something that is undocumented. Oral historians use a dialogical approach that allows the interviewer to ask questions that are of importance, to find out exact details about events and emotions. "Oral history, as we understand it, is complex interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee about the events of the past, which requires questioning, as well as listening on the part of the interviewer. This encounter shapes the story" (Ntsimane 2008:3). The interviewee in the interview is the person who is sharing his or her experiences with the interviewer who asks relevant questions. This is a two-way process, which is carefully planned by the interviewer and shaped by the interviewee who fills in all the details to the questions asked by the interviewer.

South Africa can be seen as a "Rainbow Nation", but has nation building really taken place? The answer may be unclear since the term needs to be clearly understood. Social cohesion is necessary to hold together people who were divided due to the apartheid policies in South Africa. Racial issues have impacted on the lives of many South Africans as there were separate residential areas, separate educational facilities and resources, and many laws separated people in South Africa.

Oral history has shifted from documenting only the struggles against apartheid and the hardships faced through colonial rule and apartheid laws, to focus rather on the many successes in overcoming the hardships; this new knowledge should encompass an awareness of the past that is positive and value laden, to facilitate nation building and eradicate all forms of prejudice. In view of the above statement I have decided to engage my learners in

undertaking projects that will instil values and build on the untold stories in South Africa.

Different race groups, that is Indians, coloureds, whites and Africans, lived together in harmony before the National Party government introduced the apartheid laws in South Africa. The laws not only set people apart but also robbed the majority of South Africans of dignity and respect.

Indians who arrived on the shores of South Africa in 1860 were brought here as indentured labourers; they travelled across the "Kala Pani", the black ocean, to find a better life. They faced many challenges travelling across the ocean, and on arrival were treated as animals and taken to the farms of colonial masters to face further hardship. Although faced with numerous challenges they were resilient in that they were able to sustain their families on the small rations that they received, to support one another with the little that they had; they even built schools and educated their children. Some opted to leave after their five-year contracts had ended but many chose to remain for another five years and become free citizens of South Africa. 2010 saw the 150-year celebration of the arrival of indentured labourers. Numerous celebrations were covered by the media --- yet the younger generation still know so little of this important part of South African history.

I then decided to get my learners involved in their history, by using this celebration of the 150th anniversary of the arrival of indentured labourers in South Africa as an oral history project. Learners began to collect newspapers and share newspaper articles and discussed articles on the topic in the classroom. They identified important people in the community who had shared their stories via the newspapers.

The Natal Museum in Pietermaritzburg had a display on the topic and I invited the museum services to loan me their travelling display for a week, which I set up at school and then invited the learners to view the display. They thoroughly enjoyed the experience and more learners became interested and wanted to know more on the topic. The articles that were published in the media were shared with the students. The external resource of museum services was of great value in terms of capturing the interest of the learners.

Having successfully captured the learners' interest in history, I took them to the next step, which was to begin to think locally. Learners were asked to reflect on their communities and look at the role of the Indians within their community. I spoke to them about the stories that have been shared with them by their elderly family members and explained the nature of the oral tradition to them. The oral tradition collects stories that are retold by the elderly through word of mouth.

I then explained to them that oral history was different, in that stories were recorded through the process of an interview. I explained to them the role of the interviewer was to elicit as much information on the topic from the interviewee, who is the person whose personal accounts are shared. The

learners wanted to know more about how to do an interview. I got them to watch different programmes like the Oprah Winfrey Show, where an interview takes place between the interviewer and interviewee, and important stories are shared, as an example of the process of making oral history.

Learners were encouraged to think further and to read around their topic. They came up with different key questions that would form the topic of their project. They began to identify people from within their community whom they would interview.

Now that they were planning questions for their interview, they had to be taught how to get more information by asking open-ended questions:

> Use open-ended questions to allow interviewees to volunteer their own accounts, to speculate on matters, and to have enough time to include all of the material they think relevant to the subject. Use more specific questions to elicit factual information, often in response to something the interviewee has mentioned while answering an open-ended question (Ritchie 2003:92)

Getting the interviewee to talk about events requires that the oral historian works like a detective. The interviewer has to be specific about wanting to get exact information from the interviewee.

Learners then sequenced their questions so that they would flow logically in their interview. They had a practice session to ensure that their questions made sense to them before they asked the interviewee the questions. In a relaxed classroom setting the learners were able to correct their questions when necessary, before moving on to the next step.

Listening is a skill that few people have mastered thus far and I believe that listening attentively is the key to a good interview. Teaching learners to listen is a daunting task. Learners had sessions in the classroom where they listened to the interviewee during the practice session and took down notes on important points, which they later transcribed in the interview practice session. Learners were able to pick up the shortcomings in their listening skills and correct them – perfecting these skills requires a great deal of practice.

Technological assistance helps to alleviate part of the listening problem, since tape recorders can be used. However learners have to remember to clarify unclear parts of the interview later. Most learners did not have tape recorders and they decided to use their cellphones and make notes during the interview. The learners needed to know that the technology must be checked beforehand with backup available in case of technical difficulties. Modern technology is available at a price and with proper training, which unfortunately many of the learners could not afford or did not have access to.

Learners were now going to be exposed to real interviews. They had to go out to the interviewee and seek informed consent and set up the interview. The process was explained to them and they were told not to make promises that they would not be able to keep (since they would not be able to offer the interviewee anything financially), but that they could give a copy of the transcript of the interview to the interviewee. The learner also took along a release form that identified her or him as a student since people in the community who did not know about the project may chase the learner away. The release form was explained to the interviewees, who were informed that they could withdraw at any time they liked.

The learner must remain polite at all times: "Some potential interviewees might be suspicious of what you are doing" (Witz 1987:71). The school letterhead would serve as an identity to inform the interviewee of where the learner comes from and the purpose of the visit.

The first meeting was not to do the interview but to get to know the interviewee. The second visit could be to set up an appointment and the third to do the interview. It is always good to start the interview with a few ice-breakers: maybe ask a few questions about the interviewee's local environment, or about other family members, before continuing with the interview. It is important that the interviewer records unclear parts of the interview and goes back to them later to try to seek clarity on the topic.

Later the interviewer can maybe do a follow up. "Repeated visits help establish an intimacy that encourages candidness. Both interviewer and interviewee need some time together to develop the rapport necessary to ask difficult questions and to give honest answers" (Ritchie 2003:87). A good rapport between interviewer and interviewee will allow for the easier flow of the interview process. The interviewee will then want to speak freely.

People do not remember things in an orderly manner. Interviewees may choose to say something about an event because this is the event they recall more clearly first, before they talk about other events, so the interviewer needs to understand that "[m]ost minds do not work in a precise and orderly manner, and most of us cannot call forth recollections in perfect chronological order, grouped together logically" (Ritchie 2003:7). With time as people grow older they also speak more slowly and recall events more slowly and in more detail. Interviewers need to listen attentively and make notes on points that seem unclear so that they can be clarified later.

Recalling events that are personal can make the interview uncomfortable for both interviewer and interviewee. Interviewers need to understand that they are dealing with human beings and allow for dignity and compassion, always treating the interviewee respectfully. Sometimes the interviewer may need to wait a while for the interviewee to regain composure before continuing with the interview. Situations may develop which learners

as interviewers may not be able to handle; if this does happen, they can talk about seeking outside help.

Artefacts such as photographs, newspaper clippings, letters, as well as the senses (smell, taste, touch), can assist the memory in the process of recalling. Oral history relies on memory: the more interviewees remember the better their oral history stories can be captured. Since the interviewees are old, they have volumes of stories to share that they have never shared before; therefore the interviewer must try to get as much of an interviewee's story as possible.

Concluding the interview is basically a "wrap up", so the interviewer must allow for the interviewee to share anything else that he or she may want to say.

Interviews must be transcribed soon after the interview. Learners were taught the skill of transcribing the interview. Learners were asked to play their tapes, listen to their interviews and begin writing out word for word as far as possible what was said. I told them not to change any part of the interview, although some parts may have words missing. The interviewer should take it into consideration that people don't talk the same way as they write, so the interviewer must listen attentively. Sometimes they need to allow for a minute or two of silence, before continuing with the interview. Also there must be a few simple questions that will bring the interviewer back on track in terms of the topic.

Once the transcripts of both the interviewees were completed, the learners had to read through the interviews and see how both interviewees were similar or different. They should look for common patterns of experiences. The learner had experienced an important social process of interviewing a person that allowed him or her to understand the interviewee better as a person. The learners now have to write their report on the topic. Many learners in the school are second-language learners and need time to do this. So I allowed extra time for them to write and maybe rewrite their reports. Sometimes they may have had to listen more than twice to the recordings of the interviews. I also gave learners a sample of what a report should be like, since this may their first attempt at writing a report.

The learners should reflect on their oral history project and the process they used to develop their stories into an oral history project. What were the successes of their project? What problems did they have? How did they balance their time? What have they gained personally? What have they learnt that will help them now and in future? These are but a few questions that may guide them through their reflection.

Lastly and most importantly is the bibliography. Learners have used interviewees, and books, magazines, archived resources and the internet: all of these sources have to be listed in a bibliography. They can be taught

simply to record these sources at the beginning of their interview so that they can keep proper records for their bibliography at the end.

The methodology that I used is not new but has been practised by many oral historians internationally and locally, mostly with success. Oral history does require careful planning and preparation and a lot of patience if it is to be successful. I drew up a time frame so that learners did not become overwhelmed by the amount of work involved in the project. They also made use of holiday time when they did some preparatory work, since they had a deadline to complete their project. I had to keep track of learners throughout the process. Learners who were slower and having experiencing difficulty were paired with stronger learners who could help.

Learners were given a copy of the marking grid that would be used to assess their project. They got a chance to discuss and negotiate the assessment grid. This gave them a clear idea of what was expected of them. They had consent forms to be signed by the interviewee, giving them permission to use the interview. Learners had to give the interviewee a copy of the completed transcript.

Oral history is included as part of the curriculum in all South African schools in the Further Education and Training phase. This is heavily weighted according to the Schools Assessment Guideline document. It is only recently that the Department of Education has joined hands with the Nkosi Albert Luthuli oral history project and has begun a national competition. This has allowed learners to compete with one another; the best projects get into the national competition. I was fortunate to enter three learners into the provincial competition and one learner was selected to represent the province of KwaZulu-Natal in the national competition.

This learner was Nasiphi. Her topic was unique in that although she captured the story of unsung heroes she looked at those Indians who were resilient to the change caused by the forced removals that took place in the Edendale area. She captured the story of Mrs Susheila Maharaj and Mr Dan Deeplaul. The story of Susheila is unique because she still lives in the Edendale area among the African people, as is Mr Deeplaul's, who continues to provide a service to the community he was evicted from, since he has a trading store in Edendale. Their stories may never have been heard if the learner had not shown an interest in finding out about them. Nasiphi used people in her local community and was able to obtain an account of their lives. As she explained at the time of the competition, she gained many skills: these include listening, questioning, note taking, analysing and interpretation skills. She spoke of the difficulties that she experienced such as getting the interviewee to schedule the interview, lack of technological resources and trying to balance her time to get her project completed. The pleasures and rewards, as well as the problems which Nasiphi experienced, are not unique since many learners experience similar problems. The stories uncovered of

these two Indian people continuing their life in a "black area" speak of their resilient nature and of how they overcame adversity and continued a normal life. In South Africa we speak of the Rainbow Nation and of nation building: these stories show how this happened in the past although the apartheid laws set people apart.

I view the stories of the Indian indentured labourers similarly to the stories of African Americans who were removed from their motherland and taken to a foreign place, transported across the Atlantic, subjected to inhumane treatment as slaves to their masters, separated from family, losing their culture and traditions over time. Many African Americans have found it difficult to find their roots back in Africa, and for the Indians it will be difficult to find their roots back in India as the years pass and the older generation dies out. The older generation can be considered as an encyclopaedia of knowledge who must be interviewed and their stories documented for the sake of future generations.

As an educator I still believe learners need to know much more about the process of making oral history: gaps remain when it comes to teaching learners about nonverbal and facial expression as well as in-depth analysis of interviews, and using other sources such as archives to verify their findings. Oral history is time consuming and requires the educator to keep constant track of the learner's project, guiding and facilitating throughout.

Since oral history is about recording stories that have not been told before, there must be some reliable way of storing these projects. The final projects of my learners were placed in a time capsule that would be opened in 50 years' time. The present generation of adults may be wiped out but something important about them may be discovered when this time capsule is opened up in 50 years' time. The interviewees were also given copies of their interviews to keep. The interviewees were extremely pleased to have had their stories recorded. They were also grateful that someone had taken the time to listen to them. "When allowed to tell their stories freely, participants in oral history projects, and even readers of written accounts, can undergo a process of transformation, as they start to look at their own lives, their gender and culture in different ways" (Ntsimane 2008:126/127). In South Africa we have moved away from recording only negative accounts of people's lives, as we need to see a bigger picture of what has worked for the good and what has made the lives of different race groups significant as part of the Rainbow Nation.

References

Ntsimane R. 2008 Why would I tell my story?, in Denis P. & Ntsimane R. (eds.), *Oral History in a Wounded Country.* University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg,

Ritchie D. 2003. *Doing oral history: a practical guide.* Oxford University Press, New York.

Wahlberg B.C. 2008. An Investigation into the implementation of oral history in the Further Education and Training phase in selected KwaZulu-Natal schools. Master's Dissertation, Faculty of Education. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Wells J. 2008. Are we nation-building yet?, in Denis P. and Ntsimane N. (eds.), *Oral history in a wounded country: interactive interviewing in South Africa*. Pietermaritzburg: University KwaZulu-Natal press. Pietermaritzburg.

Witz L. 1988. *Write your own history*. A SACHED Trust/Ravan Press Publication.

Interviewees

Deeplaul D, Maharaj S, Schools Oral history project, Kharina Secondary School, 2011.

Interviewer

Nasiphi Gwiji, Kharina Secondary School, Grade 11, Schools Oral history project, 2011.

Appendix A

Kharina Secondary School

ORAL HISTORY	

<u>**DUE DATES**</u>

DATE	ACTIVITIES TO BE COMPLETED	TEACHER'S SIGNATURE
10/03	TOPIC TO BE DECIDED	
30/03/2011	FORMULATION OF KEY AND SUB QUESTIONS	
30/03-29/04	RESEARCH WORK ON THE TOPIC	
29/04-03/05	DRAFT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS & IDENTIFY INTERVIEWEES	
03/05-31/05	CONDUCTING INTERVIEW 1	
31/05-03/06	SCRIBE INTERVIEW 1	
03/06-18/07	INTERVIEW 2 & TRANSCRIBE	
25/07-29/07	REPORT WRITING	
10/08/2011	COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT	
22/08/2011	HANDING IN OF PROJECTS	

Appendix B

KHARINA SECONDARY SCHOOL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT – RUBRIC

NAME OF LEARNER: _____ **GRADE** _____

		CRITERIA	TOTAL	MARK
		Evidence of careful preparation and research leading to selection of topic	10	
		Formulation of overall key question and searching questions to guide the investigation	10	
		Introduction	10	
		Transcription of interviews	10	
		Report:		
		a) Body		
		• Information selected is relevant	10	
		• Information is coherent and presented logically	10	
		• Discussion is well planned and constructed	10	
		• Discussion is based on evidence from sources consulted	15	
		Conclusion/Reflective piece	5	
		Presentation	10	
		TOTAL	100	

COMMENTS:

_____

_____

SIGNATURE OF EDUCATOR

Appendix C

THE INDIAN LEGACY - UNSUNG HEROES

WHY ARE THE CELEBRATIONS OF THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARRIVAL OF INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA SIGNIFICANT?

Target groups: Elderly Indian people in the local community.

Questions:

1) Tell me about yourself?

   Sub-questions:

   What is your name?

   Which family do you come from?

   How many people are there in your family?

   Can you describe the relationship that exists in your family?

   Is there anything further that you want to tell me about you or your family?

2) When did your family (forefathers) arrive in South Africa?

   Sub-questions:

   Which ship did they come in?

   Where did they come from in India?

   What was his/her name and colonial number?

   What sort of conditions did they experience on arrival in South Africa?

   Do you know which farm/work area they were assigned to?

3) Discuss the life that they led as labourers.

   Sub-questions:

   Where did they live?

   Who did the homes belong to?

   How much did they earn?

87

For how long were they contracted to work?

When they married, how many children did they have?

How could they afford to bring up their children?

4) How did Indian families keep up their traditions?

<u>Sub-questions:</u>

What sort of traditions and customs do Indians observe?

Where there any places of worship then?

Were you allowed to carry on with your rituals and customs freely?

Were important days among the community recognised and a holiday given to you?

5) What type of educational opportunities were you and your family exposed to?

<u>Sub-questions:</u>

Were there proper schools?

Who built these schools?

How were the schools run?

Were there any colleges and universities that Indians had access to?

If there were problems about getting an education, how did the community work around them?

6) How have the experiences of your forefathers impacted on your life presently? (Think of values, traditions and customs.)

7) What were some of the political changes witnessed by you that impacted on the Indians in South Africa?

8) Can you describe how your family life has changed over the past 50 years?
<u>Sub-questions:</u>

Discuss your living conditions then and now.

Describe family life.

Discuss the improvement in educational opportunities for the Indians, then and now.

9) Tell me more about your life and your achievements.

10) What would you as an Indian want to change for future generations of Indians in South Africa?

The content, handling and role of oral history in the Zion Christian Church

Prof LJ Rafapa
Department of English Studies, University of South Africa

Introduction

As research approach, oral history is "a method of qualitative interview that emphasizes participants' perspectives, and generally involves multiple open-ended interview sessions with each participant" (Leavy 2011:3). Although oral history "draws on the tenets of an oral tradition" (Leavy 2011:4) the former and latter are not the same. An oral tradition is "one in which stories are passed down through the generations" (Leavy 2011:4) and the stories, according to Prins (1991:130), are capable of opening up for us "the inside of a culture and time". The kinds of stories that constitute the oral traditions include "myths of genesis, dynastic histories, family histories of ordinary people, proverbs, praise poetry, epics and narratives" (Prins 1991:130). One more distinguishing aspect of oral history, according to Prins (1991:114), is that it is "history written with evidence gathered from a living person, rather than from a written document". Oral narratives about and preserved by the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), published in the official newsletter of the organisation, will be analysed using as my criteria the above defining characteristics and functions offered by theorists like Prins (1991) and Leavy (2011). That it is worth studying these oral traditional forms of the ZCC is evident in the views of theorists like Prins (1991:118), in her view that "we have to make a conscious effort to try and slow down our pace of intake, and to see oral testimony as, potentially, equally complex" as written history.

According to Boeyens and Hall (2009:460), "oral traditions provide explicit historical contexts which can be controlled and verified by the methods and discoveries of archaeology". Such oral accounts of history are reliable, especially if they are chronologically of the most recent three to four generations, for their distinct role to provide "a reasonably accurate representation of reality" (Boeyens & Hall 2009:462). The same writers caution that oral accounts can have their evidential value "affected in various ways, for example through selection, (re)interpretation, feedback, lengthening and telescoping" (Boeyens & Hall 2009:463). This is why my essay traces synchronic continuity among the narratives of the ZCC research participants covered by this study.

Despite the possible weak links within oral historical accounts enumerated by Boeyens and Hall (2009:463), oral historical data are as important as normatively written history in that, according to Prins (1991:135), they

"serve to check other sources as they serve to check it". It will be interesting to check the oral narratives of the ZCC against the authoritative historical accounts by writers such as Mafuta (2010), Lukhaimane (1980) and Anderson (http://books.google.co.za), which employed "modern" historiography.

The function of orality emanating from the ZCC can defensibly be compared with that of Shembe's Nazareth Baptist Church, or the Nazarite Church, in what Pongweni (2000:195) describes as the latter's expression of "a striving for political and cultural survival on the part of a community that had been dispossessed and displaced". Rafapa (2010) describes ZCC mores at the least as an abrogation of western Christianity, to imbue those "Afrikan Humanist" values that have, through history, proven to be the survival kit of Africans whose identity was being smothered by the alien cultural sensibility of the protagonists of apartheid. Hence the basic commonness with Shembe's Nazareth Baptist Church, or the Nazarite Church, which Pongweni (2000) and Anderson (http://books.google.co.za) credit with attempts at spiritual and cultural survival of the underprivileged in its heyday. Anderson (http://books.google.co.za) furthermore highlights this culturally and economically affirming tenet of the ZCC throughout its existence, in his observation that "the ZCC has emerged from the fear of a powerful and oppressive regime to attempt to play a role in the radical changes that have taken place since 1990". As a result of this place of the ZCC on the fringes of power and its holistically salvific message for the underprivileged, Mafuta (2010:ii) is able to describe the consequences in his remark that "[e]mpowering its adherents economically through a religious soteriology, the ZCC has become an example of a trend that is shaping the Global South and is reviving the interest of social scientists and theologians to further investigate the impact of religious and theological formulations on the economic conduct of individuals".

As oral tales of the Zion Christian Church's history are analysed, the self-determining feature outlined above will be among the quests of the study. The shared background between Shembe's Nazareth Baptist Church, or the Nazarite Church, and Lekganyane's ZCC will enable me to analyse the latter's oral tradition within the context of modern social history as, to use Prins's (1991:115) words, "giving historical presence to those whose views and values are disenfranchised by 'history from above'". This paper aims to investigate whether narratives from the ZCC oral tradition can yield indices of this social function of the African Initiated Churches.

Repairing a distorted history

On the one hand, ZCC history as presented in Lukhaimane's (1980) research work gives the year the ZCC was founded as 1924. A careful analysis of this

history research shows that Lukhaimane recognises this contestable ZCC historical element because it coincides with the year in which a semblance of formal recognition of the ZCC by the white minority government of the time was achieved by the founding head of the ZCC, Engenas Lekganyane, and his church council. Such a modus operandi immediately reveals that 1924 is recognised as the year in which the notion of the African Initiated Churches (AIC) was invented, from the perspective of the powerful minority government, and not necessarily that of the then marginalised black leadership of the ZCC and its followers. For the black leadership and followers of the ZCC, the founding of the church would not be endorsed as coinciding with its tentative approval by the then domineering government of the powerful white minority. An incident that is significant from the point of view of the marginalised black leadership and membership of the ZCC would be their own "official" founding of the church. This watershed incident is Engenas's prophetic "vision and calling" of 1910 (*ZCC Family Bible* 1995). For the ZCC leadership and followers, 1910 is the year in which Engenas Lekganyane founded the Church.

A parallel to this conflict between hegemonic history and the history from below is seen when the ZCC marked 1967 as the year in which the current head of the ZCC became bishop at the age of 13, following his father's passing away in the same year. Mafuta (2010:7) has documented 1975, and not the ZCC-sanctioned 1967, as the year in which the bishop ascended to the ZCC throne. His reasons are straightforwardly that "formally" the bishop had to reach the legal age of 21 before he could be installed.

It is for extraneous, legalistic reasons that both Mafuta (2010:7) and Lukhaimane (1980) recognise 1924 as the year in which Engenas Lekganyane founded the ZCC. Lukhaimane, as stated above, relies on recognition of the ZCC by authorities other than the ZCC leadership and members themselves, while Mafuta (2010) does so for the reason that this was the year in which "Lekganyane split with Motaung over his marriage with a second wife … [and] returned to his home town of Thabakgone in 1925 to found his own church which he called the Zion Christian Church". It is the researcher Anderson (http://books.google.co.za) who concedes to 1910 being "the official year of the commencement of the church", although the mainly hegemonic research approach he uses binds him ambivalently to recognise 1924 also as the year the ZCC was founded by Engenas Lekganyane.

A research participant named Frans Ramalepe, whose oral narrative was published in the official newsletter of the ZCC named *ZCC Messenger* (September 1985:21)*,* recalls that he was baptised as a member of the ZCC on 6 January 1924 by *Bishop Engenas Lekganyane ka sebele* ("Bishop Engenas Lekganyane in person") in the Monono river together with 20 other

people. This was after the ZCC and Engenas Lekganyane were introduced to him by Titus Ralephenya, *gomme ke yena ke mo lebogago kudu ge ke le mo ZCC gobane o ba a bolela ditaba tše botse fela ka ga Bishop Engenas Lekganyane* ("and I am very grateful to Titus Ralephenya who turned me into a member of the ZCC, for he always was full of aweful praise for Bishop Engenas Lekganyane") (*Messenger* 1985:21).

The research participant named Frans Maselesele, whose oral narrative is preserved in writing in the same *ZCC Messenger* of September 1985 (p 28), testifies that he came to know of a man from GaMamabolo, whose name was Engenas Lekganyane of the ZCC, through acquaintances called Jonathan Kgatla and Phineas Mogale. After gaining confidence in Engenas Lekganyane and the ZCC, Frans Maselesele joined the ZCC and was baptised in 1923 in Norwood Dam in Johannesburg by a priest of the ZCC called Petrus Lekganyane. The research participant states unequivocally in the published oral account that as he was baptised he was informed about the principles of *kereke ya Engenas Lekganyane* ("the church of Engenas Lekganyane") (*Messenger* 1985:28).

These and other informants are able to speak of encounters with the ZCC of Engenas Lekganyane in 1923 and 1924, and not with the Zion Apostolic Faith Mission (ZAFM) of Motaung which Engenas Lekganyane is documented in the dominant history of the white hegemony of the time to have been part of until 1925. Both Lukhaimane (1980) and Mafuta (2010) document in their formal university studies of ZCC history that Engenas Lekganyane joined the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) of P le Roux in Johannesburg around 1908. Both historians agree that when Mahlangu left to form his own church, the Zion Apostolic Church of South Africa (ZAC), Lekganyane joined him and the two worked together for nearly three years until they split in 1924. For the two writers, Engenas's rupture with Mahlangu in 1924 marks the founding of the ZCC, and not his calling in 1910.

As Engenas Lekganyane "bought Maclean Farm, where Moria City is situated today" in 1913 after he had become ZCC minister in the same year subsequent to his calling and founding of the ZCC in 1910 (*Family Bible* 1995) (*Messenger* 2010:5), how then can the ZCC be said to have been founded in 1924? This is apart from testimonies of baptism into the ZCC by research participants such as Frans Maselesele quoted above. According to the *ZCC Family Bible* (1995) with a preface written by the current bishop, "Rev. Engenas built a church in Mamabolo" in 1924, before the present Moria could be the ultimate headquarters of the ZCC. What this means is that before 1924 Engenas's followers worshipped in the open. The *ZCC Family Bible* (1995) chronicles the years in which the current bishop built and inaugurated ZCC church buildings in places like Atteridgeville and Mamelodi. However, similarly to the building of the Thabakgone ZCC church structure in 1924, the affected ZCC congregations of Atteridgeville and

94

Mamelodi cannot rightly be said to have started worshipping the holy trinity only in the years in which the buildings were erected and subsequently opened officially by the current ZCC bishop.

The correct chronology, from the ZCC perspective, is thus that Engenas Lekganyane founded the ZCC when he had a calling in 1910 to found his own church, which call he heeded practically by joining Mahlangu's church in Johannesburg so that he could, as Mafuta (2010:5) puts it, be "baptized by triune immersion in water". Even as this happened and he later joined Motau in Lesotho, the ZCC back home was in existence and growing. This is why the research participant Simon Ramalepe, whose baptism in Engenas's ZCC was explained above to have taken place on 6 January 1924, can speak of meeting Engenas Lekganyane in the company of his son Edward and Mahlangu of Lesotho (*Messenger* 1985:13). What can be deduced here is that the existence of the ZCC on the one hand and its founder Engenas's sojourns with Mahlangu and then Motaung, on the other hand, do overlap.

The oral tradition, through the ZCC's beneficial use of the qualitative historical method, manages to rectify distortions and fill in the gaps existing in formal, hegemonic history of the same organisation. The functions of the oral traditional narratives within the ZCC as described above coincide with what Prins (1991:125) pinpoints as the three sorts of transmission encountered universally during research conducted using the oral history approach. These are "traditions of genesis, dynastic histories and accounts of social organization" (Prins 1991:125).

The qualitative, oral history research method of the ZCC

A close look at the way the historical narratives of participants like Simon Ramalepe, Frans Ramalepe and Simon Maselesele were elicited reveals significant features of the qualitative method used. This paper zooms in for now on the example of Frans Ramalepe's interview methodology.
Leavy (2011:7) observes: "Ontologically, oral history is based on a conception of research as a process, not an event." The project of the ZCC to solicit oral narratives about its genesis, the successions of its dynasty and its social organisation over a period of nearly three decades since just after the inception of the revamped newsletter, under the new title *ZCC Messenger* in 1985, is testimony to its regard of what Leavy (2011:7) calls oral history's basis in "a conception of research as a *process*, not an event".

During the interview of the research participant Frans Ramalepe, the assigned ZCC researcher, though invested with authority by virtue of being dispatched by the ZCC head and headquarters elders, refrains from assuming or shaping the nature of the findings likely to emanate from the research. It is evident that one open-ended, broad question was posed at the beginning of the interview, because the informant's narrative gives testimony rich with

95

information relating to the formative years of the ZCC as well as its social organisation/character under the leadership of its founder (*Messenger* 1985:21-22) in a flowing manner, without much interjection by the conductor of the interview. This is a qualitative research approach associated with oral history in which, as Jones (2003:61) observes, "[t]he researcher begins with one open, 'narrative inducing' question and then proceeds to allow the participant to tell his or her story without interruption".

Only two questions are asked during Ramalepe's oral narration, probably captured initially in the interviewer's scribbled notebook and by means of audiotape and later preserved in the published newsletter. The two questions are *Na lena monna yo wa Modimo le mo tsebišitšwe ke mang?* ("Honourable elder, how did you come to know about this man of God?") (*Messenger* 1985:21) and *Na Ramalepe, e be le sa šome naa?* ("Honourable Ramalepe, were you not employed at the time?") (*Messenger* 1985:22). As what is preserved in writing in the published newsletter is compressed due to the usual space constraints, probably the researcher analysed the information from Ramalepe after the first interview, after which followup interviews were conducted in which the two questions captured were posed, shaped by interceding analyses.

The nature of the questions is such that there is mutual respect between the researcher and research participant, and no specific kinds of answers are presupposed. However, the formulation of the questions by the skilful interviewer unobtrusively leads the research participant to give information relating to his personal biography as well as Engenas Lekganyane's character and values. Ramalepe's reconstruction of own biography is in keeping with what Leavy (2011:10,11) describes as the method of oral history interviews to "often cover an extensive part of a participant's life, seeking to uncover processes and link individual experiences with the larger context in which those experiences occur".

The benefit is that by Ramalepe relating parts of his personal experiences, he taps into Engenas Lekganyane's character in which are embedded the values of the church he founded in 1910. It is these values that clearly inform the social organisation of the ZCC at the time, which is crucial for the qualitative oral history research to gather information on. Such an approach is congruous with Leavy's (2011:7) characterisation of the uniquely oral historical research method to assume that "meaning isn't 'waiting out there' to be discovered, but rather that meaning is generated during the research process" with the result that "we build meaning through the generation of an interview narrative, and the analysis and interpretation of that narrative".

