

## Book Reviews

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## Boekresensies

### Rock art: Southern Africa's cultural treasure

**J.D. Lewis-Williams, *San Rock Art: A Jacana Pocket Guide***

Jacana Media, Auckland Park, 2011

157 pp

ISBN 978-1-43140-100-0

R99.95

Rock art is found on every continent, but southern Africa possesses some of the finest examples. David Lewis-Williams, the greatest authority on South Africa's rock art, here presents a fresh and inspiring account.

His little book begins the story with the central figure in South Africa's coat of arms. The figure, loosely derived from the Linton Panel, is shown clasping hands with its mirror image. The story is interesting because it tells a tale of an incredibly difficult procedure: the removal of the panel, which is over two meters long, from a farm in the Eastern Cape in 1917–1918, transporting it to Cape Town, and from it constructing a new identity for a free and democratic country more than 80 years later. Since then, the panels on either side of this one have greatly deteriorated. They were left on the rock face back in the Eastern Cape. The figure in the coat of arms is missing his erect penis, his arrow bag, the red line with arrow dots he stands on, and his facial lines. All these are significant in what they present of the San social order, though perhaps insignificant in what they represent in San cultural tradition.

The extraordinary thing is that we now know that southern African rock art is among the oldest remnants of symbolic thought among all humanity. We now realise that it is an astounding example of beauty and design, created by hunter-gatherers of the subcontinent past from whom (some argue) all humanity is descended. Southern Africa has more than 15 000 rock art sites, and probably many more to be discovered. Each has its own richness of form, and since 1967, each has had an added dimension: the recognition that what is depicted in the art is out of proportion to what is understood from its portrayal. In that year, three publications highlighted the fact that the art is focused on the eland. The eland is a relatively rare animal in its occurrence on the ground, but it is very important symbolically.

The earliest representational art in the world is that of Apollo 11 Cave in southern Namibia, produced about 27 000 years ago. The earliest symbolic representations in the world are from Blombos Cave on the South African Indian Ocean coast. These are pieces of engraved ochre made more than 70 000 years ago. Lewis-Williams puts these objects in historical context according to changes in the interpretation of rock art since the nineteenth century. Each period of consensus, he argues, was interrupted by a crisis of conflict. Until 1874 the consensus was of simple, childlike people producing art but doing so with limited understandings of the world. Then in 1874 came the magnificent work of linguist W.H.I. Bleek and his sister-in-law Lucy Lloyd on the Xam San language and folklore, the explanations of rock art given by informants to colonial administrator J.M. Orpen, and Bishop John Colenso's belief that God exists within all human beings, however different their "racial" origins. These

Western scholars came to see the art differently, and to see in it religious ideas and a wider religiosity among San artists. Yet Bleek died only a year later, and for nearly the next hundred years another consensus pervaded. Through the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, experts presumed the art was mainly secular, despite their assumption (unlike Colenso's) of a common origin of all peoples. In 1967, there appeared to be a return to the notion that rock art depicted extraordinary understandings: those of the sacred, religious belief, and interpretation through ethnographic analogy. The following decades heralded battles between functionalists and structuralists in social anthropology and archaeology, and between feminists and non-feminists, each re-interpreting the cognitive system they assumed to be at the root of San art.

Lewis-Williams often re-interprets rock art according to principles inherent in San ideology. Often, he overdoes this, as here in seemingly presuming a correspondence between beliefs in the powers of spirits and explanations of art through trance performance and other spiritual notions. While I agree with him to a great extent, he does stretch the limits of this view in his arguments for a neurological basis of the art. He is correct that there are great similarities in the art, over a very long period, and in that it certainly depicts spiritual rather than mundane activities. Exactly how far to go with this, though, is still a matter of debate. Intriguingly, Lewis-Williams remarks that the paintings themselves could be of as much ritual significance as the performance of a trance dance.