From Ramalepe's oral narrative, we gather that *Engenas e be e le monna wa boikokobetšo, wa sekgwari gomme o be a tseba go opela kudu ... boikgogomošo o be a sa bo tsebe* ("Engenas was a modest man, very

ingenious and greatly gifted in singing" (*Messenger* 1985:21). The conductor of the interview adds the footnote: *Ramalepe ke mokgalabje yo a bontšhago tebogo ya gagwe ka go ngwala history ya Kereke, gomme se sengwe le se sengwe se o mmotšišago sona ka sona o bula dipukwana tša gagwe go go balla. O ngwadile matšatši le mehlolo ye a e bonego ge a be a sepela le Engenas* ("Ramalepe is an old man who shows his gratitude by documenting the history of the church, and whenever you question him about anything that has to do with the history he opens his notebooks to read for you. He has recorded dates and miracles that he saw performed by Engenas as the two travelled together") (*Messenger* 1985:22).

This personal information about Ramalepe's pious devotion is given after the interviewer mentions earlier: *Ramalepe ke o mongwe wa batho ba mmalwa ba phelago yo a tsebago bishop Engenas Lekganyane ka botlalo. O phedile le yena gomme o be a rata go mo latela mo a bego a ya gona. Ramalepe e be e le motshwari wa patla ya Engenas, ge Engenas a tlhobola Ramalepe o be a e tšea* ("Ramalepe is one of the only few living people who know Bishop Engenas Lekganyane very well. He lived with him and loved to follow him wherever he went. Ramalepe was the holder of Engenas's staff when Engenas changed clothes") (*Messenger* 1985:22). Such information by the reporter of research results validates Ramalepe's narrative as authentic and accurate, no less than the earlier mentioning of the archaeological item "Monono River" by the research participant himself as the place where he was baptised in order to become a ZCC member (*Messenger* 1985:21). Obviously, the triangulating role of archaeological items like the "Monono River" is that they are tangible and their existence can be verified.

The other research participant, Maselesele, thickens the valuable information when recounting that Engenas Lekganyane, known to come from GaMamabolo, *o be a tsebiwa e le monna wa mehlolo e bile a bolela ka ga Bibele le Modimo ... wa go tseba go neša pula* ("got to be known as a performer of miracles and a spreader of the message of the Bible and God … and could make rain") (*Messenger* 1985:28,29). Maselesele recalls returning home in GaKgatla in 1925 to till the land a different man, rich with knowledge of the principles of the church of Engenas Lekganyane forbidding witchcraft, the use of traditional muti, smoking and drinking, as well as the commitment of murder and carrying of weapons (*Messenger* 1985:29).

The eye-witness narratives by Frans Maselesele (*Messenger* 1985:29,30) serve to validate his narratives as authentic and accurate. The first is that of the day Engenas visited Botlokwa on foot to spread the word of God. Engenas came on foot yet showed no physical exhaustion at all, heard the cries of women in the homestead of his host in the middle of the night as the hut he was sleeping in had been set on fire by those who did not like his visit and gospel message, woke up and extinguished the flames single-handedly with his bare hands, and the following day when many villagers

97

flocked to the homestead in the hope of witnessing miracles Engenas was famed to perform, all he did was preach the word of God to them, out of his humility (*Messenger* 1985:29,30).

An even more intimate interaction with Engenas was in 1932 when Maselesele visited the ZCC headquarters of Moria and Engenas sent him with 50 closed envelopes to Messina, to hand them over to a man from Zimbabwe called Samuel Moyo (*Messenger* 1985:30). Through the power of the Holy Spirit after Engenas had laid his hands on him, Maselesele could reach Messina despite not knowing the place, and Samuel Moyo knew who he was before he could introduce himself (*Messenger* 1985:30).

The Easter 2010 issue of the *ZCC Messenger* has a front cover photograph of the church structure built by Engenas in 1924 at Thabakgone, GaMamabolo. This is the issue celebrating the ZCC's 100th anniversary by means of publishing narratives of many more research participants whose stories corroborate some aspects of those by the research participants we have scrutinised above, as well as affirm the narratives across research participants covered in that specific issue. The published narratives are acknowledged in the publication to have resulted from oral narratives by the participants, similarly to the way the interviews of Simon Ramalepe, Frans Ramalepe and Frans Maselesele were published in earlier issues.

The continuum of oral narratives published in the consulted *ZCC Messenger* issues spanning September 1985 and Easter 2010, are accompanied by the photographs of the three successive ZCC bishops, the church buildings of Thabakgone and Zion City Moria, and the research participants whose pieces of oral tradition are covered on an ongoing basis.

ZCC oral tradition and ZCC historical continuities

The ZCC principles and social organisation that can be gleaned from this oral tradition equip us with the tools to explain whatever continuities there are in the ZCC today. According to Prins (1991:137), "[h]istorical continuity, especially in oral cultures, requires more attention than change" if the reliability of the oral tradition is to be probed.

First, the research participants themselves touch on such historical continuity. Maselesele calls for the value of respect to continue, among the youth of the ZCC, in the words, *Baswa ba tshwanetše go hlompha Bishop … ba swanetše go hlompha batswadi ba bona, baruti ba bona le melao ya kereke ya ZCC gore ba tsebe go neiwa bophelo bjo botelele … gobane ga ke tsube e bile ga ke nwe bjala* ("Youth must show respect to the Bishop … must show respect to their parents, ministers and principles of the ZCC in order for them to see longevity") (*Messenger* 1985:30). In a 1983 address to the ZCC Youth League, the current ZCC bishop reminds the audience that the Youth League formation *e sa le le thewa ke papa Bishop Edward*

98

Lekganyane ("was established by my father Bishop Edward Lekganyane"), before exhorting members of the League that "*le hlomphe baruti*" ("you must show respect to your ministers") (*Messenger* 1985:20). The historical item of continuity here is the ZCC principle of respect for elders, which continuity the current bishop attributes to the leadership of his predecessor Bishop Edward Lekganyane. But we know from Maselesele's narrative that Bishop Edward Lekganyane was continuing this ethos from the days of the founder of the ZCC Bishop Engenas Lekganyane. The current bishop's address declares that this ZCC value must continue today.

The current ZCC bishop, in his sermon of 7 September 2008, alludes to aspects of continuity that this paper demonstrates as informing the pieces of oral tradition discussed above. In the words *kua re tšwago gona ka seAfrika re na le mantšu a a swanago le go loišetšana moo re bego ge re apeile bupi bja hlaela re ya go baagišane go kgopela bupi re re go bona 're loišetšeng'* ("where we come from as Africans we had concepts like finishing the porridge cooking process for each other, wherein if you were cooking porridge and you ran out of mealie meal you would go to your neighbours to ask for mealie meal using the phrase 'please complete porridge cooking for us'") (*Messenger* 2008:4). Significantly, later in the sermon the bishop links this call for what may be described as continued "Afrikan Humanism" that started right from the days of the founder Engenas Lekganyane, by reminding the congregants: *Ge ke gola ka gae papa e lego Bishop E.E. Lekganyane o ba e a na le bathuši ... ba ga Chirwa ba go tšwa Malawi, Mngomezulu wa go tswa Matebeleland go la Zimbabwe, Twodays Mhlampfu wa go tšwa Mashonaland go la Zimbabwe ... Nkambule wa go tšwa Swaziland gammogo le Gumbu wa go tšwa ga Kgoši Gumbu Zimbabwe* ("As I was growing up at home, my father Bishop EE Lekganyane had helpers… from the Chirwa of Malawi, Mngomezulu from Matebeleland in Zimbabwe, Twodays Mhlampfu from Mashonaland in Zimbabwe … Nkambule from Swaziland and Gumbu from King Gumbu in Zimbabwe") (*Messenger* 2008:5). There is no mistaking the continuity between the current bishop's narrative and that of 1932 by Maselesele when the ZCC's abhorrence of xenophobia was exemplified by the founder Engenas's love for fellow human beings, including Samuel Moyo from Zimbabwe. Continuity of this ZCC tenet during the leadership of Bishop Edward Lekganyane from 1949 to 1967 is underlined by the very revelation by the current ZCC head that the scenario he is painting obtained in Bishop Edward Lekganyane's administration. As the current ZCC head continues with his sermon, he accentuates continuity of this ZCC feature in his own administration, in the words "The Zion Christian Church was taken aback by the recent xenophobic tendencies that are becoming a trend in South Africa" (*Messenger* 2008:6).

It is a premise of this paper to regard the present bishop's sermons and speeches as narratives of the church's present that reflect its past and possible

99

future – within the bigger frame of the ZCC oral tradition represented by research participants other than the bishop himself, such as Frans Ramalepe, Simon Ramalepe and Frans Maselesele.

Apart from the ZCC today continuing to live the values stated above, song and dance invented by Engenas Lekganyane at the origins of the church continue to characterise the organisation today. The ZCC practice of singing in a circle while clapping hands, practised today (Ledwaba 2002a:17; 2002b:17), is a continuity from the days of Engenas. This is evident from the oral narrative of Frans Ramalepe, in which he recounts that every night when they travelled with Engenas he would summon them to come and sing and clap hands with him while he led them in song (*Messenger* 1985:22). The same research participant's explanation of this part of the narrative is as follows: *Mpogo bjale ka ge le bona ga se selo seo se thomilego maloba empa ke setšo sa ZCC gobane se thomilwe ke mothei wa kereke e* ("As you can learn from my narrative, *mpogo* was not invented yesterday in the ZCC, but was invented in the days of yore by the founder of this church" (*Messenger* 1985:22).

While pieces of oral tradition discussed above reveal diachronic historical continuity within the ZCC informed by preserved principles and leadership character since its beginning by Engenas Lekganyane, it makes these oral narratives plausible and reliable to see synchronic continuity within the same epochs. Looking back in history, in an article published in the same *ZCC Messenger* issue as Simon Ramalepe's narrative, Maaga (p 8) tells how he was taught by word of mouth to know how around 1930 his grandfather came to be converted to the ZCC of Engenas Lekganyane. Maaga's grand-father, a resident of Pankop in the Pienaarsrivier district, was sent with two other men by Chief Legau Maloka, to meet Engenas Lekganyane and ask for prayers for rain. Engenas was "found at Pienaarsrivier at Mr Madikologa's place" (*Messenger* 1985:8). On the other hand, Simon Ramalepe's narrative declares: *Pula dinakong tša ... boMaaga wa Pienaarsrivier e be di tlhokega ka kudu gomme bontšhi ba batho e be ba šetše ba kwele ka ga Monna yo wa Modimo Bishop Engenas Lekganyane yo a bego a tseba go neša pula* ("In the days of people like Maaga of Pienaarsrivier rains were very scarce, and lots of people got to hear about the Man of God Bishop Engenas Lekganyane who could make rain through prayers") (*Messenger* 1985:13). This kind of corroboration between Maaga and Simon Ramalepe about Engenas Lekganyane's ability to make rain through prayers is rendered reliable by their commonly referring to the same incident when Engenas Lekganyane was visiting Pienaarsrivier to spread the word of God. Simon Ramalepe, then in his 80s, lived in Nobody GaMothiba, while the relatively young medical doctor Maaga stayed hundreds of kilometres away in Mamelodi; yet the narratives of the two use historical data consonantly to testify to the ZCC founder's unshaken faith manifested in rainmaking.

100

For the ZCC oral tradition to pass such a test of continuity is evidence of its reliability as a depository of history, in keeping with Prins's (1991:137) remark that the validation of oral traditions through the oral history method lies in features of continuity, rather than those of change primarily driving the project of hegemonic historical research. The mistake frequently made by hegemonic history writers is a search only for evidence of change in the narratives of the oral tradition, as this is the approach they are used to in handling written history.

Conclusion

The research participant Simon Ramalepe's narrative includes the fact: *Mo go emego kereke ya Moria lehono, ke mo re bego re tshwarela kereke ya rena nakong ya Engenas gomme nakong yeo, yona e be e dirilwe ka matlhaka noka* ("Where the church building stands today in Moria is where we held our church services in the times of Engenas; however the church structure then was made of reeds" (*Messenger* 1985:14). The narrative of Frans Maselesele includes the fact that Engenas had to go from Moria to Botlokwa on foot because *[d]ikoloi ... e be e le semaka gomme di sepela fela ka bahumi ba makgowa fela* ("[m]otorcars in those days were inaccessible to us, driven around only by rich whites" (*Messenger* 1985:29). Such items of the ZCC oral tradition are a clear indication that the ZCC leadership and membership have always been on the subaltern side of society, thus striving from within the underprivileged to uplift them spiritually, socially and economically. The oral tradition in this regard endorses what writers like Pongweni (2000), Rafapa (2010) and Anderson (http://books.google.co.za) demonstrate to be the philosophical underpinnings of the ontological and epistemological character of the ZCC.

One more significant feature of the ZCC that can be distilled from its oral tradition is its oral historical approach of anchoring narratives in archaeological and other tangible items. The visuals, artefacts and archaeological items published alongside the narratives of research participants like Simon Ramalepe, Frans Ramalepe, Simon Maselesele and the current ZCC bishop, perform the important function of grounding the oral testimonies given by the research participants. In this way, the ZCC oral tradition and accompanying artefacts live true to the roles of each. According to Boeyens and Hall (2009:460) the narratives and artefacts respectively perform mutually reinforcing functions of providing "explicit historical contexts" which can be "controlled and verified by the methods and discoveries of archaeology".

The "traditions of genesis" and "dynastic histories" of the ZCC, to use Prins's (1991:125) words, are provided by research participants like Frans Sekgobela, Simon Sekgobela and Frans Maselesele, while more overtly

temporally transcendental narratives like those by the current bishop yield for the perceptive oral historian what Prins (1991:125) describes as "accounts of social organization".

This article has demonstrated that the ZCC oral tradition is crucial to putting right what, in the ZCC history, was distorted, like the year in which the ZCC was founded. It is this fundamental function of oral tradition of serving "to check other sources" even as the other sources "serve to check" oral tradition, that a researcher like Prins (1991:135) advances as one of the many reasons why the oral history research method and oral traditions can no longer be ignored in the writing of history today.

It is through the ZCC use of the qualitative, oral history method of researching ZCC oral tradition that continuities in the history of the ZCC can be mapped. These continuities validate the oral history research method and oral traditions, as much as they foster a ring of veracity in the ZCC history. Social organisation in the ZCC of today serves as an index for the continuities that the oral narratives considered above bear witness to. Hegemonic approaches to historical research, through their propensity to look mainly for change in a given history, could have missed out on the benefits derived from the qualitative, oral historical research methodology shown in this paper to have been employed by the ZCC. However written history, like one represented in this paper by the works of writers such as Lukhaimane (1980), Anderson (http://books.google.co.za) and Mafuta (2010), has a clear triangulation role, for it too considers both continuities and change in going about writing a history --- except that more, or at times even sole, emphasis is put on change.

The fact that the ZCC oral tradition considered in this paper has to do with only three generations of ZCC leaders and followers since the founding of the church in 1910, adds to the narratives' probable accuracy of historical detail. In Boeyens and Hall's view (2009:462), "oral accounts of history are reliable, especially if they are chronologically of the most recent three to four generations". What should be seen as the achievement of this study is a demonstration of the reliability of oral accounts of ZCC history by looking at it from inside the tales themselves, and not by means of the dictates of theorists of written history.

References

Anderson, Allan 2011. African Initiated Christianity in the 20th century. Available: http://books.google.co.za. Accessed: 9 October 2011.
Boeyens, Jan, & Hall, Simon 2009. Tlokwa Oral Traditions and the Interface between History and Archaeology at Marothodi. *South African Historical Journal,* 61(3), 457-481.

Jones, Kip 2003. "The turn to a narrative knowing of persons: One method explored." *Journal of Research in Nursing* 8.1 (January 2003), 60-71.

Leavy, Patricia 2011. *Oral History. Understanding Qualitative Research*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Ledwaba, Lucas 2002a. Moria: a journey of hope, salvation. *City Press,* 31 March, p. 31.

Ledwaba, Lucas 2002b. The ZCC – where Africa meets God. *City Press*, 31 March, p. 31.

Lukhaimane, Khelebeni Elias 1980. The Zion Christian Church of Ignatius (Engenas) Lekganyane, 1924 to 1948. an African experiment with Christianity. Unpublished Masters Dissertation, University of the North.

Mafuta, Lubeme 2010. Religion and development in South Africa: an investigation of the relationship between soteriology and capital development in an African Initiated Church (AIC). Doctoral Thesis, Department of Philosophy, Practical and Systematic Theology, University of South Africa.

Motolla, E.M. 1985. Ed. *ZCC Messenger,* September, 12-13, 22-25.

Motolla, E.M. 1987. Ed. *ZCC Messenger,* Easter, 7-8, 12-15.

Motolla, E.M. 1995. Ed. *ZCC Family Bible*. Waterkloof: Olyfberg Publishers cc, i-v.

Motolla, E.M. 2008. Ed. *ZCC Messenger,* December, 4-5.

Motolla, E.M. 2010. Ed. *ZCC Messenger,* Easter, 8-90.

Pongweni, Alex 2000. Voicing the Text: South African Oral Poetry and Performance. *Critical Arts,* 14(20), 175-222.

Prins, Gwyn 1991. Oral History, in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*. Peter Burke (ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press, 114-139.

Rafapa, L.J 2010. *Es'kia Mphahlele's Afrikan Humanism*. Johannesburg: Stainbank and Associates.

A "linked data" approach to biographical documentation –

a case study of unsung struggle heroes

Roger Layton

Project Manager of the National Policy on Digitisation of Heritage Project, Department of Arts and Culture

Zdena Mtetwa
Khulumani Support Group, Khotso House, Johannesburg

Introduction

During the early stages of writing this paper, the co-author Zdena Mtetwa accepted an offer to attend a postgraduate course in the United Kingdom, and was not available for much of the time in the detailed writing of this paper. Her name is retained as a co-author, with the primary author being Roger Layton, and some of this text is written in the first person from his perspective. Further input has been provided by Marjorie Jobson from Khulumani who also reviewed this paper before submission.

Background and context

This paper follows on from my paper presented at the 2010 Oral History conference, *Digitising and Documenting the Oral History* (published in the first part of this volume under the OHASA Conference Proceedings of 2010). The focus of that paper was on the "elements" arising from oral history digitisation and documentation projects, and placing these elements into the context of the Living Heritage Policy (Department of Arts and Culture, Living Heritage Policy Draft for Public Review, December 2009), the National Policy on Digitisation (Department of Arts and Culture, Draft National Policy on Digitisation, 2011, available from www.dac.gov.za) and the current technology trends that are providing impetus for large-scale, long-lived digital heritage repositories. One section of my 2010 paper concerned the codification of the oral history in order to provide a more detailed set of linkages to related items that are referenced within a single such element.

Based on my interaction with Khulumani, including Zdena Mtetwa and Marjorie Jobson, it has became evident that there are a large number of recorded narratives of people involved in the liberation struggle who did not, or could not, participate in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

While the TRC created a "meta-narrative" of the liberation struggle, the "story stock of the TRC" does not reflect the incredible richness and diversity of contributions to the birthing of democracy in South Africa, nor does it create space for the contestations that were part of the lived reality. Many stories remained silent and were even suppressed by the TRC. The collation of narratives by the TRC was in fact carefully managed. Ms Nomarussia Bonase, Khulumani's Gauteng Provincial Coordinator, during an informal interview explains:

> Those who went inside to testify to the TRC were improperly prepared. They were told what to say to the TRC. Statement takers asked specific questions from a list; the "victim" would respond to those questions. In the list, rape and gender violence was not a question. If a woman said it happened to her, the interviewer often did not record it.

The ongoing documentation of stories remains crucial, not only to provide the bearers of these stories with acknowledgement but also to more accurately populate the historical record to prevent distortions that can and are being invoked for particular political purposes. The value of narratives is that they generate knowledge from the perspective of others' lives and they

help to prevent erasure while also refusing complicity in the production of domination.[1]

Many contributors to the historic liberation struggle in South Africa are at risk of being forgotten if their contributions are not recorded somehow and somewhere within some formal and accessible structure. Khulumani have been recording these oral histories and have built up a large database, but this remains largely inaccessible due to limited resources --- and yet holds many stories of South Africa's struggle to democracy. In most cases these are the stories of the unsung heroes and heroines of the struggle, and this is therefore a useful starting point from which to explore new methods for encoding of the oral histories, which may create, using the words of one of the Khulumani staffers, "the facebook of the struggle". This analogy to Facebook is weak, since in the oral history we need to create modes of interconnectedness that are far beyond the limited structures available within the social networking systems: in order to achieve this vision I have examined current and emerging methods for the encoding of biographical information as part of the search for the ideal approach.

My motivation for this work has arisen from my personal observation that all histories are massively connected, and yet this level of connection is not directly evident from treating such histories as disconnected personal life stories. The true value of using a formal encoding process on the individual words and sentences of oral history transcriptions is that we can identify new connections, and can rebuild history in different ways, using a more powerful "connection engine", which I foresee as the next generation of the current linear-structured "search engines". My argument is that we cannot achieve this next generation of massive connections without a deliberate effort into fine-level encoding of the oral history materials we have at our disposal.

I have outlined my early approach to codification elsewhere[2] in which I have introduced broad-brush techniques to encode oral history transcriptions, and this early work has since been extended to address more fine-grained approaches to encoding. My approach is to use modern methods of encoding semantics within documents, as is becoming increasingly important within the next generation of the World Wide Web. This is referred to as the Semantic Web, Web 3.0, or the Linked Data movement (Linked Data, World Wide Web Consortium, retrieved from http://www.w3.org/standards/semanticweb/data on 2 October

---

[1]   Presentation by Professor Louise Vincent of the Department of Political Science at Rhodes University on "A Narrative View of Institutional Culture".

[2]   Layton, R. Codification of Intangible Heritage for the South African Heritage Resources Information System (SAHRIS). SAMA National Conference 2006. 13 June 2006, Champagne Sports Resort, Drakensberg, KwaZulu-Natal. Workshop conducted on Oral History Codification with the Women's March Oral History Project. 2007.

[2011](). My approach is to apply this to biographical information obtained from oral history projects, no matter how large or small the narratives recorded.

The Linked Data Movement

The Web is the core technology for storing and linking information, and the technologies of HTML and its related standards for encoding information have been available and widely used for the past 20 years. The Web has revolutionised all forms of information storage, retrieval and sharing, using the "hyperlink" as the manner in which a reference from one document can be automatically used to open up the other document, no matter where this is located. The early attempts at encoding information for the Web, using pure HTML, have given way to standards that separate the content, structure, format and interactive behaviour of the data stored. These standards, including HTML, CSS, XML and Javascript, are collectively referred to as Web 1.0.

Within Web 2.0, the focus shifted to networking of people so that rather than each user having a personal and individual relationship to the web of documents, the focus was on the shared networking of people with one another, giving rise to the social networking uses of the Web that are widely used today. This mode of interaction accommodates user-created content, which is accumulating at a massive rate as people record their personal histories in blogs, video libraries, photographic repositories and dynamic conversations. We will have a massive and potentially uncontrollable digital archive of this generation arising from these stores, with the additional problems of these all being under the control of very few organisations, and also of their having unproved trustworthiness.

Web 3.0, the Semantic Web, is now emerging as a new set of standards for information storage and interchange, in which the unit of data is not a complete document, as with Web 1.0, but in which every sentence, word, phrase, image or sound bite can be identified and referenced independently. This is the essence of the Linked Data movement, in which data contained within any document or database can be linked to any other element of data in any other place.

One of the core technologies for the Semantic Web is the generic language XML (eXtensible Markup Language) which is used to create new languages and new vocabularies for particular situations and requirements, and has become widely used and applied over the past 10 years.

However, the encoding of the oral history is a hard problem, given that so much rich information and connections can be gleaned from even small statements, and also given that each individual narrative contains

references to a wide range of external concepts and things, each of which will be required to be encoded separately, and each of which should be commonly identified within well-known vocabularies in order to minimise the risk of duplication.

The Khulumani archives of oral history

The Khulumani Support Group is the only national membership organisation of more than 65 000 victims and survivors of apartheid-era gross human rights violations. The organisation was formed in 1995 prior to the establishment of the TRC.

Khulumani's main focus remains that of transforming survivors of major apartheid trauma into community activists through processes to facilitate reclaiming of their political agency, to contribute to community development initiatives for economic empowerment and to secure the accountability of local government in their local communities. The active citizenship demonstrated by empowered Khulumani members focuses on dealing with the ongoing reality that the post-1994 years have been marked by slow delivery on the promise of freedom with local government being beset by inadequate management and a slow rollout of necessary services.

Khulumani's mission is summarised as follows: responsive to the needs of its members Khulumani exists to restore the dignity of all persons harmed by apartheid through their transformation from victims to active citizens. A major contributor to the restoration of the dignity of victims and survivors is the acknowledgement of what happened to individuals who sustained serious harm in the struggle for liberation.

A model for linked data encoding for biographical information

Introducing Linked Data

From my paper presented at the 2010 Oral History Conference referred to in the above, I identified the "elements" of the oral history as the documents that have been captured, such as audio recordings, their transcripts and their translations, digital images from scanned photographs, old newspaper cuttings, archival documents, film and video, and any other type of source materials.

When these "elements" are treated as the units of oral history information, they are indexed and made available as self-contained units in digital archives, and are mostly managed as parts of specific oral history collections. However the real value is to be found embedded deep within the content, and this is not directly available within a document-level indexing structure.

When we look for specific information, such as the incidence of a particular type of event in a particular area within a given time frame, we will not discover this from the titles or the metadata associated with the document-level information. What is needed is to change our notion of the "unit of information" to be the internal parts of the documented historical recordings – from each chapter, paragraph, sentence and word, and also the subject matter contained within each image and video segment. In essence, we turn the current words and images into data. The motivation for this approach is that data can be readily queried, whereas documents as a whole and images cannot. Whereas there has been much emphasis on "full-text" searching in creating the modern search engines such as Google, this approach fails in cases in which there is considerable context in which the statements exist. The current search engines are good at finding web pages over the internet but cannot find relationships between things, the essence of our approach to digitally recording the oral history. We need to build a new generation of information-based tools to accommodate these needs, which is the combination of a new encoding structure with a new form of data discovery using the "connection engine". The work of encoding the oral history is posing challenges for our notions of recording and notating information and is pushing us to a new future of the information technologies.

Our approach makes an important assumption concerning the motivation for recording oral histories in the first place. I argue that such documentation is not to create an archive of independent histories, but to provide the basis for understanding the collective histories, and the massive connections that exist between these histories. I am pushing this encoding towards an ideal form of data representation that will serve as the basis for long-term management of oral histories which are managed and stored as connected and linked data, rather than as independent stories.

In order to achieve this ideal data representation, we need to analyse our oral history recordings not as a narrative or as a story, but as a set of linkages to other things: to people, organisations, events, places and concepts. This is a very large task when considered in the context of the totality of the oral history. In order to reduce the scale of this task for the purpose of a pilot implementation I have chosen to explore the smaller problem of the encoding of biographies, and have collaborated with Khulumani, who have extensive oral history resources available from years of recording narratives and stories of the unsung heroes of the liberation struggle.

These are not complete biographies as one would find in a "Who's Who" but are mostly provided in the form of small snippets of individual narratives which highlight the specific role of individuals who participated in the liberation struggle, including the stories related by others concerning those who died or disappeared. Some of these narratives are small, and some

are long and extensive – some are available with the original wording and in the original languages, whereas others are provided as translations, and in which the stories have been rewritten for the benefit of the reader. However, it is not the medium or the format or even the level of rewriting which is significant, but the content – and the finer details of this content are of interest to me in the context of this project.

Attempts have been made to describe biographical information as a sequence of events that make up a person's lifetime, as in the BIO vocabulary (BIO: A vocabulary for biographical information, retrieved from http://vocab.org/bio/0.1/.html on 2 October 2011), which is focused on the relationships with other persons. However, for the oral history in general, and the biographies of those who participated in the liberation struggle in particular, this approach to encoding biographies is too limited since it omits the important elements of shared events and the ad hoc organisational structures that were formed spontaneously in response to the worsening political situation at the time. This BIO vocabulary also omits the contextual relationship with places and of the larger context in which individual biographies were a part.

My approach has been to design a new encoding structure from the bottom up, by examining the nature of the materials available to me, and from this to create new structures that capture the essence of this interconnectedness.

Encoding events

Events are an important element of biographical information, representing the dynamic elements of what happened to people ("I did this", "this was done to me", "I participated in this shared event"). The types of events that we see within these struggle narratives use verbs such as "tear-gassed", "picked up (by police)", "tortured", "arrested", "beaten (to a pulp)", "dies", "joined (the struggle)", "detained", "attacked", which all indicate a violent society fighting both with itself and with its oppressors.

The statements that describe events represent complex relationships that exist between people, organisations, places and outcomes, and also with other prior and consequential events.

As an example, consider the statement:

> "I was badly beaten by the police here in Sikhulu Street when we were involved in a protest dance, the toyi-toyi. I was beaten on my back with an R1 rifle and spent three months in the local provincial hospital."

111

This shows a particular type of event (**beaten by police**), the place where this occurred (**Sikhulu Street**), and the reason given by the person concerned (**involved in a protest dance**). There is no date or time reference for this event. There is a reference to the **toyi-toyi** as a protest dance. The second sentence indicates the instrument used for the beating (**an R1 rifle**), and the body part affected (**back**). It also indicates the consequence of this event (**three months in hospital**).

Further in this short narrative the following statement is made:

> "When the weather is cold, I have severe pains in my body and I am unable to sleep. My back has never healed completely."

This shows the need to identify the long-term outcomes arising from an event, in this case the result of the beating on the person and how this impacted the person's life. This is a cause-effect relationship which is significant to identifying the narrative in perspective.

In order to formalise this encoding of the narrative it is necessary to break it into its constituent parts, identifying the various parts of each statement, what they refer to and how they link together. These individual parts in this story concern the following:

- beating: a type of event
- toyi-toyi: a type of event, subtype of dance
- police: an institution/organisation
- provincial hospital: an organisation
- back: part of body
- three months: a duration

We also need to encode all of the referenced information (organisation, place, time, people) sufficiently to capture the connections and commonalities between the events and between individual people's histories.

From this small selection from a small narrative, a snippet of a single person's life, many issues arise about how to effectively encode it at a finer level, which raises the question of the "grain-size" of the encoding.

The grain-size problem

"Grain-size" problems exist in situations in which we can develop finer and finer descriptions, leading to the question how fine our descriptions have to be to accomplish the outcomes we are seeking. The term "grain size" arises from the analysis of a sandy beach, which at one level is a single unit, the beach, and at another level can be seen as individual grains of sand. The sand granules themselves can be divided further into their molecular structure if

112

we wish, but at some point we need to decide how fine a level we need for our descriptions.

This issue forces us to make a key planning decision early in the encoding process about how much detail we encode, since encoding these narratives at a fine level will provide more detailed information but will be more costly – and encoding at a high level will provide fewer connections but can be conducted quickly and at relatively low cost. We do not currently know the answer to this grain-size question for the Khulumani archives and we hope to learn lessons from this project to help guide future projects.

My recommendation, given the massive volume of un-encoded oral history documentation, is to start encoding at the broadest level and then to conduct future projects in which a finer level of encoding can be carried out on documents regarded as more significant than others.

There is always the possibility that future artificial intelligence programs will be able to read the archival documents and to automatically encode these, but this approach appears to be almost impossible given the nature of the oral history transcriptions, and is at least 50 years into the future.

Common vocabularies

A significant level of commonality is found in the contents of individual oral history elements, including transcribed narratives, photographs and videos. These elements will also include future forms of historical documentation, such as blogs, e-mails, online discussions and websites, but for the present these are excluded.

This commonality must be encoded using commonly available vocabularies, and the call for a common set of national vocabularies has been made previously with some prior work on creating these having been performed in 2006-7 (Unpublished report on Data Coding Standard for Heritage, Part D of the South African Heritage Resources Information System Project, Phase 1, SAHRA, 2007).

Creating vocabularies is a complex and time-consuming activity, and it is important to start correctly so that the vocabularies are useful and as widely known and accepted as possible. Once vocabularies are in place, they not only provide a fixed point for encoding but they also impose a single way of encoding – which itself may be a risk. To mitigate this risk I recommend that all encoded source information be retained in its original state for re-encoding in the future, and also that the vocabularies are also flexible and evolving, allowing for redefinitions, the inclusion of new words, terms and named things, and also the ability to represent different viewpoints formally and explicitly within the structure of the vocabulary.

113

As an example of these different viewpoints, it is common for experts to hold different positions and to disagree on interpretations of specific events and situations; when such differences are analysed, they can sometimes be reduced to different views of how the evidence should be structured and into which semantic box a particular piece of evidence should fit. This does not belittle the work of the experts, but it provides a means to formalise and clarify multiple viewpoints, and is a move towards the "Glass Bead Game" representation that I cited in my 2010 paper published earlier in this volume.

The common approach to vocabularies has been to structure them into one of two types: thesauri, representing abstract terms, and authority files, representing named items.

Authority files are concerned with individualised items that we have already named, and this includes People, Organisations, Places and Named Events – essentially the concrete nouns. Thesauri are concerned with ways in which we use categories and classifications to make sense of our world, to identify groups of items using these categories – which represent abstract nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs from our language structures.

I have produced extensive prior work on the nature of these vocabularies and authority files (see the ETHER Initiative. www.ether.co.za) and it is not possible to provide details here; consequently I will rather outline only some high-level issues as they apply to encoding of oral history biographical narratives.

People and organisations

The first authority files I have examined are those concerning individuals (Persons) and how individuals organise themselves into groups for various purposes, formal and informal (Organisations).

Persons exist by name, and ideally each person should be recorded only once within this vocabulary. However, in practice this is difficult, since the same person is referred to in different ways, and often by different names, in the context of the oral history narratives. In some cases the name is their full name, in others it may be partial (such as Mr X), and in other cases, nicknames are used. In most cases there is no identification information on which to base the linkage such as an ID number. There also a number of people who share the same name.

Organisations may represent large-scale national organisations (the Police), or informal local organisations (CRADORA – the Cradock Residents Association, CRADOYA – Cradock Youth Association).

Some of these organisations are widely known and widely used as names and abbreviations (e.g. COSAS), whereas others are local and relatively unknown outside of their geographical areas.

In other cases, groupings represent geographical communities (such as CRADORA), tribe names (Zulu, Xhosa), political parties (ANC, Inkatha Freedom Party/Inkatha/IFP).

There are also common names used for various groups that are significant since their histories are highlighted within the context of the struggle (PEBCO 3, Cradock Four).

There are many challenges to identifying and recording these names into a formal database, since many of these have different meanings to different people, there are differences in spelling, and the names of organisations change over time.

Places

The Places authority file includes the names of towns, villages, suburbs, streets and buildings. For example, from our work on the Cradock narratives some of the place names that appear are

- Cradock, Langa Township, Tembisa
- Sikhulu Street
- Provincial Hospital, Livingstone Hospital, Walton Hospital
- Matthew Goniwe High School
- Pollsmoor Prison

When we read these names in a narrative, we create a mental image of the place as we read the narrative. We also need to record the older names used, as well as common, colloquial names and to include the type of place.

An international Thesaurus of Geographical Names (TGN) is maintained by the Getty Foundation, but this does not accommodate the level of detail required for our current work, although it serves an important purpose for more commonly used names.

Named events

Named Events is an authority file concerning the names of specific events which are well known and used frequently. This will include the names of wars, battles, sieges, and so on, as well as the names of large-scale events which cannot be accurately placed on a time line. However, each and every named event does have some mapping to a time line, even if this is inaccurate.

Examples in usage within our current work include the following:

- Liberation Struggle/the struggle
- State of Emergency
- Langa Massacre
- School Boycott
- Sharpeville massacre

These names and their events have a parent-child relationship in which a larger event (such as "the struggle") contains within it a range of other events, which themselves may overlap in time, and which may also have their own "child" events. I have found that this parent-child relationship exists with a number of types of vocabulary, and that there are few purely linear structures of names or knowledge.

Event types

Another thesaurus is needed to describe the types of events that happen to people and organisations, which is represented by the verbs used within the sentences. We find the words used repeat themselves in many contexts, and have much the same meaning – but the true meaning is often not defined anywhere and is implied. Some of the common event types in our sample set of narratives include

- detained
- arrested
- beaten
- shot
- killed
- tortured
- compensated

Each of these has a range of parameters which define their situation, which correspond to the subjects and objects used within sentences of which these event types are the verbs.

Roles/types

The final thesaurus I outline for the purpose of this paper is that of the relationships or roles that exist between entities, and particularly between people and organisations.

For example

- father/son/other family relationship
- member
- founder/co-founder
- chairman

These few examples of the various vocabularies have barely scraped the surface of this complex area for encoding information. Much work is needed to ensure that such a common set exists for the benefit of all: without such a common set, it may prove impossible to allow for queries that span repositories and collections. The worst-case scenario is that many repositories will be built that are not interoperable --- the development and widespread usage of common vocabularies, and associated standards for representation of dates and times, will be sufficient to mitigate this eventuality.

Example of encoding

For the purpose of this paper, I am illustrating the encoding processes we are using for a single narrative and how this relates to other vocabularies.

Raw content

This information has been used in its raw and original form with real names used. This is because in order to tell these stories they cannot be about anonymous people, but about the real people who wish their stories to be told. These are the "unsung heroes" whom we identified in the title of this paper.

NOMBULELO MBANJANA, 11 Kwintshi Street, Cradock
I was not directly affected by torture but my uncle Mr Madoda Jacobs was an activist and a leader. Madoda Jacobs was an activist since 1977. He was arrested and beaten to a pulp on several occasions up until 1990. He was detained under Section 28 of the Internal Security Act and spent time in Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town in 1984 together with Matthew Goniwe who was brutally assassinated. He spent nine months in Pollsmoor prison and was then a listed person who could not be quoted. He was detained in 1985 until the lifting of the state of emergency in 1986 at which time he became the chairperson

of COSAS. COSAS led the school boycotts from 1984 to 1987 which resulted in 200 000 school children participating. Mr Jacobs was a member of the Cradock Youth Congress which was affiliated to the United Democratic Front. He could not complete his studies and my family is still bitter that he died in 1984, unemployed and uneducated, having spent most of his student years behind bars. Other people went to school and obtained qualifications that enabled them to enjoy the fruits of freedom. But he was a forgotten hero, neglected by those in power. Nowadays few people are committed to the people as he was. I am proud of him. Long live the spirit of Madoda Jacobs. Long Live!

Analysis of the content

Here we read a narrative about a person whom the author claims is a "forgotten hero". Within this narrative we see a large number of "things" mentioned, which represent the key elements from which this story is woven. My recommendation is to identify and encode these nouns as the first step in the process of encoding the entire narrative.

In this first level of encoding I identify the key nouns and encode them using the XML structures we have developed. I have only selected the first half of the above narrative, and you will see that these include the XML Tags of Person, Organisation, Law, Place and NamedEvent. In each case the "Code" attribute is linked back to the vocabulary entry for these nouns. One example of each of these markups is highlighted in **bold**.

I was not directly affected by torture but my uncle **<Person Code='madoba.jacobs'>Mr Madoda Jacobs</Person>** was an activist and a leader.

<Person Code='madoba.jacobs'>Madoda Jacobs</Person> was an activist since 1977. He was arrested and beaten to a pulp on several occasions up until 1990. He was detained under **<Law Code='ISA' Section='28'>Section 28 of the Internal Security Act</Law>** and spent time in **<Place Code='pollsmoor'>Pollsmoor Prison</Place>** in Cape Town in 1984 together with <Person Code='matthew.goniwe'>Matthew Goniwe</Person> who was brutally assassinated.

> He spent nine months in <Place Code='pollsmoor'>Pollsmoor prison </Place> and was then a listed person who could not be quoted. He was detained in 1985 until the lifting of the **<NamedEvent Code='stateofemergency'>state of emergency</NamedEvent>** in 1986 at which time he became the chairperson of **<Organisation Code='cosas'>COSAS</Organisation>**.

Next we markup the relationships that exist, such as that he was the chairperson of COSAS, and that this started around 1986. Another relationship is that he was at Pollsmoor with Matthew Goniwe.

> He was detained in 1985 until the lifting of the <NamedEvent Code='stateofemergency'>state of emergency</NamedEvent> in 1986 at which time he became the **<Relation Type="chairperson" Person="madoda.jacobs" Organisations="COSAS" DateStart="1985" DateEnd="?"> chairperson</Relation>** of <Organisation Code='cosas'>COSAS</Organisation>.

Finally, it is then possible to encode the specific events that occurred in the life of Madoda Jacobs, including the roles he played, his arrest, beating, detention, and the fact he was a listed person under the State of Emergency.

> He was **<Event Type="detention" DateStart="1985" DateEnd="1986" DateEndEvent="stateofemergency">detained</Event>** in 1985 until the lifting of the <NamedEvent Code='statsofemergency'>state of emergency</NamedEvent> in 1986 at which time he became the <Relation Type="chairperson" Person="madoda.jacobs" Organisations="COSAS" DateStart="1985" DateEnd="?">chairperson</Relation of <Organisation Code='cosas'>COSAS</Organisation>.

Only limited examples have been provided of the above due to lack of space. However, these indicate the nature of our markup process for the encoding. It is important to note that this markup does not impact what the users will see when they access this. Each of these marked-up areas embeds a small part of the text, and will allow for a link to the item mentioned if this points to another entity (such as a Place or Person).

119

The next step is what happens to these oral history files once they have been encoded in this way.

The "connection engine"

By themselves these marked-up files are not very useful. However, when they are linked and connected to the vocabularies, they allow for the creation of connections that I identified earlier in this paper.

I have referred to this as the "connection engine" since its purpose is to store all of the oral history files and the vocabularies, and to provide access using a new search engine structure which results in a complex connection of items as outputs and not a linear list of search results.

This engine contains the following components:

- A vocabulary manager, capable of handling all of the vocabularies as required, as well as linking these to national vocabularies as required.
- A repository which holds each of the documents, marked up using the encoding structures. Documents are marked up as indicated in this paper, and audio files, images, video files and scanned documents have separate markup approaches.
- A collection management function, which supports the management of individual collections, as well as the rights associated with the collections.
- A connection-based search engine, which takes in a range of terms, and which then finds the connections between them and returns a connected network of items that match the terms provided.

The "connection engine" has been designed and is under construction at present and it is intended that this can be provided in many sites and for many types of collection which can then interlink with each other, sharing common information while protecting the rights of the owners of the materials and allowing them to manage their own materials without having to release them to a central repository.

Discussion

This paper is too short a space to outline our goals in the building of this "connection engine" repository structure for the oral history, and much of our work is engaged in research into new ways of recording and encoding the information.

This work falls within our programme called "ETHER" (Eternal Heritage) with the vision of heritage information systems which can live forever, through continual attention to reformatting and migration of the content and upgrading the content as new technologies become available. ETHER also includes the development of new standards for museum and library collection management in the digital age, and the development of collection management systems that are more accessible to smaller and less wealthy institutions.

Our work on the Khulumani materials is self-funded at present, although we are looking to complete a full pilot to use as the basis for attracting funding. This will enable new ways of accessing the vast stores of oral history materials, in which they will appear to the users as items in a massive connected universe for which even a 3D visualisation is insufficient to capture the complexity of the relationships. However, such visualisation is a useful tool for seeing how these connections are structured, and one future project we have considered is the usage of such virtual reality tools to help us understand and grasp the complexity of this data by seeing it within a 3D or 4D landscape rather than using the limited interface of the 2D 15" computer screen.

For now, our work continues on simple data sets, using these as the pilots to help us work on our prototype for the "connection engine".

We would like to use a range of different types of oral history, beyond the biographical accounts, and would welcome the opportunity to work with others as part of our ongoing research and development of this "connection engine".

Emancipating the African voice through photojournalism: Alf Kumalo and his experiences during the struggle for freedom in South Africa

Nomazizi Jamela and Tembeka Ngcebetsha
Department of Heritage and Knowledge, Freedom Park,
Pretoria, South Africa

Introduction and background

Documentary photography is a very powerful medium especially when it touches on something that people don't want to look at.[1] It is a narrative that is largely concerned with details that make each photograph unique.[2] During apartheid, photojournalists who used documentary photography to expose the gross human rights violations of apartheid to the world were marginalised in the media. Documentary photography was not encouraged because it threatened the core of what the country was about. In its attempts to suppress all forms of anti-apartheid activity, the government implemented various laws that severely restricted press freedom and limited the production and circulation of any images that revealed the current conditions in the country.[3] Photojournalists worked under extremely difficult conditions; they were continually harassed, detained and banned. Some even had their work destroyed. As described by resistance photographer Omar Badsha in a conversation with Alex Harris: "Photographs are so powerful that the state makes sure that no cameramen are allowed in the streets. That they be shot on sight … that they can be put away for twenty years because they have a camera and are taking photographs."[4] Getting the true story was not easy; photojournalists were thus forced to quickly capture images that would symbolise the struggle. However, despite extremely difficult working conditions, photojournalists such as Alf Kumalo persevered because images of a struggling South Africa were so highly valued by the world.

---

[1] *Photography and the liberation struggle in South Africa.*
http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/photography-and-liberation-struggle-south-africa-1

[2] This is an excellent example of documentary photography's relationship with detail in David Goldblatt's book, *The Transported of KwaNdebele: A South African Odyssey*, which chronicles the daily six-hour commute via overnight bus of workers living in KwaNdebele to Durban.

[3] *Photography in South Africa: 1950–2000.*

[4] Transcript of various conversations with Omar Badsha 9/1985-11/1985, 9.

The focus of this paper is an interview with Alf Kumalo on his career as a photojournalist, in his engagement with documentary photography and resistance photography during the liberation struggle in South Africa. Through an open oral interview with him, which was carried out by a Freedom Park research team in 2009 at his museum in Soweto, he was interrogated on his life and his engagement in photojournalism during the most trying times of South African history. The authors listened carefully to his voice, as he narrated his life and experiences during the struggle years to try to understand how he saw his work, and how it was shaped by his strong cultural traditions and upbringing. They also carefully analysed his photographs and related them to the politics of the time and their continued value in post-apartheid South Africa.

The main argument of the paper is that although photography is often believed to "witness" history or "reflect" society, it often fails to account for the complex ways in which photographs are understood, and the variety of motivations and social and political factors that shape the vision of the world that photographs provide. The reasoning behind this is that sometimes people post photos (whether of war, distressed children, street demonstrations or other "contrived events", etc) that they clearly believe to have obvious, usually political, meaning; and commentators respond to these as "powerful images", meaning that the images are effective in a context where photographer and commentor share assumptions about the ability of pictured events to manipulate viewers by non-logical means toward conclusions that the commentators agree with.[5] Thus, by analysing Alf's photography, an attempt is made in this paper to demonstrate the most significant contribution of his photographs and how they influenced the international community to join the struggle against apartheid, which in turn contributed to the freedom South Africans currently enjoy.

It should be noted that the intention of the authors was not to provide a comprehensive survey of South African photography during the apartheid period but to focus on the life and experiences of Alf Kumalo as a photographer during the liberation struggle, as portrayed in the interview. The interview itself should be understood as a project of oral history, which is a self-conscious, disciplined conversation between two people, a dialogue about some aspect of the past considered by them to be of historical significance and intentionally taken down for the record.

Although the conversation with Alf takes the form of an interview, in which one person – the interviewer – asks questions of another person --- variously referred to as the interviewee or narrator --- oral history is, at its heart, a dialogue. The questions of the interviewer, deriving from a particular frame of reference or historical interest, elicit certain responses from the

---

5   *Photography, Meaning and Historiography. Posted by Jonathan on October 11th, 2007.*

narrator, deriving from that person's frame of reference, that person's sense of what is important or what he or she thinks is important to tell the interviewer. The narrator's response in turn shapes the interviewer's subsequent questions, and on and on. With this view of oral history, our discussion of the life of Alf Kumalo as a photographer must therefore be understood to be bound by a specific frame of reference based on shared assumptions. The interpretation of the impact of photographs was thus influenced by Alf Kumalo's frame of reference at the time of the interview.

The life and experiences of Alf Kumalo as a photojournalist in the struggle for freedom

Alf Kumalo was born in Vrededorp, Johannesburg, on 5 September 1930. He matriculated at the WiIberforce Institute in Evaton. As a young man, Kumalo was intrigued by the impact of pictures, and their ability to "freeze moments in time". He experienced this ability as a child, and this childhood obsession encouraged him to pursue a career in photography:

> "My love of photography started when I was young, I loved drawing. I started by drawing cars, houses, people and everything that triggered me, I then became involved in photography because it was a better tool of capturing a moment ... I found it easier to capture a picture than drawing, which is why I opted for photography. Even though I enjoyed drawing a lot, I felt involved with the camera because I believed that there was nothing that captured people's history than the way photography does, as well as video, but photography is easy to use, cheaper and easily available."

Alf was never formally taught to take pictures:

> "I started taking pictures at an early age, when my cousin sister (daughter of his mother's sister) brought me a camera which could be used from 5 feet, 10 feet distance. This kind of camera encouraged me to take pictures more often because the pictures came out perfectly. I would then spend time taking more pictures after doing my household chores as a child, such as fetching water."

His photography was also inspired by his upbringing and culture. He narrates his life and how his father instilled strong cultural traditions that contributed to shaping his career:

"Born from the Dukuza Clan of kwa Nongoma in KZN, a clan that originated from Cetywayo Clan during Shaka period, his father named him Dukuza. After his family moved to Utrecht his family moved to Johannesburg when he was about three years old. They first lived in Alexandra and later in Everton where his father bought property. His mother was from Swati background and father from a Zulu background of Mbatha. Although his parents were from different cultural groups, his father was very strict with culture and tradition."

"My father ensured that we (his children) spoke vernacular languages at home. Because we lived in Johannesburg, he did not want his children to lose their identity, and do things like other Jhb people, who spoke mixed languages. So he ensured that we spoke proper vernacular languages whether Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho or Shangaan."

As an African boy and teenager, Alf narrates some of the cultural activities and rituals he undertook including cattle herding, stick fighting and bird chasing. This is how he narrates some of the activities he undertook, that taught him the importance of the value of accountability and responsibility:

"When I was about nine years old, I was ordered by my uncle to go and look after the cattle of the farmer my uncle was working for in Natal. The reason was because the boy who used to look after them was not there and my uncle was also going to get married. I then went to KZN to replace my uncle. I single-handedly looked after a lot of cattle, including hundreds of goats in Vaterstroom. On one occasion, nine of the goats got lost … I remember that my uncle was very harsh and told me that if I did not return with the lost goats I should not come back home. On that night, I slept in a dense jungle on a very huge rock bigger than my own studio … It was about 4am that people who were looking for me found me and my granny was in tears because she and other people thought I was kidnapped by witches. People in the village died still believing that I was kidnapped by witches, but I did not come back because I was scared that my uncle would beat me up."

After this scenario of disappearance, Alf's father came to fetch him to return to Johannesburg and he could not say goodbye to his friends. Another activity he narrated was stick fighting, which he was taught by his friends while herding cattle in the village. This was a common game, similar to

125

boxing in the township, which taught him that apathy, idleness and self-pity are no-go areas:

> "I remember playing the stick fighting game for the first time, my hands got injured and I stayed home. But while I was at home, I collected wires and tins of shoe polish to make a wired car. My friend came to visit while I was making my car. He was wondering what was wrong with me and why I did not go for herding with other boys. When he saw the car I was making, he got impressed. I then told my friend to collect more wires so that I could also make him a car. The next day, my friend brought other boys. That day, I was suddenly a hero, because I could do what other boys in the village could not do. Even today, I can still do stick fighting."

These are the values that were instilled in him, which were reinforced when he went through the rite of passage during his teenage years. When he was asked to talk about black people's heritage – ubuntu --- he responded:

> "Ubuntu is about sharing. Poverty was not allowed amongst Black people, if you had nothing, others would make sure that you have a better life. They would do what is called (*ukusisa*), which means sharing. If you are one and have a number of cattle, you would give your neighbour who does not have anything, some of your cattle so that his family can survive. Even today in some areas of KwaZulu-Natal, people are still sharing (*Sisa*) their cattle with their neighbours. However, people have to return them when they multiply. But this heritage is no longer common amongst people in the villages."

Regarding the impact of his upbringing in both urban and rural areas on his career, he explains how the life of herding and the environment influenced his career in photography:

> "Coming from the urban areas and having lived in the village definitely had an impact on my life but a positive one. I loved the forest because it was quiet, I learnt a lot in the villages, stick fighting, herding cattle and even tracking birds (hunting birds). The village environment and the life of herding made me to love scenery. Both the jungle and the waterfall were very beautiful. I even went to Ghana to take scenery pictures. Because of the love for scenery, I also went to capture the Waterfalls in Zimbabwe. My best moment of taking pictures

126

was during the mornings when there is a rainbow above the waterfall."

As a young man, Kumalo was intrigued by the impact of pictures, and their ability to "freeze moments in time". What attracted him to photography was and still is the visual impact of a picture; for him it was always about capturing the visual moment.[6] He experienced this ability as a child, and this childhood obsession encouraged him to pursue a career in photography:

> "My love of photography started when I was young, I loved drawing. I started drawing cars, houses, people and everything that triggered me, I then became involved in photography because it was a better tool of capturing a moment ... I found it easier to capture a picture than drawing, which is why I opted for photography. Even though I enjoyed drawing a lot, I felt involved with the camera because I believed that there was nothing that captured people's history [better] than the way photography does, as well as video, but photography is easy to use, cheaper and easily available."

When Kumalo began his career as a journalist in 1951, it was not easy. He started by freelancing for *Bantu World*, where he took photographs to illustrate his stories. Not owning a camera, he was helped by one of his teachers to open a studio in 1952:

> "After the age of 14 years, I started to save a lot of money to buy a good camera … I was very serious about photography. In the '50s, instead of first buying a camera, I bought an enlarger --- a tool used to develop photos, I also teamed up with a school teacher who could use the tool because I did not have the skill. But the teacher disappointed me and did not want to share the information with me, so I took the equipment back. I still have that equipment even today …"

In 1956, Kumalo found a permanent position at the *Golden City Post,* a daily newspaper targeting black, coloured and Indian readers. When the publication closed down in 1971, he went to the United States of America, where he freelanced for a period of six and a half months. This experience helped him to publish some of the photographs he couldn't publish in South Africa in newspapers such as the *New York Times*, *Observer* and others. On his return, he found a position at the *Sunday Times*, and remained there until 1977. At

---

6   Andiswa Majavu in "Alf Kumalo: 5 decades in photos", http://www,southafrica.info.

this time, he still didn't own a camera, until he joined the *Drum* staff as a picture editor:

> "When I joined *Sunday Times* newspaper, I asked my editors to buy me a camera that made it possible for me to take pictures even if the camera is in the pocket. I used this kind of gadget in areas where the police did not want cameras or want a photographer to take pictures."

Documenting photographs of the liberation struggle

In the course of an illustrious career as a documentary photographer over 50 years, Kumalo has photographed both daily and historic events, and therefore captured permanently much of South Africa's collective photographic history, which will benefit future generations. He documented the life and times of a changing South Africa such as the intriguing story of South Africa's fight against apartheid, Africa's battle against poverty and disease and the triumph of a black boxer and athlete in segregated America. Alf's adventurous life has seen him "freeze through the lens" Nelson Mandela's first steps out of 27 years of captivity, Mohammad Ali's victory against George Foreman in that famous "Rumble in the Jungle" showdown in Kinshasa, DRC, the meeting of kings and plebeians and the general triumph of the human spirit.[7]

Some of the historic events he documented were of Sophiatown, the Rivonia Trial, the Treason Trial, trade union activity in the 1970s, and the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement. Kumalo also photographed several other historically significant events concerning the Student Uprising of 1976, the 1980s State of Emergency, the unbanning of the liberation movements, the Codesa talks, the first democratic elections, the forced removals, black people giving clothes to poor white people (1970s), Albertina Sisulu, Mrs Mandela during Mandela's trials (during the time of ANC and PAC banishment), Zinzi Mandela at two months, Mickey Tsakayi being arrested before the 1976 uprising, students tear gassed in the 1976 uprising, the 1960 Sharpeville massacre, and the bus boycott. One of his best images was an image of mineworkers, exhausted and sweaty against the background of a mine.[8] As well as in his Soweto museum, his photographs are kept in various locations such as Albert Luthuli House, Mandela's house and the Mandela Foundation.

---

[7] **Musa Ndlangamandla. 2010. Alf Kumalo: Freezing moments through the lens. *The Swazi Observer*, 31 March 2010.**

[8] Ibid.

When asked to state his reasons for his interest in politics he responded:

> "When I was young, things weren't right in this country and I became interested in politics, particularly in Robert Sobukwe, the first president of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). My older brother was quick to point out that as I was with the media, I shouldn't join any party. That was great advice as I was able to cover everything from Verwoerd's funeral to AWB gatherings – although they threatened to kill me and nearly succeeded a few times."[9]

He explained the reason for deciding to capture pictures of the liberation struggle:

> "I wanted to expose what was hidden, and what they did to our people, the intention was to capture what was [happening] … Actually it is through the influence of photography that the world became interested in how our people lived, because the government then would call people from abroad who would ask what is it that is not free here, because they would not see anything. So, photography freed us …"

He went on:

> "Did you see on TV what was happening in Zimbabwe and even the image of xenophobia? That image will not be forgotten, but if it were just words people would not believe that there is xenophobia …"

Obviously, Alf had a unique approach to photography. When asked what made him different from other South African photographers, he responded:

> "I am very observant … being a photographer helps one to be observant because there are things that you see and others cannot see, especially when you have an artistic background. I made sure that I was there and captured everything … those trials involved Mlangeni, Sisulu, Mandela of course …".

Another skill allowed him to follow important people in the struggle:

---

[9]   *Sunday Times* Lifestyle, 10 October 2010.

"In my photography, I developed a hobby of following people especially the politicians. This brought me closer to them and they became my close friends, I was closer to Sobukhwe, Sisulu, I would even spend the entire day with them. I followed people because you as a person you have a story to cover."

Showing a picture of Zinzi at two months old with Winnie Mandela, he said: "Look … this is Zinzi at 2 months old, now she is 48 years old."

He narrated some of the difficult challenges he experienced as a photographer during the liberation struggle. One was when he captured the 1976 student uprising:

"The bad experience was that when you take a picture of a police assaulting other people, even students do not understand, they would turn you away and say go back to Soweto … For instance, when I was taking the picture of Hector Peterson, I was nearly killed by the student who did not understand. Fortunately some of the students who knew my background spotted me. One student said No! I know this man … its Bra Alf! The students were angry and frustrated at me, they were not aware that the system was killing them."

"There were many other incidents, I was once beaten up with a rifle on the skull and got arrested and went to court … unfortunately there was no witness coming forward on what went on that day. I was sentenced that day for three years and there were no witnesses, they suspended me for three years on condition of resisting arrest, fighting police and taking pictures of prisoners."

Just like other resistance photographers, Kumalo was not well received by the apartheid government:

"I was hated by the government, I escaped number of times, but my brother suffered a lot, he was shot in his skull when I was raided in my home. His nickname was AK, the police thought that I had AK guns and that I was a terrorist. When they got into the house at about 4 am, they ordered me to open the wardrobe. I was raided a number of times and they found pictures … they spotted a whole lot on the roof. They thought there were guns, unfortunately they found nothing."

Although there were challenges, photographers tended to be treated differently from other journalists:

> "One day during the sixties we heard that there had been an explosion at a dynamite factory in Modderfontein and 47 people were dead. Terrorism was immediately blamed. Journalists descended on the place but were being turned away. We arrived and quickly saw that the way in was to join the throng of people getting off the trains and going through the pedestrian gate. No one bothered to look at our IDs. Once in, we headed for the bar and soon got first-hand accounts of what had happened. I discovered only five people had died …"

When he was asked to tell how the events that took place during the struggle affected his photography, it was clear that he was determined and could not be stopped:

> "I became more determined [about] stories of apartheid [and] I went out of my way, everything that was messing our people I went all out to capture it, I went to places like Kimberly, where I took pictures of Sobukhwe and his family …"

Just like the resistance movement itself, and other resistance photographers, Kumalo could not be contained by acts of repression. He became even more determined to expose South African conditions to the world. Especially in the 1980s it became clear that, although defiance could mean loss of life or terrible suffering, there was more to gain than to lose.

Impact on international community

Documentary photography played a crucial role in informing the international community about the injustice and inhumanity of apartheid, and raised international pressure against the Nationalists. By 1976, when most of the other African colonies had decolonised, the eyes of the international community focused on documentary films, newsreels and photographs featuring South Africa. In a conversation with Omar Badsha, Paul Weinberg emphasises the role played by such images in the liberation struggle: "You are looking at times when a single picture, or a bit of information can actually sway public and world opinion. It is incredible to be aware of the power that one has as a photographer."[10]

---

[10] Transcript of conversation between Omar Badsha and Paul Weinberg while driving from Durban to Cape Town, 2009.

The international media craved images of South Africa, not only because of worldwide interest in apartheid, but also because of their gruesome nature. Without the international community on board in the struggle against apartheid, the course of events in South Africa would have been hugely different. Resistance photography's contribution in alluring the hesitant members of the international community to take action against apartheid should be acknowledged as a critical component of the liberation struggle.

It was when photography was emerging as an institutionalised form of resistance that the apartheid government began to crumble. The new constitution of 1983 marked the beginning of the end for the apartheid regime. In response, the government dealt with the revolutionary tide by mobilising the army and declaring three national states of emergency in 1986, 1987 and 1989. Acts of resistance were met with acts of repression and as the cycle continued so did the delegitimisation of the South African government. Photography helped the liberation struggle by inviting more repression. Alex Harris wrote: "Among the journalists working in South Africa, photographers make a highly visible and particularly vulnerable target for the security police."[11]

During the states of emergency, when all civil rights were suspended and repressive violence raged continuously in the townships, documentary photography thrived. Documentary photography in the 1980s went in two directions simultaneously. It grew subtler and more sophisticated in its critique of apartheid by focusing on poverty and the quotidian indignities of being a nonwhite in South Africa; and it documented the revolution at full throttle.

Conclusion

Kumalo is one of the few photographers who were privileged to witness and record extraordinary events of the liberation struggle, despite the fact that his activities often led to detention, arrests, assault and harassment. Consequently, photographs depicting the lives of the majority of this country's population over the past century remain largely unseen by most South Africans. The work of Alf Kumalo is one of the recent efforts made to collate, publish and exhibit historic archives of images.

South Africa is indebted to Kumalo, as his body of work is testament to his perseverance as a photographer during the struggle, and to his dedication. His photography is therefore representative of the resistance that gained South Africa its freedom, and is displayed in the Alfred Kumalo Museum in Soweto. Alf continues to project photography as a persuasive text more powerful than the narrative form. In this regard he successfully used

---

[11] Allister Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 337.

photographs as tools of rational persuasion in the campaign against the brutalities of apartheid.

Despite his age, Kumalo continued to work professionally. To ensure that future South African photographers had adequate means to improve their skills, Kumalo opened a photographic school in Diepkloof, Soweto. This school would provide all aspiring photographers with the necessary training, and ensure they were not hindered by a lack of opportunity. A nine-month course was therefore designed to educate photographers from previously disadvantaged backgrounds, and supported by companies like Daimler Chrysler and IBM.

Khumalo's work has been published in both local and international newspapers, for example *The Observer* (UK), *New York Times*, *New York Post* and *The Sunday Independent* (UK). In September 2004, Khumalo's work was honoured by a solo exhibition of his life's work at the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, which was well received by critics.

To honour his contribution to documentary photography and journalism in South Africa, the South African government bestowed Alf Kumalo with the Order of Ikhamanga in Silver, at the National Orders awards on 29 October 2004. He was honoured for his "fearless determination in capturing our country's history – from political turmoil, transition, to dawn of democracy".[12]

---

[12] *South African Journal of Photography* Alf Kumalo in http://saphotojournal.co.za.

The conflict between the Mapulana and Amashangaan on a knife edge in 1984 and the impact that remains to this day

Harold Lekhuleni
Mpumalanga Department of Education, Bohlabela District

Background

The community of Bushbuckridge comprised Mapulana, Amashangaan and a minority of Amazulu or Amaswazi who mainly resided at an area called Mariti. From time immemorial, the people of Bushbuckridge had lived together side by side without even thinking of their ethnic group. They ate together from a table of brotherhood. They were not separated by either cultural or language differences. The issue of discrimination in terms of ethnicity was something that they only read about, or learnt from other media.

Almost all the schools catered to both Shangaan and Northern Sotho speakers as long as there was a need for instruction in the medium. Since there were very few secondary schools, especially in the late 1960s to 70s, the Maripi high school catered to both the Amashangaan and the Mapulana who studied in Northern Sotho. It was only in the mid-70s that learners studying in Northern Sotho at Maripi were given notice that the following year Shangaan would be the only African medium of instruction provided at the school. This ultimately led to the establishment of the Lekete high school to cater to the Northern Sotho-speaking learners. Be that as it may, the show went on. This was not made an issue but was likened to a boy who had come of age and wanted to establish himself. At primary schools everything continued as usual.

Even election to the school committees was based on merit, not ethnicity. Furthermore learners' participation in various sports such as athletics, soccer and netball was not run on ethnic or tribal lines, which also applied in cultural activities like music and dance. This was a community which lived in harmony.

Though Masana hospital was run mainly by doctors from Switzerland and Shangaan-speaking nurses, it catered to all patients in Bushbuckridge and the surrounding areas without discrimination. The white doctors had some of the basics of Shangaan since they came from Elim Hospital. Adjacent to the hospital was a primary school also called Masana. The school catered only to the Shangaan-speaking learners since Maviljan catered to both Shangaan and Northern Sotho learners. Patients were not treated according to tribe or ethnicity. Doctors and nurses alike treated all patients with the same dignity that they deserved.

Though the policy of separate development applied in many areas of our country, this is something which did not touch Bushbuckridge for a very long time. It must be mentioned that even in areas such as Acornhoek, the Shangaan and Mapulana were also able to live together as brothers and sisters. They were even able to sell their fresh produce together at the market in a relaxed, stress-free atmosphere.

Beginning of conflict

Tension started one day in 1984 when the Moletelo Tribal Authority demar-cated some stands for its subjects. What happened was that after they had put up landmarks or boundary marks for the stands, a certain Hlongwane group allegedly removed them. It is said that they even beat up the old men at the tribal authority for having put up the boundary marks for their people in areas which they alleged belonged to the Mnisi Tribal Authority. It was alleged that the group acted under the instruction of a member of the Mnisi tribal authority who was a Shangaan chief.

This seemed to be the straw that broke the camel's back. The situation escalated to knife-edge tension. In response the Moletelo Tribal Authority called on the youth especially, even those at high school, to fight back. The two groups were at each others` throats. Schools, particularly at Acornhoek, came to a complete halt and a fight ensued. Benjamin Silinda who was a prominent businessman was severely affected. One of his big supermarkets, called Bridge Way, was badly vandalised and he threatened to sell his busi-nesses. The police were sent in to restore order and ultimately sanity pre-vailed.

The after effects of this battle resulted in the Shangaan hawkers being expelled from the marketplaces which were said to be in the Mapulana area. They were left stranded and their livelihoods were severely affected. The railway line was used as a border to dermarcate the Shangaan and Mapulana areas. The area across the railway line which belonged to the Shangaan was ultimately called "Chabelagaza", which means "Flee to Gaza".

The taxi owners who were Shangaan speaking had to leave the taxi rank because it was located in the Mapulana area. They had to start a new taxi rank across the railway line. They transported passengers from Acorn-hoek to areas such as Thulamahashe, Hluvukane and Welverdiend, which were predominantly Shangaan areas. Because of the constituency or representatives which they had in the Gazankulu legislature in Giyani, their plight very soon reached the office of the Chief Minister, Prof HWE Ntsan`wisi. Soon a marketplace was established for the Shangaan hawkers so as to keep the wolf from the door.

Like cancer this trouble even spread to government institutions such as schools and hospitals. Officials from the Lebowa legislature took

135

advantage of the situation in Bushbuckridge. It was announced that borders must be identified for proper administration. To rub salt in the wound the Lebowa legislature issued a circular to all schools under its jurisdiction stating that, with effect from the next academic year, no learner would receive instruction in Shangaan. All learners were supposed to learn Northern Sotho; otherwise they would have to leave and go to schools where Shangaan was offered. Shangaan was no longer to be taught in those schools in the Lebowa area. This was a directive from Lebowakgomo. This was a bitter pill to swallow, especially for parents who had contributed to the construction of these community schools. Most of the teachers employed at these schools became redundant. Since this was an instruction from above, school principals had no option but to implement this directive to the letter.

The following year most Shangaan-speaking learners left the schools to find somewhere offering instruction in their mother tongue. Those whose parents could not afford to do so were compelled to study in Northern Sotho. Some had to start learning Northern Sotho in Form 4 and some in Form 5 (now Grades 11 and 12).

At Mariti, SV Tshawana, Principal of Moduping Primary school for 15 years, was forced to leave because he was a Shangaan. Certain members of the community posted a "paper tiger" threat on his office door, stating that he should leave with immediate effect because he was a Shangaan. When he did not respond, a well-armed "Committee of Ten" came to his house. Facing the prospect of death he packed up and left Mariti with his family for Thulamahashe.

Someone called Pruggie Mnisi came to the fore in the Mariti area of Bushbuckridge. He was chairperson of Madukoloshe Primary school at Mariti, elected by the school committee. When he learnt of the circular and the intention to expel the Shangaan-speaking learners, he immediately took the matter up with the Gazankulu Department of Education. He communicated with a Mr Ngobeni who was a circuit inspector at Thulamahashe. A task team was put in place to facilitate the resolution of the problem. The team was made up of people from Casteel, Mariti and Acornhoek.

Impact on education

The matter was taken to the Chief Minister of Gazankulu for his immediate intervention. The Minister of Education, Dr Viljoen, was brought into the fray. An agreement was reached that in the troika, that is Dr Viljoen, Dr CN Phatudi and Prof HWE Ntsan'wisi, a portion of the budget allocated to Lebowa would be given to Gazankulu.

A five-year plan was set in place for the establishment of schools to cater especially to the pupils affected. Fine schools were built, especially along the borders of Lebowa. The process was to begin as soon as possible,

136

and moreover Chief ML Nkuna was to be the Minister of Finance in Gazankulu. All the four chiefs in Bushbuckridge under Gazankulu had a quota of schools built in their areas. It was as if the Gazankulu government wanted to prove a point. They built state-of-the-art institutions. Some of these schools include Lamulelani and Rhinzani which are all at Mariti. Both schools are a reminder of what happened in 1984 between the Mapulana and Amashangaan. "*Lamulelani*" means "Help us we are in trouble" and "*Rhinzani*" means "Wait a bit". This was after Lamulelani was flooded with learners and could not cope with the intake: parents were therefore advised to wait a bit.

Psychological and emotional scars of what happened between the two groups remain to this day.

Almost all the teachers who were Shangaan speaking left Masana Primary School which is adjacent to the hospital. Even the Acting Principal Mr Masinga left the school and was accommodated in a school located in the Gazankulu area. Though the fight between the warring group died down, tension still prevailed. The name of Masana primary school was now changed to Dilayi and the Masana hospital was renamed Mapulaneng hospital. Mapulana claimed ownership of the hospital since it was located in the area. At Mariti tension rose to a higher level than before after the Gazankulu government built Lamulelani and Rhinzani together with their feeder primary schools. Since these were state-of-the-art schools, some Mapulana started obstructing learners from attending because attendance at their own schools was dwindling. Another aspect was that some Mapulana who lived near these schools started attending them because they were such good schools.

Impact on health

Most hospital patients suffered from the tensions. Some patients were denied hospital admission for reasons of ethnicity. Patients at Tintswalo hospital at Acornhoek were discharged just because they were Mapulana. The same applied at Mapulaneng hospital, where some patients were denied treatment just because they were Shangaans. Some patients were left to die because of these tensions between the two groups.

Even when spraying for malaria prevention, both Lebowa and Gazan-kulu officials would each confine their work strictly within their borders. They would spray along the border without crossing the road or railway line which marked the border line. This showed the deep-seated tension between the two groups.

Intervention by stakeholders

Between 1986 and 1987 people like Dr Aaron Motsoaledi and Dr Joe Phahlaa, doctors at Mapulaneng hospital, raised awareness about the impact of this division among the people. They started to talk freely about how it could utterly ruin communities if left unresolved. They questioned how a patient could be denied treatment just because he or she was either a Lepulana or a Shangaan. They further questioned why officials, especially from the Department of Agriculture, were limiting anti-malaria spraying activities to certain areas, observing the borders according to strict demarcation, without crossing the border of either Lebowa or Gazankulu. Their argument was mosquitoes made no distinction between Lebowa and Gazankulu; they crossed borders to bite residents of both Lebowa and Gazankulu! They emphasised that communities should work together in harmony.

The churches, especially the Presbyterian church, together with civil organisations, played an important role in making people aware of the divisive strategy employed by the apartheid regime.

Sanity ultimately prevailed. Between 1987 and 1988 the Shangaan-speaking learners were allowed back into the schools where their language had been phased out. This was due to the intervention of different stake-holders.

The effect on today's politics

The tension between two groups has left many psychological and emotional scars. Even with the new dispensation, performance is still sometimes viewed or classified along tribal lines, especially in the schools. Even when an official is appointed to a senior position, the question is whether he or she is Mapulana or Shangaan. Whose interests is he going to represent or serve? This kind of thinking has prevented people from thinking beyond tribe and ethnicity: they don't investigate whether the incumbent has what it takes for the job. Even when schools are selected for a pilot project for example, selection is usually based on whether both groups are properly represented. If such aspects are not taken into consideration this might result in crying foul from a certain section of the population.

When the colleges of education were formalised, the Department of Education in Limpopo suggested that the Education Multi-Purpose (EMPDC) Development Centre should be established so that the colleges did not become a white elephant. However, only Hoxane which was a College of Education from the former Gazankulu was declared an EMPDC. The former lecturers of Mapulaneng college joined the Hoxane EMPDC irrespective of the former college's good infrastructure. This became a contested issue. Stakeholders were called to adjudicate on why the former Mapulaneng

college was not made an EMPDC. The Regional Director of Bushbuckridge who happened to be a Shangaan was invited to that meeting since he had executive decision-making power. Among other things he was told not to revert to what had happened in 1984: clearly, for some it was as though these things had happened yesterday.

Though these difficulties are managed to certain extent in politics, they sometimes rear their ugly heads. This can also be observed in labour movement especially during the election of branch office bearers. Voter would vote along tribal lines without consideration of the aspect of merit and capacity. A venue where a particular will be hosted will be viewed on tribal lines without consideration of the material condition.

References

Participants in the research are:

Mashile J. Student
Matsane H.S. History Subject Advisor
Mnisi P. Leader of Delegate to Gazankulu
Mogane W.I. Principal of Ngwaritsane High School
Tshawana S.V. Former Principal of Moduping

**Cultural hegemony, distortion of history, memory and identity:
then and now**

Zorodzai Dube
Department of New Testament and Early Christianity,
University of South Africa

Introduction

The article discusses how the history of the Roman Empire distorts the
culture and history of its subject, used as a lens through which to discuss
British imperial ideology in Zimbabwe. To understand how these empires,
both Roman and British, distorted people's history, memory and identity, we
need to begin by trying to understand how Roman imperialism developed and
operated. I suggest that among other things Roman imperialism had four
features: economic deficit, binary worldview, ideological lies and domina-
tion. My discussion relies on Peter Garnsey's description of the rise of
Roman imperialism, when he noted that during its zenith, the Roman Empire
ruled a vast territory covering areas of Europe, Asia and Africa. The Empire
was partitioned into large provinces ruled by the senators and procurators[1]
with the help of non-elected officials from the equestrian order.

Garnsey asserts that the Roman city was a parasitic province, which
required financial and food aid from all the provinces for its survival. As
such, the Empire's task was to collect taxes and to maintain law and order in
its provinces.[2] Among other reasons, taxes were needed to pay for wages,
military expenses, entertainment and food or cash in the capital. From this
description, we deduced the first assumption that imperial domination started
from a point of economic deficit because the lack of adequate supply of food
or resources triggered the desire to control other lands.

Consequently, the assumption that the Roman Empire provided law
and order to its citizens is a false projection of the "Other" as weak, in need
of help and external protection, thereby giving the Empire the justification for
controlling under the guise of offering humanitarian help. This generates the
second insight that imperialism developed from a false construction of the
"Other" in order to justify its reasons for domination.

Garnsey further describes how imperial cities were structured and
points out that cities accommodated mainly the elite while the peasants

---

[1] Procurators appear in provinces as financial agents collecting taxes and other direct taxes.
[2] Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture*
(London: Duckworth, 1987), 20.

resided in the rural areas.[3] Cities were regarded as centres of Romanisation in newly conquered areas. Two types of cities existed: the *colonia*, modelled after Rome and mainly accommodating retired Roman officials,[4] and the *municipium*, which had greater freedom because it used its own laws and magistrates. But the *colonia* had greater respect because of the link with Rome. Stratifying the society between the **haves and have-nots**, or rich and poor, reveals the third insight about Roman imperialism: that the Empire used a binary worldview: the world of the conquerors and that of the conquered. Creating binary worlds was a ploy to label the peasants as weak, less significant and backward, as compared to the elite and the city dwellers.

The hierarchical social structure aimed to benefit the elite at the expense of the poor. During the Roman Empire, cities survived by forcing financial contributions, services and human resources from the communities under its control.[5] For example in Galilee, which had two cities (Sepphoris, 4 CE, and Tiberius, 18 CE), Jonathan Reed notes how the cities exerted economic control on Galileans. Local rulers and the elite paid for the construction of civic building projects in the cities from the taxes and rents collected from the countryside, placing a strain on the countryside.[6] The establishment of cities dominated Galilee's agricultural landscape, thereby shifting the villages from traditional to commercialised agriculture. This reveals the fourth insight regarding the Empire: that it exploited and dominated its territories.

The following discussion exposes the Roman ideology of domination, exploitation and division. The strategies used by the Empire to control its subjects will provide comparable background to how the British Empire controlled Zimbabwe.

A hurdle that needs to be dealt with is whether the Roman Empire controlled Galilee during the first century. Scholars such as Chad Myers[7] and Richard Horsley[8] think that the Roman Empire was present in Galilee during the first century. They agree that the first century was characterised by "extensive popular discontent, periodic protests, numerous resistance, renewal movements, and recurrent repression by the Roman military".[9] EP Sanders opposes this view, saying that the Roman Empire only featured in

---

[3] Cities function to collect taxes, recruit soldiers, and maintain law and order. Cities had other additional responsibilities of providing animal transport, and giving hospitality to visitors.
[4] Garnsey and Saller, 27.
[5] Garnsey and Saller, *29*
[6] Jonathan Reed, *Archaeology and the Galilean Jesus: A Re-examination of the Evidence* (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Trinity, 2000), 68.
[7] Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus* (Maryknolls: Orbis Books, 1991), 143.
[8] Richard A Horsley, *Hearing the Whole Story: A Political Plot in Mark's Gospel* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 221.
[9] Horsley, 131.

Galilee during the second century.[10] Sanders thinks there is lack of evidence that the Roman Empire actually colonised Galilee. While there may be merit in the view that the Roman Empire did not directly rule Galilee, it does not mean that the Empire did not control the region. I therefore disagree with Sanders in that imperialism involves the political and the economic control of a society by an external power, meaning that, despite the lack of Roman direct control of Galilee during the first century, the region was under economic and political control because of Roman imperialism.

Social changes in Galilee and their impact on peasants' collective identity

Firstly, in dismantling the peasants' culture, Roman imperialism introduced foreign cultural values through the emerging cities. Freyne suggests that the Galileans were predominantly country dwellers, as such different from the elite who resided in the cities. In Freyne's words, "the Galileans may be identified with the people from the villages".[11] The Galileans are portrayed as having village leaders or representatives who went out to meet Josephus and negotiate their demands. On many occasions, Josephus met with the elders from Galilee to hear their social concerns.[12] Freyne argues that the Galileans were a peaceful people whose everyday social life was threatened by the imperial presence and growing city life.[13] The cities were places inhabited by the predominantly foreign elite. Since the majority were foreigners, they took a pro-Roman stance. As such, the peasants viewed the city dwellers as representing a different identity.[14] In addition, the cities displayed a foreign lifestyle, especially the Greek way of life. The other point of contention was that wealth was in the hands of the urban-based elites, who maintained their status by exploiting the peasants.

Secondly, to dismantle the peasants' collective identity, the Empire introduced exploitive laws. A universal lesson is that imperial laws favour the rulers while suffocating the poor. The high demand of tribute and taxes by Rome from Galilee was among the factors that negatively affected the peasants. Freyne says each province was required to pay a stipulated amount of tribute and tax. Galilee was required to pay 200 talents from all the territories of Herod Antipas.[15] The stipulated revenues were supposed to be paid at the end of every two years, and one quarter of the harvest was handed over to Rome. The high demand for tribute was necessitated by frequent food

---

[10]   E. P Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus*, (London: Penguin Press, 1993), 51.
[11]   Sean Freyne, "The Galileans in the Light of Josephus' Life," in *Galilee and Gospel: Collected Essays*, (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 34.
[12]   Freyne, 36.
[13]   Freyne, 38.
[14]   Freyne, 36.
[15]   Freyne, "Herod Economics in Galilee: In Search for a Suitable Model," In *Galilee and the Gospels: Collected Essays*. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 96.

shortages, especially in Rome, because of the rapid expansion of the city population. Tribute was paid to Rome in the form of grain such as wheat and other agricultural produce.[16] Corn was directly demanded from the peasants or taken from imperial estates that were established in the provinces.[17] Freyne notes that the decree to pay tribute to Caesar by means of wheat remained in effect for almost the rest of the first century.

For example, Herod Antipas imposed high taxes on the peasants. During Herod Antipas's reign, there was intensified tax collection and frequent use of conscripted peasant labour to carry out works projects. Sean Freyne estimates that about 200 talents were collected from Galilee annually, paid in the form of grain such as wheat, barley, grapes, olives, vegetables and livestock. Antipas dispatched a veritable army of auditors, tax collectors and soldiers to the groves, vineyards and threshing floors of every village at harvest time to ensure that the revenue was collected.[18] The officials took the little surplus that the peasants produced in the form of taxes or rent. Officials from the city even went out to the village threshing floors, where they required the villagers to pay their taxes in grain.[19] This severe taxation was a threat to the very basis of the village culture that the Galileans lived and had faithfully maintained for years. The Galileans were agrarian communities who survived on their use of the land and on mutual reciprocity. The chain of demands in taxes from the royal tax, religious tax and other sacred donations to the temple imposed a heavy burden on the peasants, whose produce was limited each year. Taxes sometimes left a family to starve, especially in times of drought when the tax collectors and priestly representatives turned up to demand their due. Horsley says that the penalty for nonpayment could sometimes be violent.[20] The peasants never had high yields, even under normal favourable conditions. The yield that they produced was not enough to feed the family and meet the tax obligations. In drought conditions, they were forced to borrow, which drove them into further debt, since most people were unable to repay their debt. John Dominic Crossan also paints a picture of a Galilee under harsh economic burdens. He says the Roman Empire had

---

[16] Freyne, 97. As Frayne explains, the imperial administrators were happy to receive payment in kind, in grain produce from the various provinces. The corn was technically called "imperial corn".

[17] Freyne, 97. Freyne says that imperial corn confiscated from the peasants was stored in upper Galilee. Josephus reports that the peasants wanted to break in and steal the imperial grain. Josephus also reports that corn was stored in lower Galilee at Gaba. The corn was collected from the peasants and belonged to Queen Bernice, wife of King Agrippa II.

[18] Richard Horsley, *The Message and the Kingdom: How Jesus and Paul Ignited a Revolution and Transformed the Ancient World* (New York: Grosset/Putnam, 1997), 26.

[19] Horsley, *Galilee: History, Politics, People* (Pennsylvania: Trinity Press, 1995), 180.

[20] Horsley, 28.

inflicted on the peasants tax and debt, malnutrition and sickness, agrarian oppression and demonic possession.[21]

Tax demands severely affected the peasants. The peasants produced only for their immediate households. This meant that to demand a portion of tribute from the little that they produced was to start a ripple effect with devastating, deadly consequences on their lives. The action further strained the precarious existence of the peasants, because what was taken away could not be replaced. This meant that what was left after paying the tribute was not sufficient to feed the family until the next agricultural season. Forcing the peasants to pay tribute from their little revenue was more than a psychological trauma. It meant forcing a group of people to starve to death from lack of food.

Third, the Empire damaged the peasants' collective identity by taking land from the peasants. Land was taken in two ways: first by compulsory acquisition when the elite wanted to meet the demand of food and secondly through debt, when the peasants failed to pay their dues. Because of the growing city populations the peasants could not cope with the growing demand for food in the cities, thereby creating the need for specialisation and changes in landownership. John S Kloppenborg says that the creation of large estates had a profound effect on the structure of the economy. It shifted production from small household consumption to estate farming. Estate farms pushed smallholders out from their land onto marginal lands.[22] This created the problem of tenancy. Freyne also says:

> [I]n an agrarian economy specialisation would mean a shift in land owning patterns from small, family run farms to large estates in which the tenants work the estate, often for an absentee landowner under a manager, receiving a substance living in return for their labour.[23]

Changes in landownership were necessitated by the growing city population, which made increased demands on food.[24] Consequently, the elite took fertile and better lands through forceful expropriation or default in payment of taxes by smallholders. Sometimes compulsory acquisition of land by the central administration happened in order to create estate farming and large-scale production. Frayne says that there was compulsory settlement of veterans in

---

[21] John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), xi.

[22] John S. Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 289.

[23] Freyne, 98.

[24] Oakman, 74.

Gaba and Trachonitis, and private ownership of estates in the great plain and on the better land in lower and upper Galilee.[25]

The annexation of land from the peasants resulted in the land concentration in the hands of royal estates from the time of Herod the Great and Antipas.[26] The rich controlled most of the land and owned a large number of slaves. Peasants were displaced from their ancestral land. Land alienation and tenancy became a common feature, especially among the peasants. The coming of the Romans and estate farmers disrupted a peasant economy that was based on reciprocity and redistribution.[27] A small percentage lived as labourers on farms or as artisans.[28] The repercussion was evident. Guijarro says: "The intensive production causes the collapse of the traditional family system."[29] Production was no longer for the needs of the household only, but also for the extended market. The traditional family system could not serve the demands made by a new economy. There was a need to transform land ownership from tribal ownership to farm ownership. The traditional household system was gradually being replaced by comercial farming.[30]

In my view, land dispossession had severe repercussions on the peasants. The peasants depended on the land and on what they could produce from the land. Kloppenborg says that the majority of tenants were peasants who had lost their land or were unable to continue their subsistent existence on their small piece of land.[31] This was common in estates that were owned by absentee landowners. The absentee farmer would rent his farm to tenants who would cultivate the farm on his behalf. The landlord always stood to benefit from the arrangement since he would get half or two thirds of the harvested crops. In event of a poor harvest, the tenant suffered arrears from unpaid rent demanded by the landlord. As Kloppenborg explains, one poor harvest put the tenants into arrears, which might have taken several years to pay back. In many instances, there was conflict and forced eviction when the tenant failed to pay back. This could result in the tenant losing all that he had, including the right to subsist.[32] Kloppenborg says the parable of the vineyard (Mk 12:1-9) explicitly mentions the use of violence by the landowner in evicting the tenants from his farm. The tenants sometimes also used violence to retaliate against the landowner.[33]

---

[25]   Freyne, 99.

[26]   Myers, 48.

[27]   Richard A. Horsley, "Jesus Movement and the Renewal of Israel," 42. See also Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man,* 45.

[28]   Myers, 45.

[29]   Guijarro, 45.

[30]   Guijarro, 46.

[31]   Kloppenborg, 307.

[32]   Kloppenborg, 331.

[33]   Kloppenborg, 40.

Accumulating debt also caused peasants to lose their ancestral land. In instances where the tenant failed to pay back his dues, the peasant forfeited his ancestral household land to the landowner. In such cases, the only collateral that the peasant had was the land that had been cultivated by their family for generations. This meant that their inability to pay would mean they would lose their land.[34] Douglas Oakman says that the rich elite used the mechanism of debt to oppress the peasants. As peasants and tenants failed to meet the demand for food, they accrued debt to the landowner. Recently, archaeologists have discovered underground silos at Sepphoris. These discoveries show evidence of weights that were used by inspectors when they were collecting grain from the peasants. The discoveries date back to 29 and 30 CE during the time of Antipas. This means that land displacement started early, with severe effects on the peasantry. Douglas Oakman says that debt further strained the relationship between the alienated property owner and the peasant. Debt pushed the peasants into further debt and impoverishment.[35] Oakman notes that debt was a way of controlling and subjugating the peasants. In Galilee, the rich or the elite used the lending of money or tenancy as a way of exercising political and economic control over the peasants. When the peasants failed to pay back the money, they would lose their ancestral land. Poor yield and precarious weather plunged the peasants into further debt. Josephus reports many instances when the people protested by burning the building that was used to store debt records (*Wars of the Jews* 7.61).[36] Oakman says the issue of debt became one of the central messages in Jesus' preaching. The Lord's Prayer carries the petition for debt cancellation. Debt forced the peasants into cheap labour after they lost their land, due to unpaid debt. Debt was one major cause for the destruction of the peasant lifestyle and ideology. Uncancelled debt ensured perpetual oppression.

Tenancy, debt and land dispossession had severe consequences on the peasants. These measures shattered their livelihood and their ability to continue with their peasant lives. Tessa Rajak says that many peasants became landless and homeless due to debt. According to Rajak, the majority of the peasants lost their land, becoming angry and homeless.[37] David Rhodes also says there was a widespread rise in banditry in the countryside, which shows the failure of the Romans to maintain peace in the countryside. Violence in the countryside escalated during the time of Governor Felix (52-60 CE).

---

[34] Horsley, 28.

[35] Oakman, 13.

[36] Oakman, 16.

[37] Tessa Rajak, *Josephus: The Historian and his Society* (London: Duckworth, 1983), 144. Rajak attempts to give an objective description of the events that finally led to the Jewish war and of the role of Josephus in the events in Galilee. Rajak compares Josephus's conflicting accounts in *War* and in *Life,* and draws attention to some of the inconsistencies between his two accounts during and prior to the war.

146

Insights on how the Empire subjugated its subjects

How the Empire distorted the peasants' lives shows that imperial domination aimed to destroy and supplant the indigenous culture with a foreign culture. The Empire's aim was for the indigenous to lose their history, identity and memory, such that when history was retold it would be the history of the conqueror that served as the genuine collective narrative. This echoes Frantz Fanon's insight that colonialism dehumanises and supplant the native's culture:

> [Colonialism] seeks to dehumanize them. Everything will be done to wipe out their traditions, to substitute our language for theirs and to destroy their culture without giving them ours. Sheer physical fatigue will stupefy them. Starved and ill, if they have any spirit left, fear will finish the job; guns are levelled at the peasant; civilians come to take over his land and force him by dint of flogging to till the land for them. If he shows fight, the soldiers fire and he's a dead man; if he gives in, he degrades himself and he is no longer a man at all; shame and fear will split up his character and make his inmost self fall to pieces.[38]

I suppose Roman imperialism as experienced in Galilee shares three features with British imperialism in Zimbabwe: identity distortion of the "Other", imposition of oppressive laws and annexation of land. I will focus on identity distortion and the land question in Zimbabwe because these are ongoing issues in Zimbabwe today.

Distortion of history, memory and identity in Zimbabwe

We have seen various strategies used by the Roman Empire to distort the collective identity of peasants. What strategy has the British Empire used to maintain its dominance and distort the history of subjects? Victor de Waal argues that white supremacist ideology did not fade even after African countries gained independence. The Empire still sees little value in African history and culture.[39] Lawrence Vambe makes similar observations that white people spend their entire lives being served by black people whom they regard as inferior, whose language they do not speak, whose culture and

---

[38] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* prefaced by Paul-Jean Sartre (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 13.

[39] Victor de Waal, *The Politics of Reconciliation: Zimbabwe's First Decade* ((London: Hurst & Company, 1990), 17.

history they do not know and whose feelings they have ignored or insulted.[40] Despite the attainment of political independence, the Empire still fosters rationalistic sentiments of the Enlightenment where being white is seen as a blueprint of superiority and being black as an indelible mark of being stupid, childish, lazy and primitive.

As such, even after 30 years of independence, whites still claim that they "built this country"[41] and that black African leaders need their expertise and guidance. To foster its superiority and continued relevance, the Empire labelled African states as underdeveloped, a tag that forces African economies into the hands of "neocolonial powers' demands for raw material and cash crops, [as Africans] pursue the ever-receding mirage of joining the club of the powerful".[42] The Empire's values, attitudes, morality, institutions and capitalistic mode of production were embraced and uncritically assimilated. How does the Empire maintain its hegemony and distortion of Zimbabwean people's collective identity?

Firstly, the Empire has been launching an ideological battle to distort Zimbabwe's collective history. In my view, the recent spate of political violence in the country sidetracked the real social issues affecting Zimbabwe and was exploited by the Empire to justify its imperialistic ideology in Zimbabwe. Following incidents involving violence, there was a chorus of voices accusing the Zimbabwean government of human rights abuse. Internationally and regionally, Zimbabwe was being labelled as an example of a failed state. In the regional media and abroad the Empire spread insinuations that life had been better under colonialism because of the current violence in Zimbabwe. In my view, exonerating the evils associated with colonialism because of the recent violence feeds into the Empire's ideology of falsifying history. When discussing events during the first century Galilee, we noted that the Empire justifies its evils as humanitarian projects aimed at bringing progress and betterment to its subjects. Victor de Waal astutely notes that the colonisers rarely speak of colonialism and its evils; instead, the Empire presents colonialism as "a civilising mission … [in] the battle against ignorance and savagery".[43] The Empire teaches her children with "pride of how their empires existed for the good of the natives, while glorifying at the same time in the battles in which those same natives, unconvinced of the benevolent intentions of the invaders, had been bloodily defeated".[44]

---

[40]   Lawrence Vambe, *An Ill-Fated People: Zimbabwe before and after Rhodes* (London: Heinemann, 1972), 93.
[41]   De Waal, 25.
[42]   De Waal, 24.
[43]   De Waal, 17.
[44]   De Waal, 17.

I am not justifying the recent experiences of violence in Zimbabwe; instead, I argue that belittling people's independence because of violence is a gross distortion of such people's history and identity.

Demonisation of Zimbabwe as a failed state by media outlets sympathetic to the Empire achieves one important objective for the Empire: the authority to retell history from the Empire's perspective. Fanon poignantly states:

> [T]he settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that she skims, all that she violates and starves.[45]

Zimbabwe was the darling of the western countries before she demanded economic justice in terms of land redistribution and economic indigenisation. In my opinion, the success of these national projects would have been shining examples for those African countries that were handed empty political independence without economic emancipation. However, such a success story would have been contradictory to how the Empire wants its history to be remembered. The Empire does not want to hear history as a success of the natives against their former oppressors. Instead, the oppressors want their story to be retold as a genuine history. Consequently, instead of telling the post-independence history of African countries as a success, the Empire has succeeded in fanning the flames of civil wars, removing legitimate leaders and supporting puppet rulers, who cooperate with the Empire and continue its projects. The Empire has distorted the exploits of African leaders into an unsuccessful story while glorifying their own former colonial exploits. This echoes Fanon:

> The colonialist will continue to parade his statues and symbols on the public space. A world divided into compartments, a motionless, Manicheistic world, a world of statues: the statue of the general who carried out the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge; a world which is sure of itself, which crushes with its stones the backs flayed by whips: this is the colonial world.[46]

---

[45]   Fanon, 52.
[46]   Fanon, 52.

Secondly, the Empire distorts the collective identity of the Zimbabwean people through control of the economy: by land use and mineral mining. The root motivation of colonialism was doubtless an economic one. The Empire calculated that the attainment of political independence in 1980 was not synonymous with economic freedom; as such, the gesture of reconciliation by Mugabe at independence was interpreted as acknowledgement of their superiority and status quo. This is echoed by Fanon who states that the mentality of the coloniser during negotiations for independence is a desire for two states: one that perpetuates colonialism and hegemony and the other for the poor, the economically disfranchised.[47] Political independence in Zimbabwe in 1980 sanctioned the perpetuation of poverty, since the land and the mines remained in the hands of the few whites. Under colonialism, the whites, comprising less than two percent of the population, took two thirds of the land and forced the majority blacks to become labourers.[48] A desire to correct the injustices of colonialism was greeted with negativity and claims that "the protestors are scaring away investors". Two questions have not been asked: Whose investment? To the benefit of whom? Surely the majority blacks have not benefited from the attainment of independence? Fanon explains the Empire's mindset: "This land was created by us.". "If we leave, all is lost, and the country will go back to the Middle Ages."[49] The Empire has instilled in its children the ideology that the black person lacks the expertise to run the economy. I suggest that the sabotage of Zimbabwe's land reform programme and the voices against nationalisation are steeped in the mentality that Africans cannot control their own economies; if they try, it will all end in anarchy and civil war. Today, the Empire has succeeded in labelling the Zimbabwe's land reform programme and economy indigenisation as a bad example for all African countries.

Was the land reform programme a failure as the western media wants to present? Recently, contrary evidence has emerged to show that the land reform programme in Zimbabwe was not a failure; neither did it benefit Mugabe's cronies only. Ian Scoones, a British independent researcher, did ten years of research in Zimbabwe. He denies the false claims that land reform was a failure.[50] Based on his studies, he argues that the facts on the ground are at variance with popular western perceptions. Western media has labelled land reform in Zimbabwe as a total failure that resulted in the country facing chronic food insecurity. The media reports that Mugabe's cronies took land and that farmland went to ruin because of the incompetence

---

[47] Fanon, 49.
[48] Martin Meredith, *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe* (New York: PubliAffairs, 2002), 113.
[49] Fanon, 50.
[50] Ian Scoones, et al, *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities*, (Harare: Weaver Press, 2010), 1.

of new farmers.[51] Scoones argues the claim that the land reform was dominated by politically well-connected "cronies" is simply untrue. Nor are war veterans a dominant group. Although many took leadership roles during the land invasions, the majority came from rural backgrounds where they had been farming in the communal areas. While some civil servants and business people are members of the elite, many are not. Teachers, extension workers and small-scale entrepreneurs have joined the land reform programme, adding new skills and capacities. And farmworkers too have been important beneficiaries. Zimbabwe's land reform redistribution benefited 170 000 families. Whatever its faults in execution, the process has undeniably created a significantly more equitable distribution of land than what prevailed before.[52]

Despite the problems associated with the land reform programme in Zimbabwe, fast-track land reform has created a vastly more equitable distribution of land compared to the previous lopsided ownership pattern. Poverty alleviation has been real, and for the first time in their lives many have been given hope. Resettled farmers are determined to succeed. As one put it: "Land is what we fought for. Our relatives died for this land ... Now we must make use of it."[53] As a sovereign nation, Zimbabwe has the right to improve its citizens' lives, regardless of how offensive that ambition is to the imperialist nations. The land belongs to the people of Zimbabwe, and resettled farmers are succeeding in spite of the obstacles thrown in their way by western sanctions and interference.

Third, the Empire continues its cultural hegemony through control of education institutions. According to Michel Foucault, institutions such as universities function to perpetuate the oppressor's ideology. Foucault says universities are places where "bodies" are "docile"; "bodies" have been trained to think like the oppressor and perpetuate the oppressor's history and exploits.[54] This makes us ask whose history African universities perpetuate. The University of Zimbabwe and other universities in Zimbabwe have never changed their syllabuses of instruction. Western methods and theories are still taught at national universities. Fanon also adds:

> The colonialist bourgeoisie, in its narcissistic dialogue, expounded by the members of its universities, had in fact deeply implanted in the minds of the colonized intellectual that the essential qualities remain eternal in spite of all the blunders men may make: the essential qualities of the West, of course. The native intellectual accepted the cogency of these ideas, and

---

[51]   Scoones, 2.
[52]   Scoones, 103.
[53]   Scoones, 76.
[54]   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Body*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 136.

> deep down in his brain you could always find a vigilant
> sentinel ready to defend the Greco-Latin pedestal.

Fanon articulates how western epistemological perspectives perpetuate cultural hegemony and continue belittling our cultural values by extending the Empire's mindset and celebrating its history. The solution to this vicious problem is when the native "decides to put an end to the history of colonization – the history of pillage – and to bring into existence the history of the nation – the history of decolonization".[55]

Conclusion

The article discussed how the Empire distorted the people's collective history and identity. Two contexts and periods have been juxtaposed in order to illuminate one another: that of the Roman Empire and the British Empire in the Zimbabwean context. The article noted that the Roman Empire represented itself as a model of progress and betterment. The Roman Empire exercised strategies that paralysed the peasants' ability to live in their traditional ways. The worst strategy was land displacement, which resulted in the peasants losing their ancestral land and kinship. By dismantling the peasants' society, the Empire dictated the course of history and distorted the peasants' collective identity.

We have noted similar strategies in Zimbabwe under the British Empire. In Zimbabwe, the Empire resorted to media propaganda through which the post-independence strategies for economic equality and indigenisation have been negatively characterised. The Empire has continued to inscribe its history through capitalism and education institutions that perpetuate their domination. This article joins the chorus of voices that demands a renaissance of African history, culture and identity. Africa is free when she is able to dictate her future through control of resources, collective memory and values.

References

Crossan, John, Dominic 1991. *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant*. New York: HarperCollins.

De Waal, Victor 1990. *The Politics of Reconciliation: Zimbabwe's First Decade*. London: Hurst & Company.

Fanon, Frantz 1963. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Prefaced by Paul-Jean Sartre. New York: Grove Press.

Foucault, Michel 1979. *Discipline and Body*. New York: Vintage Books.

---

55 Fanon, 51.

Freyne, Sean 2000. "The Galileans in the Light of Josephus' Life," in *Galilee and Gospel: Collected Essays*. Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Garnsey Peter & Richard Saller 1987. *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture*. London: Duckworth.

Guijarro, Santiago 1997. The Family in First Century Galilee, in *Constructing Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor*, edited by H. Moxnes. London: Routledge: 42-65.

Myers, Ched 1991. *Binding the Strong Man: A Political Reading of Mark's Story of Jesus*. Maryknolls: Orbis Books.

Horsley, Richard 1995. *Galilee: History, Politics, People.* Pennsylvania: Trinity Press.

Horsley, Richard 1997. *The Message and the Kingdom: How Jesus and Paul Ignited a Revolution and Transformed the Ancient World.* New York: Grosset/Putnam.

Horsley, Richard A 2001. *Hearing the Whole Story: A Political Plot in Mark's Gospel.* Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press.

Kloppenborg, John S 2006. *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Meredith, Martin 2002. *Our Votes, Our Guns: Robert Mugabe and the Tragedy of Zimbabwe*. New York: PubliAffairs.

Oakman, Douglas 2008. *Jesus and the Peasants*. Eugene, Oregon: Cascade Books.

Rajak, Tessa. *Josephus: The Historian and his Society*. London: Duckworth, 1983.

Sanders, E.P. 1993. *The Historical Figure of Jesus*. London: Penguin Press.

Scoones, Ian, et al 2010. *Zimbabwe's Land Reform: Myths and Realities.* Harare: Weaver Press.

Orality and notation of Korean traditional music

So Inhwa
Visiting Researcher, International Library of African Music

Introduction

Korean traditional music has basically been orally transmitted. That is, even the genres for which notation exists are usually taught by ear and memorised. Notations have mostly had an archival or preservation role, often serving as mnemonic devices for the scholar performers, and contributing to the transmission of music, rather than being used in performance.[1] However, the Korean tradition of writing music dates back many centuries. Also, there are differences according to the genres of music.

Korean traditional music is called *Gugak* in Korean, literally meaning "national music". It is usually classified into two major categories according to the musical style: classical music and folk music. Classical music is called *Jeongak*, meaning "proper music". This music includes court and aristocratic music. It is supposed to be joyful without excess, sorrowful but not bitter, characteristic of its restraint, holding a philosophical viewpoint that this music helps one control emotions and clears the mind.[2] There have been many different kinds of notations for this music. This led many scholars to use the old notations as one of the most important sources for the study of Korean music and its history. Some are still persistently used, though the use of western staff notation has become more prevalent since its introduction into Korea in the late 19th century.

On the other hand, folk music, which was enjoyed more by the common people, maximising the expression of emotions and honestly portraying happiness, anger, grief and pleasure,[3] was not notated until the 20th century, with a few exceptions. In this paper, I will present the relationship between orality and notations by showing different music and notations, and discuss their meaning in today's music transmission.

---

[1] So Inhwa, Historical Change and Meaning of Korean Tablature, Hapjabo, *Musical Notations of Korea*, Korean Musicology Series 4 (Seoul: National Gugak Center, 2010), p 129.

[2] Gugak Performance Program Guide, (Seoul: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2008), p 11.

[3] *Gugak Performance Program Guide* (Seoul: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2008), p 11.

Orality and notation of classical music

There are many different notations for classical music. The most important notation is *Jeongganbo*. *Jeongganbo* first appeared in the Annals of King Sejong (reign: 1418-1450). It is regarded to have been invented by him, along with the Korean alphabet, *han-geul*. According to the preface to *Scores from the Annals of King Sejong*, it was created to compensate for the defects of the existing mnemonic systems, which could not display the duration or rhythms of music.
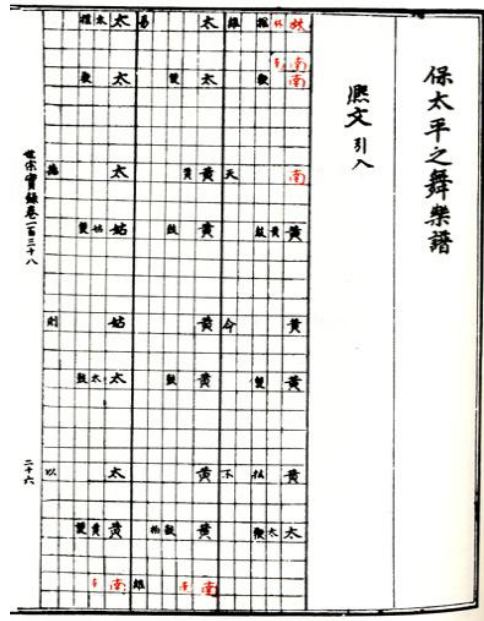
Example 1: *Jeongganbo* from the Annals of King Sejong

It is a mensural notation made up of columns of small squares. The time value of tones is shown by relating one beat to one square, called *jeonggan*, and the symbols for pitches are placed in the squares.[4] Pitches were indicated either with letter, mnemonic syllables, or tablature. Now letters are most

---

[4]   So Inhwa *Theoretical Perspectives on Korean Traditional Music An Introduction*, Korean Music Resources V. (Seoul: National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts, 2002).

commonly used to indicate pitch in *Jeongganbo*. Traditional *Jeongganbo* is read in the East Asian fashion like other notations: top to bottom, right to left.

Its use has persisted to this day. The present *Jeongganbo* is basically the same as that made by King Sejong, though today's version has many auxiliary symbols for ornaments and notates remarkable rhythmic subtleties by subdividing each square into many parts, from two to six. And it is used in teaching and learning classical music.

However, according to Seong Kyeong-rin (1911-2008) who went to the school of the royal institute of court music, majoring in a six-stringed zither called *Geomungo*, no music score was used in teaching and learning. In an interview with me in 1997, he said:

> The students spent some days learning position, basic fingering and technique when learning *Geomungo*. When the teacher started teaching a musical piece, he didn't play the instrument but "sang" the melody for them in a kind of mnemonic system called *Gu-eum*, literally meaning "mouth tone", while marking the time with a stick, because they thought *Gu-eum* contained the essence of the music. Later, the teacher showed how to play the instrument. The students were supposed to play only the skeleton melody for a fairly long time. Then the ornaments were acquired naturally.

According to Seong Kyeong-rin, there was no music score provided when he learnt: "The students could not follow the class unless they memorised the melodies. They wrote down what they heard and read. When they didn't have the instrument on them, they sang the melody in order to not forget." This means music teaching was done by ear, that is orally.

Today *Gu-eum* is still used as a teaching tool, but now it takes a secondary place in teaching and learning with the easier access to printed music scores and recording machines. My flute teacher, named Kim Joong-seop (1942-), used to sing *Gu-eum* when teaching. While I played the flute as he sang *Gu-eum*, I felt myself following his *Gu-eum*, which was very musical and I learnt much better than I could have without *Gu-eum*. However, younger teachers rarely sing, but rather play alone or together with students and watch students play. My zither teachers named Lee Jae-hwa (1953-) and Yang Seung-kyeong (1955-) didn't sing *Gu-eum* while teaching. I think the reason why my flute teacher sang, while the two zither teachers didn't, is at least partly because of the change in the way music is taught. Most musicians even younger than my two zither teachers don't feel comfortable singing *Gu-eum*.

Since *Gu-eum* is seen to contain the essence of the music and singing the melody in *Gu-eum* is highly valued as an important musical practice,

156

aside from its benefit to memorisation of music, in the present notation of traditional music *Gu-eum* is often written together with the 12 pitches for classical music.

Realising the importance of *Gu-eum*, Kim Jeong-ja (former professor of Seoul National University) created a *Gu-eum* class for Korean oboe (called *Piri*), the leading instrument for the court ensemble in 1996. I joined the class. Our teacher was Kim Cheon-heung (1909-2007) who is widely acknowledged to have been the last court musician and dancer. We started with the Confucius shrine ritual music which is the simplest among the court music genres, as the freshman students at the royal music institute did when they began to learn court music. Example 2 shows the melody and the lyrics of the music for the ushering spirits in the Confucius shrine ritual. It is played mainly by Korean instruments of Chinese origin. Because no mnemonic sounds are known for those instruments, we sang the melody of the music using the traditional names of notes (example 3): *hwangjong* (C), *daeryeo* (C#), *taeju*, (D), *hyeopjong* (D#), *goseon* (E), *jungryeo* (F), *yubin* (F#), *imjong* (G), *ichik* (G#), *namryeo* (A), *muyeok* (A#), *eungjong* (B).[5] Learning in this way made it easier to play the instruments.

Example 2: Melody in C (*hwangjong*) Key in the Ushering

Example 3

Afterwards, we proceeded to more difficult pieces, such as royal shrine ritual music, which is played both by Korean indigenous musical instruments and those of Chinese origin.

---

5   Pitches of Korean traditional music are not the same as those of western music. The notes in the examples here show the pitches approximately corresponding to those of western scale.

As for learning classical songs, called *Gagok*, traditionally no music score was used. Instead, the singers notated certain styles with symbols next to the letters of the poems of the lyrics.[6]
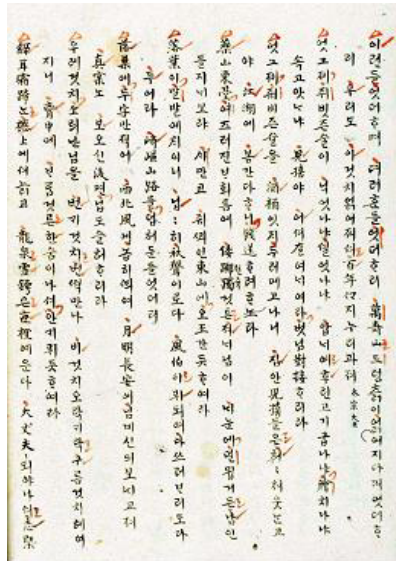
Example 4: *Gagok* in Hyeopyuldaeseong (late 19th century)

However, *Jeongganbo* is now used when learning *Gagok*.

---

6   Kim Young-woon, Korean Notational Systems, *Musical Notations of Korea*, Korean Musicology Series 4 (Seoul: National Gugak Center, 2010), p 70.

Example 5: *Gagok* in Sijochangbo (1994)

Gagok was cultivated by the literati of the Joseon dynasty. Reflecting the scholars' philosophy about the aesthetic enjoyment of nature,[7] it tends to be meditative and slow. Singers are expected to show no facial expression, singing in a sitting position, and not to make any movement during performance. *Gagok* was inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2010. There are two types of *Gagok* in terms of rhythmic cycle: the first group is based on a rhythmic cycle of 16 beats, while the second group employs rhythmic cycles of 10 beats. The former is older and slower, the latter newer and faster, having been derived simply by reducing all of the two-beat units of the former to one-beat units in the latter.

When you learn it, you begin with the former, a long one with 16 beats. It is not only long but also slow, so that it is very difficult to remember

---

[7]   *Gugak Performance Program Guide* (Seoul: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, 2008), p 65.

not only the melody but also the rhythmic patterns. Therefore we use bodily movement to follow the rhythm and melody effectively when learning it: we follow the teacher's movement of fingers, hands and arms while breathing slowly, though no body movement is allowed when you perform on a stage or in formal settings. It is difficult to follow a slow rhythm without using bodily movement. However, using a mensural notation as a way to learn *Gagok* needs to be examined. It may be easier at first and help you learn quickly, but eventually it tends to make you depend too much on notation and distracts your attention from the sound that you make, so that it may end up slowing down the learning process.

Orality and notation of folk music

In contrast to classical music, in previous centuries folk music was not written down, with the exception of several pieces in old notations such as *Siyonghyangakbo* (Current Local Music Notation) which was published to preserve and transmit local music in the 15th to16th centuries.

There was also no music score for *Sanjo*, which is a kind of solo instrumental music belonging to the folk tradition. It was created in the 19th century based on musical elements of *Pansori* (long, dramatic, epic solo music) and *Sinawi* (an instrumental ensemble music originally performed to accompany songs and dances in shaman rituals in the southwestern region). The player can express delicate feeling through *Sanjo* by change of modes and different combinations of techniques and ornaments in an improvisatory way. Nowadays, as the folk music including *Sanjo* came to be taught in schools in the mid-20th century, Sanjo has been notated, and since then notation is usually used in teaching and learning *Sanjo*. One interesting thing about notating *Sanjo* is that in contrast to classical music, which is written in older mensural notation, *Sanjo* is often written in western staff notation, which is more prevalent now. *Gu-eum* is often written together in the five-line staff notation.

However, when learning folk songs such as *Pansori*, notation is still not often used even today. Though some teachers use a mensural notation, it is done less than in other genres such as *Sanjo*. *Pansori* is a vocal form in which a professional singer, accompanied by a drummer, relates a long dramatic story with songs, speech and action. If the singer performs a complete version of a *Pansori*, it takes about six hours. The drummer accompanies the singer, often giving calls of encouragement at phrase endings such as *jochi* (nice!), *geureochi* (perfect!), *eolssigu* (right on!). The audience also adds encouragement. The singer, drummer and the audience become one and make *Pansori* together. *Pansori* was inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2003.

I would also like to mention Buddhist chant in relation to orality and notation. It is categorised into folk music in Korea because Buddhism has been integrated into the Korean people's life since its introduction in the late 4th century AD. A major Buddhist ritual such as *Yeongsanjae*, a representation of the Buddhist ceremonial rite honouring Sakyamuni Buddha's Teaching at the Sacred Mountain, includes Buddhist dance, an outdoor band and Buddhist chant. *Yeongsanjae* was inscribed on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2009.

The melismatic Buddhist chant called *Beompae* is sung only by trained Buddhist musicians at special rites. It was written in an old Buddhist notation called *Dongeumjip* by Buddhist musicians. In *Dongeumjip*, each text syllable of a chant is cross-referenced to the syllable with which it corresponds melodically in other chants, by the marking "*dong* (同, the same)." The oldest *Dongeumjip* remaining today was written in the late 19th century.

According to a monk named Hye Il, *Dongeumjip* is not used today, since the melody is not the same as the present one. Also, this system can only help those who already know certain *beompae* chants to learn chants they do not know and to remind them of what they already learnt.[8] So, when people learn Buddhist chant these days, they learn orally without any music score but write their own graphic line listening to the teacher's singing so as not to forget what they learn. Each student might hear or receive differently what the teacher sang or gave. In this way, the melody might change as time goes by and remain lively as a living organism, a creative art. However, some teachers hand out their own graphic notations to students. In fact, this is becoming common practice, which might permanently fix the melody of Buddhist chant throughout the country.

Lastly I would like to mention shamanistic music. Shamanism was the state religion in ancient kingdoms in Korea. It is still alive as a ritual of folk belief. The ritual, a kind of total arts encompassing a variety of arts, has always been a source of creation for arts such as music, dance, drama and literature. Shamanistic ritual such as *Gangreung Danoje* and *Jeju Chilmeoridang Yeongdeunggut* were inscribed by UNESCO on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, in 2008 (originally proclaimed in 2005) and 2009 respectively.

Traditionally, musicians learnt the rituals orally. So the music and dance were very flexible and improvisatory. To this day they are still mainly orally transmitted, though some have been notated or are in the process of being written for a practical tutorial book.[9] The book on ritual music and

---

[8] So Inhwa, *Theoretical Perspectives on Korean Traditional Music An Introduction*, Korean Music Resources V. (Seoul: National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts, 2002).
[9] Simon Mills, *Healing Rhythms: The World of South Korea's East Coast Hereditary Shamans*, (Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), p 89.

dance will quicken the learning process, but may also make it difficult to grasp the essence of music and dance sufficiently to improvise.

Notation in oral transmission

So far, we have seen that Korean traditional music was orally transmitted. *Gu-eum* served as one of the most powerful vehicles in oral transmission. *Gu-eum* has been written down alone or in different notations such as *Jeongganbo*. The sound of *Gu-eum* resembles those of the particular instrument. Therefore *Gu-eum* is different according to the instruments played. Here I would like to introduce *Gu-eum* of *Geomungo* as an example.
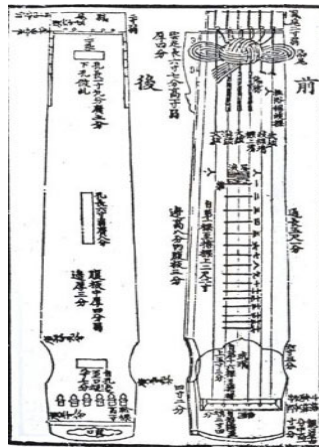
Example 6: *Geomungo* from Akhakgwebeom (1493)

The initial syllables of the major *Gu-eum* of *Geomungo*, which is played by plucking with a stick plectrum and has more rests between tones compared to wind instruments, starts with "d" and ends on consonants as in *deong* (덩),

dung (둥), *dang* (당), *dong* (동) while those of the flute, a wind instrument whose sound continues, starts with "r" and ends on a vowel without a final consonant as in *reo* (러), *ru* (루), *ra* (라), *ro* (로), *ri* (리). The syllables of *Gu-eum* tend to refer to playing techniques. For example, in *Geomungo*, the

162

same *dang* (당) is used whether the ring finger presses the second string at the 4th fret, or 5th fret, or 7th fret or 8th fret. The same syllable, *jing* (징), is also used for several different pitches produced by the thumb at different frets.

Example 7 shows several basic *Gu-eum*, on the two major strings, the 2nd string, called *Yuhyeon* (thick string, lit., large string), and the 3rd one, called *Daehyeon* (thin string, lit., played string), to play the melody in the position when the ring finger of the left hand presses the 2nd string at the 4th fret. In *Geomungo*, one basic position for the left hand is the ring finger pressing on the 2nd string at the fourth fret. In this position the other finger and thumb play various tones on this and other strings.

Example 7: Basic *Gu-eum* of *Geomungo* in the position of the ring finger of the left hand pressing the 2nd string at the 4th fret

	the 3rd string, *Daehyeon* (thick string)				the 2nd string, *Yuhyeon* (thin string)		
Finger	3rd	index	thumb	thumb	4th	index	thumb
Fret	4th	5th	6th	from 7th	4th	5th	from 6th
Basic Syllable	*deong* (덩)	*dung* (둥)	*deung* (듕)	*jing* (징)	*dang* (당)	*dong* (동)	*jing* (징)
Pitch	a♭	b♭	c	e♭, f, etc.	e♭	f	a♭, b♭, etc.

The dark vowels like "eo" and "u" are typical of sounds from the thick string, *Daehyeon*, while the bright vowels like "a" and "o" are of thin string, *Yuhyeon*. Also, the position for "*dang*" lets the sound go out, while that for "*dong*" rather keeps the sound in the hand as it sounds. When the tone is produced on the 2nd string with the right hand plucking the first and second string in one stroke (with the second one most audible), "*sal* (살)" is added before the original syllable as in "*saljing* (살징)" at the 6th or 7th fret and sometimes with some modification as "*sal-gaeng* (살갱)" at the 4th fret. Also, when the tone is produced on the 3rd string with the 1st and the 2nd strings also plucked, two more syllables, "*seulgi* (슬기)", are added before the original syllable, as in "*seulgidung* (슬기둥)" at the 5th fret. In both,

163

when two successive tones are slurred by producing the second tone without using the plectrum, the initial consonant of the second syllable is changed into "r" and they end on a vowel. For instance "*dang* (당)" and "*dong* (동)" become "*daro* (다로)" and "*dong* (동)" and "*dang* (당)" becomes "*dora* (도라)" and so on. Several more *Gu-eum* include "*tteul* (뜰)" for plucking up, "*heung* (흥)" for a single tone on the 1st string, "*munhyeon* (文絃)", "cheong (청)" for the last three strings, and so on.

   The notations with *Gu-eum* were used a lot, especially from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. They didn't focus on recording the pitches and their time value only, but paid attention to how to express the tones of sound.[10] Also, people wrote music differently in different times and places.

Conclusion

Korean traditional music has been basically orally transmitted. In the past, *Gu-eum* was a strong method for this transmission. Also, the notation was an aid for it, in the sense that while the sound of the human voice disappears immediately after the singer stops and cannot reach distant places, letters remain. The same is true of scores.[11] However, the Korean traditional style of notating music, such as the old *Jeongganbo* and the traditional *Gagok* score with only a few marks, was not supposed to give fixed form to a music piece. Rather, they were based on the idea that a music score enables the player to play a variation and functions as a medium to keep it flexible so as to form a new piece. As Kim Jin-Ah put it in her article, it implies Korean music culture where "the notator plays the role of an intermediary between the composer and the player. The audience who listens to the music can blend into this continuum. Therefore anyone, whether an amateur or a professional, has the possibility to create music, and the shape of music is determined amidst community spirit. This means that the notation has a heavy function of communication."[12] In the past, notation was written after a class or after a piece of music had been created.

   But, now in some school classes, western staff notation or traditional notation are used in the same way as the former, where no change is allowed. It might quicken the learning process. Recently, Kwon Oh-sung emphasised

---

[10] Kim Jin-Ah, The Musical Notations of Korea and Europe, *Musical Notations of Korea*, Korean Musicology Series 4 (Seoul: National Gugak Center, 2010), p 213.

[11] Kwon Oh-sung, History of Korea Notations, *Musical Notations of Korea*, Korean Musicology Series 4 (Seoul: National Gugak Center, 2010), p 3.

[12] Kim Jin-Ah, The Musical Notations of Korea and Europe, *Musical Notations of Korea*, Korean Musicology Series 4 (Seoul: National Gugak Center, 2010), pp 213-14.

the impressive history of music notation in Korea: "The fact that our own musical notation exists in our country elevates the value and level of Korean traditional music."[13] I absolutely agree with the author.

However, while observing that creative work tends to be more active in Korean folk music such as *Pansori* than in classical music whose notation is used in teaching, I would like to add that we should remember we have the heritage of music notation in Korea which is often neglected, but at the same time that we should remember it is a truth that music is an oral art --- so evident that it is easy to forget. That is, the life of music is in the sound, the orality, not in visual signs.

References

Gugak Performance Program Guide 2008. Seoul: Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

Hyeopyuldaeseong 1984. Seoul: National Gugak Center.

Sinyeok Akhakgwebeom, Seoul: National Gugak Center, 2000.

Sejongsillok akbo 1986. (Scores from the Annals of King Sejong)*,* Seoul: National Gugak Center.

Kim Jin-Ah 2010. The Musical Notations of Korea and Europe, *Musical Notations of Korea*, Korean Musicology Series 4. Seoul: National Gugak Center.

Kim Young-woon, Korean Notational Systems 2010. *Musical Notations of Korea*, Korean Musicology Series 4. Seoul: National Gugak Center.

Kwon Oh-sung, History of Korea Notations 2010. *Musical Notations of Korea*, Korean Musicology Series 4, Seoul: National Gugak Center.

Lee Yang-gyo 1994. *Sijochangbo,* Seoul: Minsokwon.

Simon Mills 2007. *Healing Rhythms: The World of South Korea's East Coast Hereditary Shamans*, Burlington: Ashgate.

So Inhwa 2010. Historical Change and Meaning of Korean Tablature, Hapjabo, *Musical Notations of Korea*, Korean Musicology Series 4. Seoul: National Gugak Center.

So Inhwa 2002, *Theoretical Perspectives on Korean Traditional Music: An Introduction*, Korean Music Resources V. Seoul: National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts.

---

[13] Kwon Oh-sung, History of Korea Notations, *Musical Notations of Korea*, Korean Musicology Series 4 (Seoul: National Gugak Center), p 4.

Ninth Oral History Conference 2012

(Mangaung: Free State)

Oral history, communities and the liberation struggle:
Reflective memories in post-apartheid South Africa

Reliving Zimbabwe's liberation struggle (Second Chimurenga) through Simon Chimbetu's selected songs

Dewah Peterson and Charles Tembo
The University of Fort Hare

Chimbetu and the Marxist Brothers

Simon Chimbetu was born on 23 September 1955 to Malawian parents who had roots in Tanzania. This explains why he could sing in the Chewa, Swahili, Ndebele and Shona languages. He joined the liberation struggle in Mozambique but returned shortly before Zimbabwean independence in 1980. Simon Chimbetu is one of the musicians popular in Zimbabwean music circles. He is known for popularising Dendera music, a subgenre of *sungura* music in which the bass guitar is predominant. Chimbetu himself took part in the armed struggle and in the early days of the band the influence of his participation in the guerrilla warfare is evident in the name of the band Marxist Brothers, in view of the idea that the war was Marxist in ideological orientation. Later on, Chimbetu changed the name of the band to Dendera Kings. His music is branded *dendera* in reference to the booming sound of a tropical bird called Southern Ground Hornbill which is found in the southern African parts of Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi.

The interface of Chimbetu's music and the war situation

Having been an active member in the liberation war, Chimbetu's music is informed and sustained by experiences of the people during the war period. It is argued in this article that the end of the armed struggle in 1980 provided such singers as Chimbetu with the opportunity to revisit the war situation. Chimbetu's music is therefore a transcript of not only pain, grief and loss through death but also of the spirit of resistance that underpinned the struggle for political freedom itself. Furthermore, after the war itself had ended Chimbetu remained committed to the anti-imperialist struggle. Guided by Marxist philosophy Chimbetu's music emphasises unity of purpose, resistance and resilience in the fight for freedom of the oppressed black community against the oppressive white regime. His music can be regarded as liberated music in as far as he revisits the war situation with a view not only to interpret the war situation but also to help change society or promote the good in people's life-worlds.

***"Rwendo rurefu"* (1988)**

In this song, addressed to liberation fighters, the singer reminds the guerrillas that the war is no easy walk but a long journey that needs commitment and sacrifice. The singer implores fighters to be purposeful agents by harnessing the energies of their bodies and minds to work towards liberating Zimbabwe. It is a conscious attempt by the singer to help the colonised see that the end of the war must not be viewed as an end in itself but as a means to an end. He seems to imply that while political independence is a necessary condition it is not an adequate condition. Mazrui (2004:105) aptly observes: "[Political independence] was indeed a necessary condition before Africa could fulfill or realize any of her fundamental aspirations. But by itself political sovereignty was not enough – it was not a sufficient condition. It was not true that 'all else would be added unto it'."

The spirit of resistance and uncompromising patriotism aimed at the success and defence of the nation born of struggle is the major factor. In the song, Chimbetu holds that post-independence in Zimbabwe is a period in which Zimbabweans coexist with the erstwhile colonisers who assume new forms of domination and exploitation – a very dangerous situation impeding the progress and development of Zimbabweans:

> *Shandisa simba rako Comrade umire munyika yamai nababa*
> *shandisa simba hondo yauri irefu*
> *Shandisa moyo wako Comrade, musha muno tigere nemhandu,*
> *hondo yauri ireful*
> *Shandisa pfungwa dzako dzako dzose Comrade mukudzivirira*
> *nyika yamai nababa*
> *Vana veZimbabwe ngatibatanei, tina VaMugabe tikurire*
> *mhandu*

Against the background of the important role played by unity in the armed struggle, the singer emphasises unity as indispensable to progress and development in Zimbabwe. By and large Chimbetu is singing against neo-colonialism as he conscientises the politically independent Zimbabweans to be wary of the machinations of neocolonialists who still want to dominate Zimbabwe. The singer is motivated to expose the perpetual quest for domina-tion by the erstwhile coloniser and to march right at the fore of the majority on their long journey in the fight against neocolonial domination. Wa Thiongo (1981:24) reminds us:

> Neocolonialism means the continued exploitation of Africa's
> total resources and of Africa's labour power by international
> monopoly capitalism through continued creation and en-

couragement of subservient weak capitalistic economic struc-
tures, captained or overseen by a native ruling class.

"*Hondo*" (War) is a song in which Chimbetu attacks politicians who want to wage yet another war, despite the formal ending of the war in 1980. He exposes and castigates warmongers as threats to peace and development of the nation. He notes that any war is marked by bloodshed, death, destruction, pain and grief. The song is a success because he does not idealise the war but refers to real challenges posed by the war period. Unlike other artists, especially those that idealise the war, Chimbetu offers a truthful account of the war. Because war is associated with suffering the singer considers it absurd to engage in yet another war. The singer exposes the meaninglessness of warmongering as a sure way to mass killings and subsequent pain. In this song, Chimbetu revisits the war situation and uses the experiences of the politically liberated masses to reveal the meaninglessness of war, especially when the war is not justified. It can be argued that Chimbetu is protesting against leaders who are masters and perpetrators of the disturbances and killings in Matabeleland and parts of the Midlands provinces in Zimbabwe:

> *Hondo ine ropa, rufu kuparadza matambudziko mukati mehondo usatanga imwe hondo, seiko muchitanga imwe hondo?*
> *Imi muchapera, tese tichapera, vana vevamwe vachapera, tichasvitsana kumakore*

"Zimbabwe" (1998) is a nationalist song in which the singer records war experiences. He reveals that dedication and patriotism inspired him to go to war to liberate the nation. He demonstrates that guerrillas worked in collaboration with the masses who provided vital information to the success of the fight against domination and exploitation. Furthermore he reveals that religion played an important role in the struggle as the dominated sought guidance from their ancestors. The singer notes that the war was given "direction and impetus by African spiritual religion" (Viriri & Tembo 2010):

> *Zimbabwe iyoyi yanga yanditora moyo*
> *Taide kusvika Gairezi ndokuudza vabereki zvikanzi famba so famba so*
> *Pakakomo ako kamunoona ako ndipo pane mwana waNichodemus*
> *famba zvakanaka akoma ndimi munawoka masango*
> *Taide kusvika muDorowa ndokuudza masvikiro zvikanzi famba so famba so*
> *musanete kusvika tatore dunhu redu famba so famba so*

Zimbabwe, land of my birthright
We wanted to go to Gairezi and parents showed us the way
At that mountain it is where the enemy is
Safe journey brethren through the jungle
We wanted to get to Dorowa and informed our ancestors who
showed us the way
Do not surrender till we get the land

It is argued in this paper that Chimbetu satisfies an Afrocentric principle based on the intention of giving explicit locational indicators when he refers to specific places like Gairezi and Dorowa. It is argued here that his reference to the war is not merely imaginary but that it is situated in known contexts in Zimbabwe.

The song "Southern Africa" from the album *Africa*, also found on the album *Hoko* as a remix, is a protest piece in which the singer castigates Prince Consort Henrik of Denmark for failing to tell the truth to his own people that Zimbabwe is a land of and for blacks. In the song Chimbetu exposes and challenges myths created by colonial masters to justify domination and oppression of blacks. It is argued here that Chimbetu is rewriting history with a view to offering a truthful account of African humanity. He dismisses the falsehoods as ways to push Africans out onto the periphery. Chimbetu expresses discontentment with the white regime for grabbing the land that belongs to blacks, the situation which inspired the armed struggle. The singer reveals a sense of resistance and looking forward by emphasising that surrender is not an option for Zimbabweans, who will fight to topple the white regime:

Hendrik mwana wemurungu
Hendrik wakakanganisa
Ndokuzofa usina kureva chokwadi kuti vazukuru takapamba
nyika
Nyika ino nyika yavatema, vachinge vaida vadzorerei nyika
Mukasadaro tingapere rudzi

Henrik, son of the white man
Henrik, you made a mistake
You died before you told the truth that my fellow people …
colonised Zimbabwe
This land belongs to blacks, when they fight for it give them
their land back to them
If you [do] not observe that we will die

171

The singer challenges the domination of the white regime in the face of the nonnegotiable reality that Zimbabwe is a land for blacks. He dismisses domination and the myths created to service colonialism with all the impunity that they deserve. To a very large extent, Chimbetu's success lies in the fact that he dismantles the myth that Africans cannot develop themselves and need the help of the white man to develop. It is also argued in the paper that Chimbetu demonstrates that he is an active participant in the fight against neocolonialism.

Singing against neocolonialism

Simon Chimbetu is part and parcel of the antihegemonic struggle in that his music reveals commitment to resistance against the machinations of the neocolonialists. Chimbetu's music reveals that the singer is looking back in history; based on the lessons derived from the past, Africans can repel any attempt to keep them under domination despite the end of the liberation war. The singer holds that because the war is over Zimbabweans can derive crucial lessons for their lives as they forge ahead into the future. The song radiates the idea that unity of purpose, resistance against oppression whether colonial or neocolonial, as well as the direction to follow in post-independence Zimbabwe, must be informed by the lived experiences of Zimbabweans throughout history.

Concerning unity, Chimbetu's song entitled "One Way" stress the importance of unity for progress and development in Africa. He takes lessons from the liberation struggle in which unity was an indispensable aspect of the liberation of the oppressed. Chimbetu is conscious that unity is particularly important to people who have attained independence. He says:

> One way, one way for Africa, one way for Africa to be the conqueror
> One way from Cairo to Cape way to Nigeria
> One way for Africa to be the Conqueror
> OA Unity oh Ethiopia, one way for Africa
> …
> Explorers came one way from Madrid to [the] Cape of Good Hope

The singer reveals that victory is certain on the basis of unity. The singer holds that because most African nation-states have all gone through the same experiences they have to unite in struggle against any attempts to keep the black man down. Chimbetu is in search of unity in the African past and in the song he underlines the necessity of uniting for victory. The singer views disunity as a threat to freedom, equality and justice. He rightly observes that

172

the colonisers had one goal which was to dominate and exploit; the lesson for the colonised is that unity is nonnegotiable. Because unity among colonialists was used to colonise Africa the true liberation of the continent lies in unity of purpose among the nations. In light of the foregoing, Osundare in Chiwome (2002:vii) observes:

> A proper understanding of our history will put our present anomy in clear if not more bearable perspective; a more tough-minded dialogue with the past will reveal how much we have gone through and how far we are capable of going. A philosophy of Africa not informed by historical wisdom is most likely to end in a kind of pessimism borne out of prognostication without diagnosis, a sure way to the ontology of defeat.

"*Pane Asipo*" (1997) from the album *Survival* is a tribute to the gallant fighters who died in the struggle, in which the singer is reminding independent Africans always to remember that in all their life experiences they must not forget the heroes who died in the struggle. He conscientises both the masses and leaders to remember that their nation was born out of blood and hence that all independent peoples must keep the spirit of resistance alive in whatever they do. The singer's gaze is by and large informed by the struggle for liberation to the extent that since his judgement of post-independence Zimbabwe is informed by past experiences. Furthermore, he does not idealise the war because he demonstrates that lives were lost during the war:

> *Gungano ramaita iri pane vamwe vasipo*
> *Mabiko ataita aya pane vamwe vasipo*
> *Kuguta kwataita uku pane vamwe vasina*
> *Tatadza kukanganwa isu kukanganwa takoniwa*
> *Jojo akasarako musango*
> *Molly akasara ikoko*
> *Love akasarako kuhondo*
> *Jona akasara ikoko*
>
> In this gathering some are not here
> As we enjoy the party let's remember that some are not among us
> Despite filling our stomachs some have not
> We cannot forget
> Jojo died in struggle
> Love also died in struggle
> Jona also died in struggle

173

In the song "Survival" (1997) Chimbetu satirises leaders who attend important meetings in different parts of the world to remember the plight of their people. In the song he satirises leaders who do not prioritise their people's interests. He is on the side of the majority because his voice is a voice of concern that leaders take responsibility for improving the life conditions of their people, so that the meetings they attend are not in vain. The singer notes that the people do not simply want to exist; they seek more humane conditions especially after having waged a struggle to improve their lives. "Survival" is a song in which the singer is "demanding the total and immediate bettering of their lot" (Fanon 1968:107). The singer is motivated by the fact that some leaders in Africa pursue their individual ends while sinking the majority into poverty and suffering. Chimbetu seems to argue that African leaders are partly to blame for the miserable condition of the African multitudes because they seem to focus on their own interests. Instead of externalising Africa's woes Chimbetu challenges leaders to be responsible and represent their people fully. Chinweizu (1987:399) reminds African leaders to desist from blaming all the miseries of the African condition on outsiders as follows:

> Our generation of African nationalists must respectfully avoid the sentimental dignitarianism of those apostles of the African Personality who prefer to externalize all the blame for the miseries of our condition. Without belittling or disguising the enormous contributions of imperialists to our present situation, we must honestly accept final responsibility for our weakness and backwardness. Africa's backwardness and weakness are man made.

Chimbetu satirises leaders as follows:

> *Kana moenda mukoma kana moenda kana moenda kurekure kana moenda*
> *Kana moenda mukoma kana moenda muitaure yeupfu hwevana vangu*
> *Kana mokwidza mitengo yetunonaka muitaure yeupfu hwevana vangu*
> *Chavanoda kusurviva*

> When you go far away when you go far away
> When you go please talk about mealie-meal for my children
> When the prices of luxurious goods go up please talk about basic commodities
> Because what my children want is survival

In the same fashion, in "*Zuva raenda*", Chimbetu satirises leaders who delay land redistribution and reveals his impatience and disappointment with the leadership for failing to redistribute this basic resource --- the land which the people fought for. The singer attacks the leadership for failing to redistribute the land and it saddens the singer that redistribution is long overdue. The singer is saddened by the government failure to redistribute the priceless resource of land. Since land was the major driver of the war in Zimbabwe it is absurd that leaders delay land redistribution. While the term *mukoma* was used during the struggle to emphasise unity among the fighters, Chimbetu uses the term to challenge leaders for failing to redistribute the land as follows:

> *Mukoma zuva raenda zuva raenda mukoma wee*
> *Raenda seri mechikomo zuva raenda mukoma wee*
> *Mukoma nhongai nyama, nhongaika mukoma wee*
> *Mukoma govai minda govai mukoma wee*
> *Takuwara nenhomba govaika mukoma wee*

> My brother time is running out
> The sun has set
> My brother, pick the meat from the plate
> My brother, redistribute the land, redistribute!
> We are salivating, please redistribute!

The singer is protesting against the leaders for making the people suffer in the land of their birth following their struggle to regain that land. Chimbetu's vision is aptly summarised in Mugabe's (2001:109) words:

> Our perspective on the land reform programme derives from our struggle for sovereign independence, and the compelling fact that the last and decisive seven years of that struggle took on an armed form that demanded of us the precious and ultimate price of our blood. We died and suffered for our land. We died and suffered for sovereignty over natural resources of which <u>land</u>, *ivhu*, *umhlabati*, is the most important.

Conclusion

Simon Chimbetu's music presents oral history by ordinary people as opposed to history written from above. He makes the listener gain insights on what transpired during the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. His reminiscences attempt to recover the cognitive value of oral testimonies of liberation struggle experiences. Chimbetu's songs offer listeners and researchers a

175

fascinating view of Zimbabwe's liberation history as well as the fight against neocolonialism. From his selected songs it is clear that Chimbetu desires Zimbabwe's liberation heritage to be treasured as an important epoch in her history.

References

Mugabe, RG. 2001. *Inside the Third Chimurenga.* Harare: The Department of Information and Publicity.

Chinweizu. 1987. *The West and the Rest of Us: White Predators, Black Slavers and the African Elite.* Lagos: Pero Press.

Chiwome, EM. 2002. *A Social History of the Shona Novel.* Gweru: Mambo Press.

Fanon, F 1968. *Black skin, white masks.* Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press.

Mazrui, AA. 2004. *Power, Politics and the African Condition: Collected Essays of Ali A. Mazrui.* Trenton: Africa World Press.

Viriri, A & Tembo, C. 2010. 'Language, Voice and Literature: the Expression of Spirituality in Zimbabwe War Chimurenga Narratives' in Imbizo Vol. 1No12010. Pretoria. Unisa Press.

Wa Thiongo, N. 1981. *Writers in Politics*. London: Heinemann.

Memories of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle among the people from the Bulilimamangwe district in the southwestern parts of Zimbabwe

Thembani Dube
University of the Witwatersrand

Introduction

The Rhodesian brutal colonial rule and its unpopular agrarian policies only served to heighten ethnic differences between the Ndebele and the Kalanga in Bulilimamangwe. The imposition of Ndebele chiefs and demotion of Kalanga chiefs in Bulilimamangwe district of the notorious Native Land Husbandry Act of 1951 left Kalanga-Ndebele relations strained. By the time the liberation struggle broke out in the 1970s there were clearly distinguished ethnic groups in this district, the Kalanga and the Ndebele. However, the Kalanga and the Ndebele, sick of the marginalisation and of their loss of land to the minority whites, united to oust the regime and to reassert their independence. This period marked a drastic shift from a radical Kalanga ethnic identity that had been taking shape during the 1950s and 1960s to adoption of a political identity which was neither Ndebele nor Kalanga in orientation. A number of scholars have overemphasised the ethnic differences that took shape during the liberation struggle within the leadership of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu) under the leadership of Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo. These differences among other reasons led to the breakup of the party which was dominated by the Kalanga and Ndebele.[1] This article departs from the usual debate that puts ethnicity at the centre of the struggle by considering how the people from Bulilimamangwe district have described their memories. The ethnicity debate fails to capture the broader perspective of the ordinary people who also fought during the war by placing too much emphasis on the leadership. This article thus seeks to show that the people of Zimbabwe were preoccupied with the elimination of injustices and that while

---

[1] Zapu was led by Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo and it drew most of its membership from the people from the Matabeleland region, although there were Shona-speaking members within the leadership, such as Chikerema and George Nyandoro. The party split in 1963 and ethnic differences are cited as the major problem that led to the split in the party. Former Zapu members such as Robert Mugabe soon formed the Zimbabwe African National Union (Zanu). While these were the two major parties that fought for the liberation of Zimbabwe, this article will focus on Zapu as many people from Bulilimamangwe joined Zapu. Secondly, Zapu cadres operated in this area when the liberation struggle intensified during the second half of the 1970s. For more studies on the struggle and ethnic differences between the two parties see Sithole (1999), Msindo (2004), Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2007) and Ranger and Bhebhe (1995).

there were ethnic differences at leadership level, these differences did not override the common factor of their political unity as the oppressed people. Moreover, testimonies from the people of Bulilimamangwe district show that ethnicity was not an issue during the war, as all the people came together under the common aim of ousting the oppressor. However by so doing the article does not dismiss the fact that ethnic differences might have shaped the politics of the war. The article therefore will elaborate how and why identities can shift from time to time and the complexity of these identities. Above all, the article gives a refreshing view of the struggle in Bulilimamangwe by showing that ethnicity was not an overarching issue during the liberation struggle. It draws examples from the experiences of the Kalanga liberation fighters who joined Zapu and also from ordinary people's oral testimonies about their memories of the war in the Bulilimamangwe district. Therefore in Bulilimamangwe the war of liberation is remembered as a unifying agent that created a political identity that shaped the course of the war of liberation.

The identity discourse and the memories of the liberation war from the peasants' perspectives

Generally it has come to be accepted that when one speaks of the Zapu cadres who fought for the liberation of Zimbabwe, the names of the leaders will feature prominently in this discourse. The names often mentioned are Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo, Jason Ziyaphapha Moyo, George Silundika and George Nyandoro among others. While the party leadership was drawn mostly from the Kalanga ethnic group, the party was viewed as an Ndebele party because of the regional perception of Matabeleland. This was also because most of the party's members came from the Matabeleland region. Nationalism gave the people from Matabeleland a political rather than an ethnic consciousness and also gave them a sense of commonality.[2] During this period the Africans, despairing of having their land grievances redressed, began to organise political parties intended to remove the settler government. The Kalanga of Bulilimamangwe thus also joined in this mass nationalism drive under Zapu, which party was led by Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo. The party recruited its cadres from all over the Matabeleland region, so that the people have tended to view it as an Ndebele-oriented party. Ranger also concurs with the above and postulates that the Kalanga had to profess an Ndebele identity and participate in nationalist activities as Ndebele, because Zapu was seen as an Ndebele party.[3] This period also saw the Kalanga taking an active role in nationalist activities. However, studies have concentrated on Ndebele ethni-

---

2   R.K Rasmussen, *Migrant Kingdom: Mzilikazi's Ndebele in South Africa*, Rex Collings Ltd, London, 1976.
3   T Ranger and M Ncube, "Religion in the guerrilla war: The case of Southern Matabeleland" in T Ranger and N. Bhebhe (eds), *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, 1995.

179

city, especially during the period of the liberation struggle. Yet this identity was neither Ndebele nor Kalanga alone. Other small groups such as Venda and Tonga also participated during the struggle under Zapu.

In the same vein, such scholars have argued that the Kalanga assumed an Ndebele identity during the same period. For example Ranger and Ncube argue that the late Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo, who was a born Kalanga, wanted to preserve Kalanga ethnic values but at the same time became a keen Ndebele nationalist who not only practised Ndebele cultural customs but also sought to revive them.[4] On the other hand Ranger and Ncube contradict themselves by going further to argue that leaders like Joshua Nkomo were simultaneously reviving Kalanga cultural nationalism and Ndebele political nationalism.[5] They seem to confuse a political identity with an ethnic identity. Msindo has done a lot of work on ethnicity and nationalism and argues that ethnicity worked hand in glove with nationalism rather than being opposed to it.[6] In his thesis, Msindo further argues that the Kalanga sought accommodation within the "nationalists" and official identity of being Ndebele, yet still clung to a traditional Kalanga ethnic identity.[7] From the example given above, it seems that the Kalanga continued to hold their identity even during the war of liberation and scholars have mistaken their joining of the Ndebele-dominated political party for identification with the Ndebele ethnic group. However this manifestation of a Kalanga ethnic identity in the camps in Zambia during the struggle was confined to a small clique of Kalanga leaders who did so for political gain. The use of the Ndebele language was also not universal as some cadres who participated during the war mentioned that each person communicated in his own language.[8] It was because they had to fight a common enemy that the Kalanga came to some compromise with the Ndebele in order to regain their land from the whites.[9]

The dispute that led to the split in Zapu also espoused the irreconcilable differences within the Zapu leadership. One such ethnic conflict occurred in Zambia in the 1970s, leading to the second split in Zapu while in exile. According to Ndlovu-Gatsheni, the conflict was ethnically induced and was between Ndebele/Kalanga-speaking politicians such as Jason Z Moyo, Edward Ndlovu and George Silundika against their Shona-speaking counter-

---

[4]   Ibid.
[5]   Ibid.
[6]   For a longer debate on this see E. Msindo, "Ethnicity and nationalism in urban Colonial Zimbabwe: Bulawayo 1950-1963", in *Journal of African History, 48* (2007), pp. 267–90 (2007), Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Muzondidya (2007) and Mkandawire (2005).
[7]   E. Msindo, "Ethnicity in Matabeleland", A study of Kalanga-Ndebele Relations", Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, Cambridge, August, 2004 p 161.
[8]   Interview with December Moyo, ex-ZIPRA cadre, Osabeni, 21 July 2012.
[9]   Interview with Fikile Sibanda, an ex-ZIPRA cadre, Luveve, Bulawayo, 27 April 2008.

parts such as James Chikerema and George Nyandoro.[10] In addition to the above, there were ethnic rifts again between the Ndebele and the Kalanga. One example was that of the Mthimkhulu faction who represented an Ndebele clique who wanted to occupy key positions within the party. On the other hand the Kalanga group comprised Jason Z Moyo, Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo and George Silundika.[11] However, it would be reductionist to use this example to conclude that there were serious ethnic fights in Zapu during the struggle. Also, these differences and disputes were confined to the leaders and the ordinary soldiers were not involved. These ethnic tendencies were also seen among the intellectuals and in the event of promotions within the party. For example during the war in Zambia, Kalanga intellectuals had so strong a grip on education provision that it was said one stood no chance of winning a scholarship if one belonged to the Ndebele ethnic group.[12] Joshua Nkomo thus assumed many identities. In Bulawayo, an urban city dominated by Ndebele speakers, he was Ndebele; in Kezi, his home area, he was a Kalanga; in the then Southern Rhodesia as a whole he was a nationalist.[13]

Scholars such as Nyathi have also accepted the ethnic debate as an important factor that shaped the liberation struggle, but without thorough scrutiny. According to Nyathi the Kalanga lost their ethnic identity during liberation and adopted an Ndebele identity. This is tends to reductionism and fails to account for the consultation of Kalanga cults such as the Njelele and Manyangwa during the war by both the Kalanga and Ndebele. Nyathi goes on to contradict himself by postulating that young Kalanga men and women joined the struggle to show the Ndebele hardliners that they were just as courageous and determined to free themselves from oppression.[14] This is also simplistic because if joining the struggle had been for that reason, then the Kalanga would have fought against the Ndebele without necessarily waiting for the struggle to prove it. The Native Land Husbandry Act did much to generate racial tension and political agitation during the 1950s and 1960s,

---

[10] J Muzondidya and Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Echoing Silences": Ethnicity in post-colonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2007", in *African Journal on Conflict Resolution: Special Issue on Identity and Cultural Diversity in Conflict Resolution in Africa,* 7 (2) (2007). p 281.

[11] It should be noted that these were the key figures who were the founders and leaders of the Kalanga Cultural Society. These might have manipulated nationalism as a tool to strengthen their political muscle. Prior to the formation of Zapu, these together with Lazarus Nkala were members of the National Democratic Party (NDP). The Kalanga were thus excited that the top leadership of NDP was comprised of Kalanga. See Ndlovu-Gatsheni's book *Do Zimbabweans Exist*?

[12] T.O Ranger, "Matabeleland since the Amnesty", *in African Affairs, Vol 88, no 350*, January 1989 , p 169.

[13] Also see T.O. Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture and History in the Matopo Hills of Zimbabwe,* Baobab Books, Harare, 1999.

[14] I. Nyathi, "Ndebele Kalanga ethnic relations in Bulilimamangwe South: Integration or Assimilation? A case study of the colonial and post-colonial Bulilimamangwe", Honours Dissertation, History Department, University of Zimbabwe, 2004.

such that ethnic differences among the Africans in Southern Rhodesia were buried in order to fight the common enemy of "oppression". However it would distort history to argue that during this period the Kalanga adopted an Ndebele identity. It is beyond reasonable doubt that Zapu had its stronghold in Matabeleland South in terms of its recruitment drive. It was no coincidence that the Kalanga from this district joined Zapu. On the other hand, Zanu's stronghold was in the Shona-speaking communities. The drive to join Zapu was not on ethnic lines, but the Kalanga took advantage of their proximity to Botswana which had established military bases, such as at Dukwe.[15] Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu agrees and argues that Kalanga people dominated Zapu because it was easy for them to cross into Botswana and then move to Zambia.[16] Therefore the geographic proximity of the Kalanga to the Botswana border played a role in influencing the Kalanga to join Zapu. Had Zanu operated in the area as well, maybe the people from this district would have joined the party.

The demands of the Native Land Husbandry Act are often cited as the reason why most people from this district joined the liberation struggle. Elders from Bulilimamangwe are said to have started conducting meetings soon after the introduction of the Act in the District. In these meetings they argued against colonial segregation and the loss of their land to the whites.[17] Nkomo is also remembered as a liberator who told people to fight for their land. He is said to have told the people to refuse their money and to cry out for land from the white men.[18] While a number of people from this area joined the struggle, many also remained at home and participated in other ways. According to the oral testimonies, the struggle penetrated the area around 1977 and 1978. Central to the debate about the struggle are the memories of these people on how the war was fought. These memories are about the combatants and the people, their relations with one another and sometimes everyday events. Such stories can feature perceptions of how the war transformed their lives as well as how they adapted to particular war situations.

The Zapu guerrillas who operated in the area are remembered as of mixed ethnic background, which more than anything else diluted the growing ethnic tensions that had haunted the area especially during the NLHA and the period of colonial community development. The people thus treated the guerrillas well; they were known as *amalwa ecatsha* (guerrillas).[19] Ethnicity was suppressed by the goal of freedom and it is not surprising that the Kalanga,

---

15   Interview with Enoch Knox Moyo, Osabeni village, 13 July 2012.
16   Interview with Saul Gwakuba Ndlovu, a Kalanga activist, Bulawayo, 28 November 2011.
17   Interview with Aleck Mposa Moyo, Muke area, 11 March 2012.
18   Interview with headman Baleni Dube, Muke area, 11 March 2012.
19   This depicted the strategy of guerrilla warfare which was adopted by Zapu because of the influence from the Soviet Union, where Zapu got its support.

who had some antipathy towards their Ndebele counterparts, soon buried their differences for the sake of liberation. The villagers cooperated with the guerrillas who were from different backgrounds. People from the Muke area remember that the comrades who operated in their area were Shona speaking and that they cooperated with these people by giving them food and shelter.[20] The guerrillas also consulted other mediums and traditional healers. In particular, they cultivated a warm relationship with the Manyangwa cult, who hid the guerrillas from the Rhodesian forces.[21] Young men and women also assisted these guerrillas by giving them information about the Rhodesian forces. These were well known as *Chimbwidos* and *Mujibhas*. However, while there was this cooperation between the villagers and the liberation fighters, the people also remember the traumatisation and suffering that they underwent during the struggle.

Guerrillas raped young women to satisfy their sexual desires and many children from the district are the products of rape. The parents of these children are bitter and argue that, while some people live in trauma because of past violent activities, there remains a tendency to hero worship and praise the guerrillas in the history books.[22] In the same vein the people of this district suffered for having misled the guerrillas or given them false information. During the war people were killed by both Rhodesian soldiers and guerrillas.[23] The Rhodesian forces compelled villagers to give them information about the whereabouts of the guerrillas. One could be killed for simply denying seeing any.[24] People from Bulilimamangwe also noted that the Rhodesian forces did not burn the people's homes but instructed the Africans who accompanied them to do so. This could have been the strategy of whites based on a divide-and-rule principle. As a result of the harassment, people ended up giving false information, which also had consequences.[25] So there is a discourse of the war of liberation as a traumatic event that took away the lives of many and destroyed many families. The guerrillas did much harm to the very people they claimed to liberate. In the same vein these

---

[20]   Interview with Jeremiah Dube, Muke area, 11 March 2012.
[21]   Around 1979, a number of Rhodesian forces attempted several times to kill Manyangwa himself for having accommodated the guerrillas, but failed to do so because Manyangwa was protected by Ngwali. Again, a number of Rhodesian forces perished in 1979 at Tjehanga village near Manyangwa. They were attacked by the guerrillas who were hidden by Manyangwa.
[22]   One elderly woman from Bulilimamangwe lamented over the cruelty that she experienced under the hands of the guerrillas. She was raped by ten men who exchanged her for two nights in the bush when she had gone to give those guerrillas food. She argues that even today she does not know who the father of her daughter is as she was raped by ten men.
[23]   Interview with Qedisani Ndiweni, Osabeni village, 27 December, 2010.
[24]   Ibid.
[25]   Usually if the guerrillas or the Rhodesian Front found out they had been misled, they would go back and kill the villagers for having given them false information. Many people lost their relatives during the war because they had given false information.

183

people were also harassed by the "enemies", who were the Rhodesian forces. While ethnic disputes erupted among the leaders of Zapu and Zanu, ethnicity was not an issue – especially among the peasants of Bulilimamangwe.

Embedded in the memories of the Bulilimamangwe people about the war is the discourse of sellouts who were popularly known as *Abathengisi.* These were those thought to have given the Rhodesian forces information on the whereabouts of guerrillas. The consequences for those deemed sellouts were dire. Thus the people became trapped in-between the Rhodesian forces and the guerrillas, and ended up giving false information and accusing their neighbours for being sellouts. Selling out others to either the guerrillas or the Rhodesian forces became a survival tactic.[26] Suffice it to say that this strategy of selling out was not confined to a particular ethnic group. For example, an Ndebele could sell out a neighbour just as a Kalanga could. If anything, the strategy of selling out neighbours reflected the social relations and tensions that were prevalent in the society, which were therefore expressed during the war. The sellout strategy was also an illustration of people's enmity towards their kinsmen who chose to eliminate their enemies by simply accusing them of being sellouts and handed them over to the guerrillas. Some people were even so intimidated by the presence of both the guerrillas and Rhodesian forces and hence ended up giving false information about their neighbours. To reiterate, in the end the villagers were victims of both guerrillas and Rhodesian forces. Usually those found guilty by the Rhodesian forces were arrested and imprisoned at Khami prison for not less than six months.[27]

Traditional authorities found themselves in a difficult position during the liberation struggle. On one hand, they were compelled to support the Rhodesian Front as they were agents of the government. On the other hand, they were accused by the guerrillas for supporting the suppressive rule of the colonial regime. This position was further exacerbated by the colonial regime's deliberate attempt to empower them as tribal authorities during the process of community development. During the period of community development, the traditional authorities' judiciary authority over land was restored to them, followed by an increase in chiefs' allowances. For example, the African Affairs Act (1966) gave chiefs new punitive powers and assigned them as government-paid messengers with the powers of arrest.[28] With all these provisions, chiefs were left with no choice but to dance to the tune of

---

[26]   Most of the informants from the district admitted to having given false information to either parties in order to escape being murdered during the war.

[27]   Tseyamu Ncube shared his experiences about his imprisonment at Khami prison. He said that he was accused of assisting the guerrillas. His homestead was burnt down and he was sent to Khami where he was imprisoned without being given a chance to defend his case. He spent eight months in prison and was released when he was found innocent.

[28]   B, Raftopoulos, "The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe", in Raftopolous, B and Phimister, I, (eds), *Keep on Knocking: A History of the Labour Movement in Zimbabwe, 1900-1997*, Baobab Books, Harare, 1997, p 59.

the colonialists. As the waves of nationalism spread throughout the country and as the war intensified, traditional authorities had to shift their loyalty to the guerrillas. Yet the guerrillas generally assumed chiefs were working hand in glove with the "oppressors". Headman Mrapelo Masendu Dube was killed in 1975 as the guerrillas accused him of being a sellout.[29] Chief Gambu Sithole was killed by the guerrillas for collaborating with the whites as well. However some chiefs such as Madlambuzi and Hobodo, whose chieftainships had been banished by the colonial regime gained favour with the guerrillas and strongly supported them. Accommodated by "chief" Madlambuzi, the guerrillas made his homestead a political base where they gave villagers political orientation.[30] It was because of his support of the guerrillas that the Rhodesian forces sought to kill him, before he ran away and sought refuge in Botswana.[31]

"We fought for the liberation of Zimbabwe": memories of selected Zapu cadres from Bulilimamangwe

The experiences of the ordinary soldier have been neglected in studies on the liberation war history of Zimbabwe. This section serves to include the war experiences and contributions of some cadres from the Bulilimamangwe district who fought under Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), the military wing of Zapu, during the liberation struggle. What is striking about the war memories of these ex-military men is their insistence that tribalism or ethnicity did not play a significant role during their operations, either in Zambia or when they were deployed in the country in the late 1970s.[32] While the leaders might have had some disputes based on ethnicity, the ordinary soldiers were united by their goal of liberating Zimbabwe from white minority rule. Nkomo was therefore viewed first and foremost as a political leader who was neither Ndebele nor Kalanga. The party was comprised of people from various ethnic groups such as the Shona, Kalanga, Ndebele and Tonga among others. Drawing from ex-combatants' oral testimonies, it seems people did not prioritise their ethnic differences, at least during the struggle.[33]

---

[29] Interview with Chief Sindalizwe Masendu Dube, 11 March 2012.
[30] Interview with Nconyiwe Ncube, wife of the late chief Patrick Haphitshula Madlambuzi Ncube, 10 March 2012.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Interview with Charles Phuthi, Nswazi village, 15 July 2012.
[33] These feelings were articulated during my personal communication with December Moyo and Rich Moyo who are of the Kalanga ethnic group from Osabeni. They said most of their friends were Shona-speaking Zapu cadres and referred to each other as comrades and "friends". They also went further to say they continued to relate well with these friends even longer after the attainment of independence.

Zapu operated in the Bulilimamangwe district as well and usually recruitment was at a village level, but also at the boarding schools such as those at the Embakwe and Empandeni Missions. According to the ex-combatants most were not forcibly conscripted but joined willingly as they had seen their parents suffering at the hands of the whites. Some ran away from school without their parents' knowledge and crossed over to Botswana where they would be flown to Zambia to join the struggle.[34] While there had been ethnic tensions between the Ndebele and Kalanga, these differences diminished, at least during the struggle. Political identity seemed the ideal identity during the 1970s. The Kalanga and Ndebele cooperated especially when it came to convincing the youth to join the struggle. For example Aleck Mposa Moyo, a Kalanga, became a very influential person tasked with recruiting the youth in the Muke area.[35] The elders also encouraged their sons to join the struggle and fight for independence.

While in Zambia (Zapu operated there) these combatants were sent in platoons to receive training in either Russia and Angola. The ethnic factor did not decide selection for training, which was based on when combatants arrived in Zambia: a first-come-first-served situation. Promotion within Zapu was based solely on one's expertise.[36] When these ex-Zapu were deployed in the country in the late 1970s, some worked in Bulilimamangwe and others in Shona-speaking areas.[37] On the other hand, Shona-speaking cadres also operated in Bulilimamangwe and were well received by the peasants who cooperated with them and fed them as their own. Their joining Zapu was not inspired by any ethnic affiliation but rather by a common goal of freedom from the oppressors, therefore uniting people from various backgrounds under one political identity. So while a lot has been written about Zapu leaders such as Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo, Jason Ziyaphapha Moyo and George Silundika among others, little is known about the ordinary soldiers who had no leadership in the party. Their own experiences and memories during the struggle serve to strengthen the view that ethnicity was not an issue, at least not at the lower levels within ZIPRA.

Conclusion

A focus on the experiences of the people of the Bulilimamangwe district on the liberation war further reveals how identities can shift within groups. The

---

[34] Five of the interviewees related how they ran away from Empandeni and Embakwe Missions and went to Botswana on foot in order to join the struggle.

[35] Aleck Mposa Moyo had by then come from Johannesburg to visit his family. He was tasked with the recruitment of the young men who were working in Johannesburg and managed to recruit many in 1977.

[36] Interview with Samanisi Nleya, Dombodema 15 August 2012.

[37] Charles Phuthi operated in the Hurungwe areas and said that he was well received by the Shona peasants in Hurungwe. December Moyo also worked in Karoi and Sipolilo.

ethnic debate, not the political debate, has been overemphasised in accounts of the liberation struggles in Zimbabwe. Yet the political atmosphere of the late 1960s and the oppression of blacks united Zimbabweans of various ethnic groups to fight for independence regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. People in Bulilimamangwe district also took part in this struggle united by the fact that they were traumatised by both the Rhodesian forces and the guerrillas. They shared a political rather than an ethnic identity. So it is dangerous to see the liberation war through ethnic lens because one might run the risk of imposing a shared Ndebele ethnic identity that never existed, at least not in the Bulilimamangwe district. The war saw the Kalanga adopting a political identity where they experienced the same brutalities as people of various different ethnic groups, such as the Ndebele, Shona and Tonga among others. These memories show how people from the district perceived the war and how identities can shift according to geography.

References

Msindo, E. 2007. Ethnicity and nationalism in urban Colonial Zimbabwe: Bulawayo 1950-1963. *Journal of African History* 48, 267–90.

Msindo, E. 2004. Ethnicity in Matabeleland. A study of Kalanga-Ndebele Relations, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, Cambridge.

Muzondidya, J. & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. 2007. Echoing Silences: Ethnicity in post-colonial Zimbabwe, 1980-2007. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution: Special Issue on Identity and Cultural Diversity in Conflict Resolution in Africa* 7(2).

Nyathi, L. 2004. "Ndebele Kalanga ethnic relations in Bulilimamangwe South: Integration or Assimilation? A case study of the colonial and post-colonial Bulilimamangwe", Honours Dissertation, History Department, University of Zimbabwe.

Raftopoulos, B. 1997. The Labour Movement in Zimbabwe, in Raftopolous, B. & Phimister, I. (eds.), *Keep on Knocking: A History of the Labour Movement in Zimbabwe, 1900-1997.* Harare: Baobab Books, 59.

Ranger, T.O, 1989. Matabeleland since the Amnesty. *African Affairs,* 88(350), January 169.

Ranger, T.O, 1999. *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture and History in the Matopo Hills of Zimbabwe,* Harare: Baobab Books.

Ranger, T. & Ncube, M. 1995. Religion in the guerrilla war: The case of Southern Matabeleland, in Ranger, T. & Bhebhe, N. (eds.), Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War.

Rasmussen, R.K *Migrant Kingdom: Mzilikazi's Ndebele in South Africa*, Rex Collings Ltd, London, 1976.

Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle: Second Edition Harare: Rujeko Publishers, 1999.

Interview with Aleck Mposa Moyo, Muke area, 11 March 2012.
Interview with Charles Phuthi, Nswazi village, 15 July 2012.
Interview with Chief Sindalizwe Masendu Dube, 11 March 2012.
Interview with December Moyo, Ex-ZIPRA cadre, Osabeni, 21 July 2012.
Interview with Enoch Knox Moyo, Osabeni village, 13 July 2012.
Interview with Fikile Sibanda, an Ex ZIPRA cadre, Luveve, Bulawayo, 27 April 2008.
Interview with Headman Baleni Dube, Muke area, 11 March 2012.
Interview with Jeremiah Dube, Muke area, 11 March 2012.
Interview with Nconyiwe Ncube, wife of the late chief Patrick Haphitshula Madlambuzi Ncube, 10 March 2012.
Interview with Qedisani Ndiweni, Osabeni village, 27 December, 2010.
Interview with Samanisi Nleya, Dombodema, 15 August 2012.
Interview with Saul Gwakuba Nldovu, a Kalanga activist, Bulawayo, 28 November 2011.
Interview with Tseyamu Ncube, Madlambuzi area, 10 March 2012.

189

Radio freedom, songs of freedom and the liberation struggle in South Africa, 1963-1991

Sekibakiba Peter Lekgoathi
University of the Witwatersrand

Introduction

Access to radio broadcasting has been one of the major priorities of political movements involved in revolutionary struggles in many parts of the world. This was also the case with the African National Congress (ANC) and its allies, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of Democrats (COD). Shortly after the brutal repression and banning of political organisations by the National Party government in 1960, the ANC together with its allies momentarily and erratically operated a clandestine station called Radio Freedom inside the country before it was forced into exile. In addition to broadcasting news from the ANC's perspective and propagating its ideology, Radio Freedom served as a channel to broadcast political music and freedom songs and mobilise supporters within the country. While there has been a significant production of scholarship on music in South Africa, not much has been written on the particular role of Radio Freedom as a medium through which political music and struggle songs were effectively disseminated.[1]

In her study of music and politics in Africa, Lara Allen (2004:144) comments: "Music functions as a trenchant political site in Africa primarily because it is the most widely appreciated art form on the continent." Music, she continues, is Africa's most prominent popular art and the one that is most widely and systematically transmitted through the mass media, which gives it extremely wide reach. And music "constitutes a large, powerful platform through which public opinion can be influenced" (Allen 2004:1,3; also cited

---

[1] A significant amount of literature has been produced on the liberation movement in South Africa, particularly on the ANC and its leaders, since 1994. This deals mainly with political developments under apartheid and the experiences and contributions of individual activists (South African Democracy Education Trust 2004, 2008; Suttner 2001 2008; Bernstein 1999; Shubin 1999; Kasrils 1998; Gevisser 2007; Callinicos 2004; Kathrada 1999, 2004; Turok 2003; Sisulu 1997, 2001, 2002; Mhlaba 2001; Maharaj 2001; Sampson 1999; Clingman 1998; Mandela 1994). However, only a small section of this scholarship has been devoted to the role of radio in the anti-apartheid struggle. See, for example, the works of scholars such as Raymond Suttner (2008) and Ineke van Kessel (2000:162,169) as well as some autobiographies of former political activists (Bernstein 1999; Ngculu 2009). While these works provide some insight into how political activists inside the country listened to Radio Freedom broadcasts and how the radio station impacted on their political consciousness, the role of radio is not at the centre of such texts and they are silent on the issue of music or freedom songs.

in Gunner 2008:29). As in other parts of Africa, a large body of literature has been devoted to African popular culture, particularly music, in South Africa (James 1999; Erlmann 1991, 1996, 1999; Coplan 1984, 1994; Ballantine 1984, 1993; Andersson 1981). However, research on the relationship between song and political struggle remains quite small, though noteworthy (Ramoupi 2010; Gilbert 2009; Gunner 2008; Coplan 2005).[2] In Zimbabwe, the role of music and song in the country's liberation struggle is explored in a book by Alec JC Pongweni (1981) that examines the contributions made by revolutionary songs and music in the fight against colonialism and imperial domination. These songs provided the "necessary anchorsheet for the successful prosecution of [a] just struggle for freedom and independence" (Pongweni 1981:11). The subject of music is also explored in the study of the Mau Mau's patriotic songs in colonial Kenya by Maina wa Kinyatti (1980).

Freedom songs – the pervasive but largely informal genre that was probably the prevalent musical form of popular expression under apartheid especially at mass protest gatherings, celebrations, political funerals and the like – are only now beginning to receive some scholarly attention (Ramoupi 2010:1). Shirli Gilbert (2009) argues that music, together with cultural forms such as poetry, theatre and dance, played a pivotal role in mobilising international support for the struggle against apartheid.[3] Liz Gunner (2008)

---

[2]   Internationally, a significant amount of work has been done on the use of radio in conflict situations (Moyo 2011; Straus 2011; Smith 2011; Ligaga et al, eds 2011; Van der Veur 2002; Carver 2000; James 2000; Richards 2000; Soley 1989). Most pertinent for the South African situation is an article by Mosia, Riddle and Zaffiro (1994:1–24). This examines and compares the clandestine radio stations of the liberation movements fighting white minority rule in Southern Africa, namely the ANC's Radio Freedom, Zimbabwe's Voice of Zimbabwe (ZAPU) and Voice of the Revolution (ZANU), as well as Namibia's South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) station. Mosia et al examine the dynamics of these stations to understand the social and political changes of the individual societies and how these stations evolved into regime stations after liberation. However, this study has nothing to say about the way in which song was deployed as a mobilising tool. Very recently, Stephen R Davis (2009:349–373) wrote an article in which he deals squarely with the use of radio broadcasting by the ANC and its allies in exile. Davis uses Radio Freedom as a lens to look into what he considers "the complex and troubled relationship" between the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP) over the three decades of exile. But his work remains mute on the aspect of music. My own earlier work on clandestine radio (Lekgoathi 2010:139–153) methodically explores listenership to Radio Freedom and its influence on internal political mobilisation in the post-1976 period, particularly in the 1980s, but obliquely touches on the station's signature tune and its emotional effects on the listeners.

[3]   Gilbert's work focuses on the ANC's most significant projects – Mayibuye, an agitprop group that achieved considerable success in Europe in the 1970s, and Amandla, which travelled widely as a party ambassador during the 1980s, offering large-scale performances incorporating music, theatre and dance. The performances by these groups provided political education about what apartheid was all about and why there should be broader support for, and solidarity with, the struggle against this system. However, it was not only through tours and live performances but also through radio that the productions of these agitprop groups became widely disseminated – an issue that Gilbert has not considered.

and David Coplan (2005) have analysed the significance of song in current political discourse in South Africa. Gunner has looked at the life of a song called "*Umshini Wami*" (My Machine Gun) and its broader implications in the public sphere. The song was adopted by the current president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, during his leadership battles within the ANC in 2005. Gunner (2008:27) looks at the origin of this song, its links to the struggle before 1994 and its "entanglements in a seamless masculinity with little place for gendered identities in the new state to come".

Revolutionary songs and political music were pervasive and pivotal elements in mobilising the struggle against apartheid. While some literature has been generated on this subject, virtually no study has explored the relationship between Radio Freedom and music. This paper looks at liberation songs and political music as crucial aspects of Radio Freedom's broadcasts and the role they played in political mobilisation.

Music, I argue, was a pivotal component of the radio station's broadcasts and underscored the propaganda messages and campaigns of the ANC and MK. Radio Freedom's signal tune included an excerpt from a freedom song which was played every time the station went on air. Interludes between and within programmes were marked by struggle songs or other forms of political music intended to invoke a certain mood that resonated with the message that was being propagated on a particular programme. The station closed its broadcasts with the singing of "*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*", a song composed by Enoch Sontonga which became an anthem of the liberation movements in several southern African countries and subsequently a national anthem of those states when they achieved independence.[4] A huge chunk of this song was actually incorporated into South Africa's national anthem post-April 1994. Further, besides a special programme that was dedicated to it, music was so pivotal to Radio Freedom that it was interspersed between and within programmes. Different genres of music including martial, choral and classical music as well as American jazz with its highly political undertones, featured prominently on the station's programmes. Finally, the struggle songs that were played on the station were directed more specifically at audiences inside the country (rather than being directed at international listeners).

The paper draws upon some insights from Shirli Gilbert's (2009) analysis of the ANC's perception of culture more generally, and music in particular, as a weapon of political struggle, as well as from Liz Gunner's (2008) examination of the relationship between freedom songs and the public sphere. It looks at the music that was played on Radio Freedom and investigates the extent to which this formed part of programmes intended to garner

---

4   The association of "*Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*", a song composed by Enoch Sontonga, with the
     ANC is as old as the organisation itself. It was first sung by the ANC in the 1910s. See Gray
     (2004), "The Liberation Songs: An Important Voice of Black South Africans from 1912-
     1994", *Journal of Education* 33:86–101.

support among the listeners within the country. While Gilbert's work has begun the process of documenting the development of cultural activity in the struggle, no study has as yet systematically explored how Radio Freedom became an important medium for the dissemination of cultural activity, or how it became a weapon of struggle. Besides giving extensive coverage to the works produced by the ANC's cultural ensembles, Radio Freedom was used as a platform to publicise productions by exiled musicians (such as Miriam Makeba, Letta Mbulu, Caiphus Semenya, Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa and others) whose music was banned in the country and could not be played on the South African Broadcasting Corporation's (SABC's) radio stations.

The paper relies on three key sources. The first is the documentary material deposited in the Liberation Archives at the University of Fort Hare in the Eastern Cape, more specifically the reports, memoranda and even scripts of the radio programmes that formed part of the ANC-London Internal Propaganda files. The second type of sources is the Radio Freedom Collection, which is housed in the Mayibuye Archives of Robben Island Museum at the University of the Western Cape. This collection comprises hundreds of recordings of the different programmes as well as the vinyl music records which were played on the station from various neighbouring African states. The recordings are available on audiocassettes only and not in the form of typed transcripts.

The oral interviews that I conducted between 2009 and 2011 with individuals who had some experience of listening to Radio Freedom constitute the third and final source of information on the issue of music. Coupled with secondary and primary sources discussed above, the information collected from the interviews provides a good basis to draw some conclusions regarding the connection between political mobilisation and freedom songs and music played on Radio Freedom.

The music played on alternative radio stations such as Radio Freedom is a grossly under-researched subject. This omission by scholars is rather surprising given both the importance of music or singing in African society and the position of radio as the biggest communication medium on the African continent. In the particular case of Radio Freedom, the music and freedom songs that were broadcast on the station so powerfully and eloquently reflected the artistic expression of the lived experiences of the majority of the people who lived under conditions of oppression.

Radio Freedom at home and in exile: historical background

Space constraints in this paper do not allow for a more detailed background on Radio Freedom, but this has been comprehensively covered elsewhere (Davis 2009; Lekgoathi 2010). Suffice it to say that Radio Freedom was

193

launched surreptitiously as a clandestine radio station in June 1963, on the farm Liliesleaf in Rivonia, which was the secret headquarters and hideout of the high command of the ANC's military wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK) or "Spear of the Nation" (Suttner 2008:68). This initial venture into radio broadcasting, Davis (2009:351) argues, was occasioned by the failure of the spectacular MK bombings between 1961 and 1963 to instigate the great majority of South Africans to revolution.[5] Nonetheless, Radio Freedom was stopped in its tracks when the top leaders of the ANC and its allies were arrested in the same month of June.

Radio Freedom tried to carry on with its clandestine operations inside the country in the face of extreme repression but its efforts were fruitless. The radio station was thrown a lifeline when it was re-established in 1967 as part of the external mission of the ANC in Lusaka, Zambia, where it was placed under the Department of Information and Publicity (Suttner 2008). It formed part of "The Voice of Freedom", a programme established for the broader Southern African liberation movements that broadcast to the region from the facilities of Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD) (Mosia et al 1994:7; Kushner 1974:154; Ellis & Sechaba 1994:133).

Until its disbandment in 1991, Radio Freedom was broadcast from outside South Africa's borders and at its height it was put on air daily at diverse, discrete times and frequencies from five different countries, namely Angola, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Tanzania and Zambia (Suttner 2008:68). According to *Sechaba* (1981), the ANC's monthly journal, listeners could access Radio Freedom's programmes via at least four (and sometimes five) state radio services on the continent. They were advised to tune into Radio Madagascar on shortwave 49 m band, 6135 KHz, from 20:00 to 21:00 daily in order to listen to the programmes of Radio Freedom (*Sechaba* 1981). They could also tune into Radio Lusaka on shortwave 41 m band, 7.3 MgHz, between 08:30 and 09:00 daily to get Radio Freedom's programmes. Radio Luanda, which was on shortwave 40 and 50 m bands and on medium wave 27.6 m band, aired Radio Freedom's programmes from 07:30 daily. Finally, Radio Tanzania on shortwave 19 m band, 15,435 KHz, broadcast the programmes at 20:15 on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and on 31

---

[5]   The early 1960s was also the period when the apartheid government in conjunction with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) had begun extending broadcasting in the different African languages in the country and they had in fact launched Radio Bantu as a fully fledged station on frequency modulation. Considering these developments, the ANC and its allies were compelled to want to challenge the state's monopoly over the airwaves and to establish a broadcast medium that would present different perspectives on news and current affairs to counter state propaganda, as well as to influence public opinion and to mobilise their support base. For more information on the SABC's monopolisation of the airwaves and the establishment of African language stations, see Hayman and Tomaselli (1989), Gqibitole (2002), Gunner (2000), (2002a), (2002b), (2005), (2006), Lekgoathi (2009) and Mhlambi (2009).

m band at 06:15 on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday (*Sechaba* 1981). In addition, the powerful Ethiopian state radio also allocated 15 minutes to Radio Freedom.

According to Raymond Suttner, a former political activist and ANC underground activist, beside the monthly publication *Sechaba*, the *African Communist* (the South African Communist Party's journal), also provided a list of the external transmitters and the times of day that Radio Freedom programmes would be broadcast (Suttner interview, 2009).[6] It was through these publications that Suttner himself came to know about Radio Freedom and how to tune into it. However, his initial attempts to listen to it while stationed in Durban in the early 1970s proved unsuccessful. He attributes this to the jamming of the frequencies by the state to prevent the ANC from projecting its voice inside the country. Nonetheless, Suttner contends that for most Radio Freedom listeners in the townships word of mouth probably played a major role in how they came to hear of its existence (Suttner interview, 2009).

While Radio Freedom had broadcast illegally in South Africa prior to being exiled, it existed legally in the "frontline states" and the locations of the transmissions were readily evident to listeners tuning into it. Individuals appearing on air identified themselves publicly as representatives of their respective organisations. However, its transmission from these exile locations continued to be performed in a clandestine fashion. Within the country, tuning into the station was also illegal and an offender could get a maximum eight-year sentence.

Radio Freedom offered a different perspective, the ANC's viewpoint, of the history of South Africa; it provided political education to its listeners about what the ANC stood for and about the organisation's campaigns; and it was also a major source of inspiration for political activists inside the country wanting to join MK. Within a context in which the ANC literature could not be easily distributed, it became essential to try to spread broad anti-apartheid messages and information on the history and policies of the organisation (Thörn 2009:100). Thus, above and beyond the reinforcement of mentorship by former political prisoners, "a constant and important factor in the ANC presence within the country was the daily broadcasts from Radio Freedom" (Suttner 2008:67, 165). Radio Freedom was a crucial component of the underground media that afforded the ANC a presence inside the country. The radio station was an extremely important factor in keeping the ANC alive in the minds of the black population during the long period of its exile. Nceba Faku, one of the activists in the 1970s who was politicised through the Black Consciousness Movement, recalls:

---

[6] Interview with Raymond Suttner, conducted by Sekibakiba Peter Lekgoathi at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 12 February 2009.

I was not a member of the ANC, but the underground media of the ANC, mainly Radio Freedom, was the kind of media that we would listen to. It was even banned to listen to Radio Freedom, but that was our source of information (cited in Thörn 2009:100).

Although Radio Freedom's news and current affairs programmes served as a source of information on the struggle against apartheid, political messages were also transmitted through struggle songs and political music which were broadcast on the station. Songs were an important medium for articulating oppression and how to overcome it.

Music and Radio Freedom programming, 1970s–1980s

Music was at the heart of Radio Freedom's broadcasts. Lindiwe Zulu, a female ex-MK combatant, puts it so succinctly: "[The Radio Freedom] programme started with a song and closed with a song" (*Amandla* 2002). There were particular distinctive sound effects that made the station very easily recognisable to its audiences when it came on air. These were the trademark introduction and signature tune of the revolutionary song "*Hamba Kahle Mkhonto we Sizwe*" (Go well, Spear of the Nation) "taken from the record that was distributed at home in 1970",[7] accompanied by the sound of machine gunfire (unmistakably of an AK-47 assault rifle), the call "*Amandla*" (power) and "*Mayibuye*" (Africa must be returned to her rightful owners).[8] This tune was intended to invoke strong nationalist feelings, to inspire defiance and to send a clear signal to the audiences regarding the ANC's resolve on violence as a key means of ending apartheid. Appended to this song was an oration which was also placed at the centre of the signature tune, and it went as follows:

This is Radio Freedom, the voice of the African National Congress
One of Africa's time-tested revolutionary movements
Born of the people in the frontline,
To spearhead the people's struggle for the seizure of power from the oppressor;
A product of the battles of the African continent for liberation.

---

[7] Ibid.
[8] "Radio Freedom: Voice of the African National Congress and the People's Army Umkhonto we Sizwe" (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Rounder Records; Lusaka: *Radio Freedom*, 1996), available from:
http://www.amazon.com/Radio-Freedom-Voice-African-National/dp/B00000037K (last accessed: 27 April 2010).

It is the voice of Umkhonto we Sizwe
The ever-heroic people's army that draws its combat tradition
from Hintsa, Shaka, Moshoeshoe, Sekhukhune, Ramabulane,
Madingoane and other great generals and warriors of our
glorious history of resistance.
Comrades and compatriots, duty calls
The battle lines are drawn
The African National Congress commands and urges all of us
To act for unity and, as one, to engage the enemy in united
action.
Let this be the year of the most powerful offensive against the
apartheid regime and its puppets.
Let this be the year of the greatest unity in action.
Let this be the year of the great leap forward to the threshold of
victory![9]

The speech fitted perfectly with the militaristic acoustics of the signal tune. It covered the theme of heroism, tying the anti-apartheid struggle in the 1980s to accounts of African resistance to colonial conquest during the 19th century.[10] The present was linked to the past, drawing on and increasing a range of heroic African figures in the country, mainly male leaders of the 19th century. This, according to Suttner, was because "they [the ANC] wanted people in faraway areas to have a sense of affinity with the message and not feel that it is only Sekhukhuni and therefore not for Xhosa-speaking people, or that it is only Xhosa by virtue of mentioning Makhanda, etc. etc." (Suttner interview 2009). Combined with the sound of gunfire and the militant singing, the speech's invocation of the 19th-century anticolonial heroes was intended to legitimise the use of violence in the struggle against apartheid during the late 20th century. It was consciously designed to incite war and to generate a martial mentality among Radio Freedom's listeners.

Many of the station's listeners were enthused by the contents of the signature tune. Murphy Morobe, a renowned student leader aligned to the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) during the 1976 Soweto uprising, a United Democratic Front (UDF) leader in the 1980s and an ardent listener of

---

[9]   There was some flexibility for the presenters to change or add new phrases rather than stick dogmatically to the statement. On 1 August 1986, for example, Takalani Mphaphuli introduced his programme thus: "You are tuned to *Radio Freedom* the voice of the African National Congress and Umkhonto we Sizwe the people's army". MCA 8 – Audio Cassette 1201, *Radio Freedom* (Lusaka) programme with Karel Roskam, 1 August 1986.

[10] Suttner shows that the discourse of heroism projects the male warrior as hero in ANC self-identity, a model to be followed, something which tended to erase the involvement of women warriors such as MaNthatisi of the Tlokwa, among others, in the struggles against colonial conquest (see Suttner 2008:117-118).

Radio Freedom, still has vivid memories of the kinds of emotional appeal that the station's opening credits had on him:

> When we used to listen to Radio Freedom, […] it wasn't always easy because the regime would also be interfering with the signal at all the times to ensure that we do not get absolute benefit of what is being transmitted. However, one thing they couldn't block out was that opening stanza. Now we were young people in our teens. Now to hear the opening stanza of Radio Freedom with the sound of a machine gun, after that we didn't even want to hear anymore (laughter). That was just sufficient to tell us that we must just carry on with the struggle (Morobe interview, 2009).

Another Radio Freedom listener who was partly inspired by the station to escape the country and to join both the ANC and its military wing is James Ngculu. His recollection resonates with Morobe's words above: "[T]he sound of the opening tune "*Hamba Kahle Mkhonto*", followed by a burst of gunfire, excited us. We would imagine ourselves pulling that trigger" (Ngculu 2009:22). Whereas Murphy Morobe stresses the sound of gunfire, James Ngculu underlines the importance of both the song and the sound of gunfire.

Similarly, Nomboniso Gasa, former UDF activist from a rural village in the Eastern Cape and former head of the Gender Commission, remembers how in the early 1980s she fiddled with the radio daily, "going up to the shed at home, positioning the aerial" because her village had limited access to medium and shortwave, so that when the time came for Radio Freedom broadcasts she would be ready (Gasa 2011). She recalls the rhythmic marching of soldiers accompanied by shouts of "*Amandla! Ngawethu!*" (Power! To Us!), the sounds of AK-47s and the singing of "*Hamba Kahle Mkhonto*" and the formal opening (Gasa 2011). All this preceded the standard update on world news, the global political situation, the growth of the anti-apartheid movement, the struggle in South Africa and Namibia, women's struggles and other issues, as well as ANC president Oliver Reginald Tambo's address to "the nation in exile, diaspora and inside the country" (Gasa 2011). The station concluded its daily broadcasts with a tune that was the instrumental version of the ANC's anthem, "*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*" (God bless Africa).[11]

Given the role of Radio Freedom as a recruitment agency for the ANC's military wing, martial music and freedom songs were given sufficient airplay and were interspersed within certain programmes. During the mid-1980s, a programme that was very popular among the "comrades" was "A

---

[11] Liberation Archive, University of Fort Hare (hereafter LA-UFH): Report of the Radio Unit and the Propaganda Committee, ANC-London Internal Propaganda 1973-1985 Box 7 Folder 3 "Text Radio Programme (Radio Freedom) 1973", dated 6/6/1973.

Call to Battle". This was about the "people's war" which was a strategic political tactic adopted during this period (Morobe interview, 2009). The programme was often prefaced with politically overt music and revolutionary freedom songs aimed at stoking the listeners' emotions. For example, on Sunday evening 1 August 1986, the presenter gave an overview of the state of politics in South Africa following PW Botha's declaration of the State of Emergency, the escalation of repression and violence, the detention of thousands of political activists and the disappearance of many others. Addressing the listeners as "compatriots" and "countrymen", the presenter explained that the State of Emergency was declared "because of our liberation struggle that has rendered the apartheid system unworkable and South Africa ungovernable" (MCA 8, RF programme). In a militant and uncompromising tone the presenter makes a direct appeal to the listeners to intensify the struggle:

> This is the time, countrymen, that we must escalate our offensive on all fronts to destroy the apartheid system once and for all. In view of the desperate acts […] we must intensify our political and armed offensive on all fronts to seize power from the racist authorities (MCA 8, RF programme).

The presenter reminds the listeners of the political programme for the year 1986 as clearly outlined by the ANC president, Oliver Tambo, in his call to the nation. After a short musical interlude the presenter plays the recorded speech by Tambo entitled "An offensive on mass resistance". The speech makes an appeal for total civil disobedience, for an organised campaign leading to nationwide refusal to pay all taxes and rent, for class boycotts in schools and universities, consumer boycotts and the withdrawal of labour from the mines, factories, white homes and farms. In the latter part of the speech Tambo unequivocally dwells on the militant nature of the struggle:

> We must multiply the formation of people's militia everywhere so as to meet more effectively the assault by the enemy's armed forces and the treacherous vigilantes and *impis* which they employ. Our people's army, strengthened by the emerging popular militia, must intensify and spread its armed actions across the country. Let us strengthen further our underground organisations and emerge from every campaign […] (MCA 8, RF programme).

After yet another interlude of martial music, the programme goes on to elaborate on Tambo's message and to give a more concrete outline of the practical campaigns that the audiences should participate in. Two voices, a

199

male and a female, present the programme in the form of a dialogue, their parts separated only by the sounds of gunfire and explosions, as well as by the martial music, to evoke a fighting or militaristic mood. The male voice further amplifies the message:

> The time has come to take the battle to white areas […]. The ANC calls on all workers in factories, mines, farms and suburbs to form underground units and combat groups and take such actions as sabotage in our places of work. Disrupt the enemy's oil, energy, transport, communication and other vital systems (MCA 8, RF programme).

After a short interlude of another massive explosion, the female voice interjects, calling upon all the people opposed to apartheid to spread the consumer boycott to all areas of the country and to organise well-planned demonstrations in the white suburbs and town centres. The male voice then cuts in, urging more violent means:

> The time has come to carry out systematic attacks against the army and police and the so-called defence units in the white areas. We must start organising well-planned raids on armouries and arm dumps of the army, police, farmers and gun shops to secure arms for our units (MCA 8, RF programme).

This section is followed by the sound of automatic gunfire to underline more strongly the point just made. Always more diplomatic and less militant than her male counterpart, the female presenter appeals to "white democrats" to take part in mass action in white areas in cooperation with the democratic movement. She encourages them to use their anti-apartheid organisations to win as many whites as possible to the side of freedom and non-racialism. More pointedly, she urges white activists: "You must intensify campaigns against conscription, repression, the tri-cameral system, racist education and the mass carnage by the army and police in the townships" (MCA 8, RF programme). To those serving in the apartheid parliament while declaring to be democrats, her advice is that they should abandon the illusion that they could change the system from within and join the mass democratic movement. She concludes her segment by impelling those serving in the South African army and police force to "refuse to shoot your fellow countrymen", to turn their guns against their superiors, and to throw in their lot with the cadres of the ANC and the underground units of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*. The concluding line of the programme is the resounding line "The time to act is now!", followed by the sound of gunfire (Ibid). The main objective behind programmes such as "A Call to Battle" was to galvanise militant support for

the ANC's and MK's campaigns and to heighten the internal revolt against the apartheid state.

Music was at the heart of Radio Freedom's broadcasts. Lindiwe Zulu asserts: "Almost every phase of our struggle had its own kinds of songs. So, all the songs were composed to fit into a particular phase of the struggle" (*Amandla* 2002). Manala Manzini, former MK freedom fighter, asserts: "The more radical the political situation was becoming [in the post-1976 period and especially in the 1980s], the more militant the songs" (*Amandla* 2002). Manzini continues: "These songs really reached Soweto; they reached South Africa, because these songs were then played by Radio Freedom. And people then listened to Radio Freedom. And in no time these songs were being sung in the streets of our country" (*Amandla* 2002).

I have shown the different ways in which music formed part of Radio Freedom's programming. In addition, the station featured, by the early 1970s, a programme called "Music on Saturday" every Saturday night immediately after the news. This was "a pseudo-relaxation programme" which featured the music that had some revolutionary or liberatory undertones. South African choral music was featured on this programme, as did the Russian classical performer Dmitri Shostakovich's 7th Symphony, which paid tribute to the defenders of Leningrad during the German siege during World War II.[12] One feature looked at the African American songstress Billy Holliday and other black artists, and the other featured Gideon Nxumalo, black artists and jazz. Political commentary on the music as well as on the composer or the performer formed part of this programme. This was a music programme partly aimed at entertainment and, as such, commentary was kept to a minimum and more time was allocated to the music itself.[13]

Radio Freedom and freedom songs, 1970s–1980s

Now that I have dealt with the music composed and performed by professional artists, this last section of the paper will provide a brief discussion and analysis of two of the most popular struggle songs (sung in Zulu) during the last two decades of the apartheid system. These are songs that were sung by rebellious "comrades" in the dusty township streets and barren rural villages as well as in the ANC camps outside the country. The singing of freedom songs "was often a means of uniting those who faced a dangerous and powerful enemy, and such

---

[12] Dmitri Shostakovich (born 1906, died 1975) was a Soviet Russian composer and one of the most celebrated composers of the 20th century. The 7th Symphony was his greatest and most famous composition, officially claimed as a representation of the people of Leningrad's brave resistance to the Nazi occupiers and an authentic piece of art at a time when morale needed boosting.

[13] LA-UFH: Report of the Radio Unit and the Propaganda Committee, ANC-London Internal Propaganda 1973-1985, Box 7, Folder 3, dated 6/6/1973.

music stretched back at least to the first use of '*Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*' by the African National Congress in the second decade of the twentieth century" (Gunner 2008:37).

From a stylistic point of view, freedom songs had their origins in choral music as a dominant genre that merged the regional singing traditions with Christian hymns. Most of the songs had simple melodies and were sung *a cappella*. They were often folk songs upon which political lyrics were adapted. Even as political songs, they were very flexible and displayed the capacity to "collect a new line or phrase to amplify an idea held in the song, or add a different thought, or piece of news" (Gunner 2008:39). These songs were composed and sung in groups and often mirrored changing political conditions and outlooks. The two songs that I discuss below probably originated in the camps of South African exiles in countries like Zambia and Tanzania. Liz Gunner (2008:41) contends: "Cultural competitions were a mark of the life of bases that together made up a single camp and competitions for the best song were frequent occurrences."

Discussing the origins and potency of Zuma's favourite song "*Umshini Wami*", Gunner views cadres who constantly and silently moved in and out of the country as a link between the exile camps and political resistance at home. These freedom fighters served as pivotal conduits of revolutionary songs from the frontline into the country. Even more important in the transmission and circulation of struggle songs, I argue, was Radio Freedom which, as shown above, had established listening communities within the country during the 1970s and 1980s. The following song was among the most popular struggle songs at the time:

(Stanza 1)

Sobashiya' bazali ekhaya	We shall leave our parents behind
Sa vuma, sa ngena kwamanye amazwe	We agreed and we entered other countries
Lapho kungazi khona ubaba no mama	Where neither father nor mother had ever been before
Silandela inkululeko	As we pursue freedom

(Stanza 2)

Sobashiya abafowethu	We shall leave our siblings behind
Sa vuma sa ngena kwamanye amazwe	We agreed to go to other countries
Lapho kungazi khona ubaba no mama	Where neither father nor mother had ever been before
S'landela inkululeko	As we pursue freedom

202

(Stanza 3)
Sithi salani, salani, salani ekhaya   We are saying goodbye,

goodbye,
goodbye to everyone

at
home
Sa ngena kwamanye amazwe   As we entered other countries
Lapho kungazi khona ubaba no mama   Where neither father nor mother

had
ever been before
Silandela inkululeko   As we pursue freedom

This is one of many freedom songs that expressed the anxieties and aspirations of those fighting for freedom in South Africa. The narrative of the song speaks specifically to the personal sacrifices made by young black men and women in pursuit of the ideal of freedom. It is about their leaving behind the comforts of their own homes, the protection of their parents and the company of their siblings. It is about their courage to embark on journeys into exile or foreign countries unknown to their parents, journeys that were full of perils and uncertainties. This song, according to Nomboniso Gasa (2011), originated "from black youth expressing pain and resolve to go away … [to be] trained and bring back bazookas to free their land and people".

The final song is the very popular "*Siyaya ePitoli*" (RF346, Track 10):

Siyaya ePitoli   We are going to Pretoria
Tambo siyaya ePitoli,   Tambo, we are going to Pretoria
Siyaya soyinyova   We are going to cause mayhem
Pasopa we mabhunu   Watch out, you Boers!

Short and cryptic, "*Siyaya ePitoli*" was no less symbolic and potent than the previous song discussed above. This one is about the yearning and resolve of the young fighters to take the apartheid regime head on at the very centre of power, the Union Buildings in Pretoria. It appeals to OR Tambo, ANC President and Commander-in-Chief of MK, to give them a go-ahead (and probably to supply them with the weapons) to take over the government by military force. At the same time, the song sends a stern warning to the Boers – meaning supporters of the apartheid regime – to watch out as the

writing is on the wall. As archival material so cogently illustrates, this song, together with other struggle songs, was played on Radio Freedom. Thus the freedom songs that were being sung in the camps beyond South Africa's borders were not only brought into the country by the freedom fighters who infiltrated the country but also by Radio Freedom which facilitated their circulation throughout the length and breadth of the country. These songs became very popular and were influential in mass political gatherings, protest marches and celebrations as well as on occasions of political funerals within the country, particularly during the turbulent 1980s.

Conclusion

Throughout its history the ANC has always recognised music as an important medium for communicating the experiences, feelings and aspirations of its supporters and uniting them for a common purpose. Radio Freedom – the station that was formed by the ANC and its allies to counter the apartheid state's propaganda messages and to articulate an alternative political vision – also became a major transmitter of political music and freedom songs. Apart from programmes that were dedicated to music for purposes of entertainment, different types of music were integrated into various programmes for purposes of giving special effect or to underscore particular messages. Music, in other words, was inextricably interwoven with the political messages transmitted to audiences by Radio Freedom. Although it was not the only source, it became a major conduit for the circulation of freedom songs that originated in the camps in exile. These songs became a common feature of mass protest meetings inside South Africa especially in the 1980s.

References

Primary sources

Gasa, N. 2011. This Song Gives Voice to Our History. *The Sunday Independent*, 12 May.
Interview with Nomboniso Gasa, conducted by Sekibakiba Peter Lekgoathi, at Observatory, Johannesburg, July 2011.
Interview with Raymond Suttner, conducted by Sekibakiba Peter Lekgoathi at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 12 February 2009.
Interview with Christian Seleke and Ronnie Kasrils, conducted by Karel Roskam in Lusaka, 1 August 1986, Mayibuye Centre Archives (henceforth MCA) 8, Audiocassette 1204, University of the Western Cape.
MCA 8, Radio Freedom Programme, 1 August 1986, Audiocassette 1201.

Secondary sources

Andersson, M. 1981, *Music in the Mix: The Story of South African Popular Music.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Ballantine, C. 1984. *Music and Its Social Meanings.* New York: Gordon and Breach.

Ballantine, C. 1993. *Marabi Nights: early South African Jazz and Vaudeville.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Bernstein, R. 1999. *Memory against Forgetting: Memoirs from a Life in South African Politics, 1938–1964.* London: Viking.

Carver, R. 2000. "Broadcasting and Political transition: Rwanda and Beyond", In R. Fardon and G. Furniss (eds.), *African Broadcast Cultures: Radio in Transition.* Oxford: James Currey, Harare: Baobab, Cape Town: David Philip, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 188–197.

Callinicos, L. 2004. *Oliver Tambo: Beyond the Engeli Mountains.* Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.

Clingman, L. 1998. *Bram Fischer, Afrikaner Revolutionary* Cape Town: David Philip Publishers and Mayibuye Books.

Coplan, D. 1985. *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Coplan, D. 1993. *In the Time of Cannibals: the Music World of South Africa's Basotho Migrants.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Coplan, D. 2005. God Rock Africa: Thoughts on Politics in Popular Black Performance in South Africa. *African Studies*, 64 (1), 9–27.

Davis, S.R. 2009. The African National Congress, its Radio, its Allies and Exile. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 35(2), 349–373.

Erlmann, V. 1991. *African Stars: Studies in Black South African Performance.* Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.

Erlmann, V. 1996. *Nightsong: Performance, Power, and Practice in South Africa (with an Introduction by Joseph Shabalala).* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Erlmann, V. 1999. *Music, Modernity and the Global Imagination: South Africa and the West.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Gevisser, M. 2007. *The Dream Deferred: Thabo Mbeki.* Johannesburg and Cape Town: Jonathan Ball.

Gqibitole 2002. Contestations of Tradition in Xhosa Radio Drama under Apartheid. *English Studies in Africa* 45 (2), 33–45.

Gunner, L. 2000. Wrestling with the Present, Beckoning to the Past: Contemporary Zulu Radio Drama. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26 (2), 223–237.

Gunner, L. 2002. Resistant Medium: The Voices of Zulu Radio Drama in the 1970s. *Theatre Research International*, 27(3), 259–274.

205

Gunner, L. 2005. Resistant Medium: The Voices of Zulu Radio Drama under Apartheid: The Case of Alexius Buthelezi. *Social Identities*, 11(2), 161–169.

Gunner, L. 2008. Jacob Zuma, the Social Body and the Unruly Power of Song. *African Affairs* 108/430, 27–48.

James, D. 1999. *Songs of Women Migrants: Performance and Identity in South Africa.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Hayman, G. & Tomaselli, R. 1989. Broadcasting Technology as an Ideological Terrain: Some Concepts, Assumptions and Problems, in Tomaselli et al. *Addressing the Nation: Currents of Power in South Africa.* Cape Town: Anthropos.

James, W. 2000. The Multiple Voices of Sudanese Airspace", In Fardon and Furniss (eds.), *African Broadcast Cultures: Radio in Transition.* Oxford: James Currey, Harare: Baobab, Cape Town: David Philip, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 198–215.

Kasrils, R. 1998. *Armed and Dangerous: From Undercover Struggle to Freedom.* Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball.

Kathrada, A. 1999. *Letters from Robben Island.* Cape Town: Zebra Books.

Kathrada, A. 2004. *Memoirs.* Cape Town: Zebra Books.

Lekgoathi, S.P. 2010. The African National Congress's Radio Freedom and its Audiences in Apartheid South Africa 1963-1991. *Journal of African Media Studies* 2 (2), 139–153.

Ligaga, D., Moyo, D. & Gunner, L. (eds.) 2011. *Radio in Africa.* Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Maharaj, M. (ed.) 2001. *Reflections in Prison.* Cape Town: Zebra Books and Robben Island Museum.

Mandela, N.R. 1994. *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela.* Randburg: Macdonald Purnell.

Mhlaba, R. 2001. *Raymond Mhlaba's Personal Memoirs: Reminiscing from Rwanda and Uganda (narrated to Thembeka Mufamadi).* Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council; Robben Island: Robben Island Museum.

Mhlambi, T.N. 2009. The Early Years of Black Radio Broadcasting in South Africa: A Critical Reflection on the Making of Ukhozi FM. MA Dissertation, University of Cape Town.

Mosia, L, Riddle, C. and Zaffiro, J. 1994. From Revolutionary to Regime Radio: Three Decades of Nationalist Broadcasting in Southern Africa. *Africa Media Review*, 8(1), 1–24.

Ngculu, J. 2009. *The Honour to Serve: Recollections of an Umkhonto Soldier.* Claremont: David Philip.

Pongweni, A.J.C. 1981. *Songs that Won the Liberation War.* Zimbabwe: College Press.

Richards, P. 2000. Local Radio Conflict Moderation: The Case of Sierra Leone, in Fardon and Furniss (eds.), *African Broadcast Cultures: Radio in Transition.* Oxford: James Currey, Harare: Baobab, Cape Town: David Philip, Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 216–229.

Sampson, A. 1999. *Mandela: The Authorised Biography.* London: Harper Collins Publishers.

Shubin, V. 1999. *ANC: The View from Moscow.* Cape Town: Mayibuye Centre.

Sisulu, E. 1997. *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: A Biography.* Cape Town: David Philip.

Sisulu, E. 2001. *I Will Go Singing.* Cape Town: Robben Island Museum.

Sisulu, E. 2002. *In Our Lifetime: Walter and Albertina Sisulu – A Biography.* Claremont, Cape Town: David Philip.

Soley, L.C. 1989. *Radio Warfare: OSS and CIA Subversive Propaganda.* New York.

South African Democracy Education Trust 2004. *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* 1 & 2. Cape Town: Zebra Press.

South African Democracy Education Trust 2008. *The Road to Democracy in South Africa* 3. Pretoria: Unisa Press.

Suttner, R. 2001. *Inside Apartheid's Prison: Notes and Letters of Struggle.* Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press; Melbourne and New York: Ocean Press.

Suttner, R. 2008. *The ANC Underground in South Africa to 1976: A Social and Historical Study.* Johannesburg: Jacana Media.

Thörn, H. 2009. *Anti-Apartheid and the Emergence of a Global Civil Society.* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Turok, B. 2003. *Nothing but the Truth.* Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball.

Van der Veur, P. 2002. Broadcasting and Political Reform, in G. Hyden *et al.* eds., *Media and Democracy in Africa.* New Brunswick & London.

Wa Kinyatti, M. 1980. *Thunder from the Mountains: Mau Mau Patriotic Songs.* London: Zed Press.

The histories of children's futures

Christina Landman
University of South Africa

Introduction

During 2011 interviews were conducted with 110 young people in Dull-stroom-Emnotweni. The township in which these interviews were conducted has been known as Sakhelwe, a township that came into being after forced removals in 1980. The people of Sakhelwe do not want their suburb to be known by this name anymore, and therefore reference here will be made only to Dullstroom-Emnotweni.

Of the interviewees, 50 were learners from Mphilonhle Primary School. They were between 10 and 14 years of age, and in grades 5 to 7. By means of a structured questionnaire they were invited to tell the stories of their future dreams in terms of career employment.

Another 60 young people were interviewed, most of whom had, since leaving secondary school, been unemployed. Again, by means of a structured questionnaire, the youngsters were interviewed on their histories of unemployment, and their expectations for the future.

This paper will present the research findings of these interviews, and make a short comparison between the expectations of the primary school learners and those of young people who have been unemployed for a period of time after finishing their schooling.

The career dreams of primary school learners

Augur, Blackhurst and Wahl[1] have found that elementary-aged children focus in their career expectations either on social prestige occupations with a high income (eg doctors) or on fantasy careers with a high visibility (eg actresses/actors or TV presenters), and that these choices are gender-specific. The learners interviewed at Mphilonhle Primary School in Dullstroom-Emnotweni are underprivileged children living in conditions of poverty, HIV infection, drugs and liquor. Also, there are almost no health or social services in the township. There is an absence of doctors, nurses and social workers, not to mention lawyers and other professional service providers.

---

[1] Richard W Augur, Anne E Blackhurst, Kay Herting Wahl, "The development of elementary-aged children's career aspirations and expectations", in *Professional School Counselling* Vol 8, Issue 4 (2005), accessed through Google Scholar.

Interesting enough, the learners opted not for fantasy careers as is to be expected from their age group, but for careers from which the community will benefit in terms of health and social services.

But first the parameters and findings of the research will be given.

Ten male and 40 female learners were interviewed. There was no deliberate choice in this regard, but more girls responded to the invitation to participate than boys responded. Half of the learners were from Grade 7, a majority of whom were 12 years old. There were also 13 and 14 year olds in Grade 7.

To determine the social context of the interviewees, they were asked about the jobs in which their mothers were employed. Of the 50 children, 24 (almost half, 48%) indicated that their mothers were working. From my knowledge of the township, I will infer that these mothers are not working, not because their husbands are supporting them, but because they can find no employment. I once asked one of the elders of the Uniting Reformed Church about the extent of the unemployment in the township and he answered: "There is so little work, not even the women have work!"

The mothers of the learners, then, who have found employment, are mainly employed in low-paying jobs. They are domestic workers, cleaners, kitchen workers, shop assistants, or farm workers. Two of them are teachers; one nurse and two mothers work for the municipality.

Another question invited learners to talk about their fathers and the work they were doing. Only 16 of the 50 learners (a third, 32%) indicated that their fathers were employed, while half of the mothers were working. Ten learners told the interviewer that both their mother and father were unemployed.

The fathers were employed as builders, drivers, security guards, garden workers, farm workers, (street) cleaners and waiters. One was a policeman. In one case a learner said: "My father is educated."

All of the learners indicated that they belonged to a church, a majority (24) to the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), a large African Independent Church. Nine belonged to the Uniting Reformed Church in SA (previously known as the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa), three more to the Lutheran Church and another two to the "Alliance", that is the Presbyterian Church. The rest belonged to independent churches with interesting names, such as the Sunpower Church, the Elohim Bible Church, and Hallo Him Bible Church.

To explore the world in which the learners live, questions were asked on their activities before and after school, and what their favourite TV programmes were. It seems that most of them wash before they go to school, and after school do homework and clean the house. There do not seem to be many sport and cultural activities in which to participate after school. Their favourite TV programmes are the children's programmes on TV2, including

Thakalane Sesame and a variety of cartoons, as well as the late afternoon "soapies", including *7de Laan*. About a quarter of the learners do not have a TV at home because they do not have access to electricity.

Although this does not paint a picture of children growing up in an intellectually stimulating environment, the majority of the learners interviewed indicated that Maths and English were their most favourite subjects at school.

Then came the questions about the future.

At first the children spoke about what they were going to do after matric. One needs to be reminded again that these children are between 10 and 14 years of age. Without being prompted, a majority of the children (20, 40%) said that they wanted go to university after finishing school. Five more would go to college. One wanted to go to university to study to become an actress which makes one wonder whether "university" is a reality for children who grow up without access to tertiary education, and even without the technology – such as computers -- to lead them to these facilities. One other girl mentioned that she wanted to become a famous radio presenter. All the other children envisaged that they would study further.

What, then, do you want to study? What do you want to become one day? To these questions, as mentioned before, the children gave surprising answers. As would be expected of their age, they did not choose the fantasy and high income jobs, except for a few exceptions. They chose contextual careers through which the community would be served. Some wanted to become police officers, to arrest those who steal and protect the people of the township against crime. Others wanted to become nurses or teachers, because they wanted the people of the township to cope, and to be educated. Quite a few aimed to become social workers, to help poor people and children who do not have parents. Ten of them, all girls, wanted to become doctors to help sick people, pregnant women, and those hurt in accidents. A boy and a girl wanted to become lawyers to help the community and their country. "I want to become a scientist and discover different types of chemicals," one said. And another wanted to "study for engineer, then become a fitter and turner because it is a good job and not many people take that job."

And, of course, there were the odd fantasy careers. "I want to become an actress, because I want to see myself on TV." "I am going to study to be a police, and become a gospel artist because I want to be famous." "I want to become a pilot because I want to fly with an aeroplane" (girl). "One day I want to be an archaeologist because I like to see the world and learn more." "I will be a geologist and have a business of my own." "I will be a famous radio presenter and it will be easy to communicate with other people and learn things from them." "I am going to sing and become a doctor to help people who have HIV and AIDS."

The career expectations of post-school youth

Far removed from the dreams of the primary school learners, the under-privileged youngsters of Dullstroom-Emnotweni are living out the realities of being educated but unemployed. Sixty young people between the age of 15 and 35 were stopped in the street and invited to be interviewed on their expectations of the future. Of them 17 (28%) were between the ages of 15 and 19, 20 (33%) between 20 and 25 years, 13 (22%) between 26 and 29 years, and 10 (17%) between 30 and 35 years of age.

There were 23 (38%) men and 37 (62%) women.

A slight majority of the interviewees – as said, chosen randomly – had finished matric (34, 57%). The rest (25, 43%) went to school at least up to Grade 10 but did not finish Grade 12. All of them attended the only secondary school in the township, Siyifunile Secondary School.

Of the 60 interviewees, 50 were unemployed, and had been unemployed since leaving school, some already with 20 years of unemployment. None of them had tertiary education.

The ten that were working were employed in low-income jobs. One was a waitress (R900 per month); two were working for the Independent Electoral Commission (R1 500 per month); three were domestic workers (between R600 and R1 900 per month); one was a driver (R1 600 per month); the rest were in the spa enterprise, for which Dullstroom-Emnotweni is famous, earning between R900 and R3 000 per month. It seems, then, that the youth have not moved beyond the low-paid jobs of their parents.

The initial aim of the research was to determine the role of religion in providing for the needs and expectations of the youth in the township. They were therefore asked to prioritise their needs and expectations in terms of the tangible and intangible assets of religion. The reason why "religion" was singled out as a potential needs provider is the fact, as mentioned above, that churches are the only support structures in the township in the absence of health and social facilities.

The University of Cape Town, under the leadership of Professor Jim Cochrane, has developed the African Religious Health Assets Programme (ARHAP)[2] that defines religious health assets (RHAs) as "locally embedded religious images, values, practices, people and organizations that might issue an action to heal ... through local and translocal agency". As religion's intangible assets, the questionnaire – following the definitions of the ARHAP[3] – mentions resilience, health-seeking behaviour, motivation, responsibility, a

---

[2] Here we were following the categories created by the African Religious Health Assets Programme, run at the University of Cape Town with Prof Jim Cochrane, www.arhap.uct.ac.za.

[3] In 2012 ARHAP repositioned as IRHAP, the International Religious Health Assets Programme.

sense of duty, care, resistance, boundaries (norms/morals), sense of meaning, belonging, energy, trust, hope, love and faith. There were positive body language reactions when motivation, care, belonging, hope, love and faith were mentioned as assets to which the youth might have access. They felt uncomfortable with assets such as responsibility, boundaries and duty, probably because they felt that religion placed too much emphasis on these. They were totally amazed that resistance and health-seeking behaviour were religion's business at all. A concept such as resilience was unknown to them; neither did they associate it with the assets of a church.

All in all there were very few stories told about the interviewees' experiences with religion's intangible assets. They knew religion provided norms and morals, but apparently they have never turned to religion for motivation and resistance, or even for sense making, love and care. Some expressed their disappointment that religious institutions did not support them in the recent service delivery uprisings. Actually, a majority of the young interviewees were charmed by the idea that religion, resistance and politics might be related.

Christianity is the predominant religion in the township, and church buildings range from informal structures to fairly strong rectangular buildings. There are mission churches and independent churches. There is a mosque in the "white" town that is only visited by the four Indian families who have businesses in town. Therefore, when the questionnaire referred to the tangible assets of religion, it referred to "the church".

The interviewees were asked to talk about their needs for the following (and their need for the church to assist them in these needs): trained paramedics, hospital, HIV counselling, home visitations, faith healing, traditional healing, care groups, youth and women's fellowships, choir, education, sacraments, rituals, rites of passage, funerals, connections and leadership skills.[4]

The interviewees showed great enthusiasm towards all these tangible assets that the church theoretically should be able to provide. Incidentally, they showed resistance to traditional healing and claimed that they never visited a traditional healer (although other research which is still being planned may give a different picture). It is also suspected that, when "religion research" is being conducted, interviewees want to give the "right" answer and not an honest one.

Nevertheless, this part of the research evoked an array of stories. "I live in a four-roomed house with my girlfriend, my children, my brothers and sisters, my mother and my grandmother." There are thus four generations in one house. "I live in a four-wall (RDP) house with no water or electricity."

---

[4]   In reality, of course, the churches cannot provide in these needs because it is as poor as the community in which it functions. However, this research has inspired and guided FBOs (Faith Based Organisations) to get involved in the township.

"Please give me a job". "There are no computers in the township, how can I enrol at Unisa?" "Where can I get money to study?"

Eventually, the 60 interviewees prioritised their needs. Firstly, they need job opportunities. Secondly, they need further education and skills training. Thirdly, they need HIV counselling and home visitations for those who are HIV affected. They also need a youth centre with a soccer field and a hospital, and they need leadership skills.

Conclusion

The youth's realities of unemployment, lack of housing, recreational and health facilities, and massive HIV infection (47,2% of the people in the township are reportedly HIV infected) are far removed from the dreams of the young learners of Mphilonhle Primary.

While the young learners fantasise about becoming doctors and social workers, the youth find themselves unable to access tertiary education, and while remaining unemployed they are ultimately ... forgotten.