He concludes with a discussion of what he regards as four stages in the production and consumption of rock art. The first stage is that of acquiring imagery, such as through shamans going into trance and hallucinating visions that can become the images in rock art. The second stage discusses the manufacture of paint. This can include, for example, the incorporation of the blood and fat of the eland into the paint, as well as the sense of painting as part of the sacred nature of the art. The third stage is the making of rock paintings, in itself a complex activity with nuances of meaning in belief in the abstract, as well as specific beliefs about power in images and what this power can do. The fourth stage is that of art as a thing in itself, and not merely a depiction of something whose essence lies elsewhere. While this may seem odd, nevertheless it does offer a clear vision of art as containing its own creative being. Art then literally is "living"; it is not just paint on a piece of rock.

All this returns us to the beginning. Rock art is something which (in President Mbeki's words) enables South Africans to "make a commitment ... to respect all languages and cultures and to oppose racism, sexism, chauvinism and genocide" (p 136). Lewis-Williams' *San Rock Art* is produced cheaply and in small format. It has relatively few pictures (17 figures, to be precise), and there is very little detail about specific paintings or even the places they are located. However, perhaps because of this, *San Rock Art* is one of the most thought-provoking of the many books on rock art. Its emphasis on imagery and the sacred is predictable, because that is what Lewis-Williams does. Its beauty is in its utter simplicity and in putting the interpretation of rock art into historical context, even since the creation of South Africa's coat of arms in the year 2000. I recommend it not only as a light read, but also as one with profound insight into South Africa's past.

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### Transnational written cultures, local challenges

A. Delmas and N. Penn (eds), *Written Culture in a Colonial Context: Africa and the Americas, 1500–1900*

UCT Press, Cape Town, 2011

364 pp

ISBN 978-1-91989-526-0

R250.00

*Written Culture in a Colonial Context* connects the evidence of written culture with historical issues of broad social and cultural significance. Bringing together the histories of written culture and European expansion from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, it lifts studies of literacy, writing, books and reading into the realms of transnational and interdisciplinary scholarship, foregrounding the largely overlooked regions of Africa and the Americas. The fifteen chapters that make up this seminal publication are so rich in detail that it makes little sense to provide a summative overview. It seems instead more useful to address some of its methodological features and to identify the challenges for historians who wish to carry forward this kind of research in South Africa. In doing so, I will draw on my overall impressions of the book using specific examples where these are relevant.

Following Isabel Hofmeyr's excellent and synoptic foreword, co-editor Adrien Delmas introduces the book's five parts and calls attention to the material dimensions of writing not just as the bedrock of historical studies, but as a recent focus especially of cultural historians. That documentation is also the object of history, revealing the "history of men, ideas, situations, places and the relationships that they produce" (p 91), echoes across the chapters. The significant shift from the idea of writing to that of inscription, which extended written cultures (probably better than "expressions of written culture") to include rock art, pictograms as well as oral performance as forms of proto-writing, breaks down such dichotomies as "civility/barbarism" and "writing/orality" (p xx). This now brings several cultures, previously thought to have been without writing and studied ethnologically only, into the "disciplinary boundaries of history" (p 210). Such methodological breakthroughs are supported ironically by the newer writing cultures, accompanied by their own benefits and anxieties.

The new technologies of digitisation, increasing access to online archival records, combined curiously with tougher intellectual property regimes have heightened awareness of the materiality of historical records and written cultures. But lurking behind the investigation of their roles in colonial contexts may also be concerns about the future of historiography as the permanence of records and traditional patterns of their production, circulation and consumption seem less clear in a digital world.

Nonetheless, excavating early modern writing technologies and written cultures can benefit from their twenty-first century versions. Translations and transcriptions occur more quickly now as a result of improved communication methods such as e-mail, listservs, blogs, social media, and other scholar-friendly internet features and electronic resources. Databases compiled from archival records can be mined from one's desk, often eliminating costly research visits. Electronic copies of documents can be ordered from research libraries and archives across the world using online inventories and payment schemes, and so forth.

Applying some of the successes of these developments, the editors skilfully intersperse chapters translated from Spanish and French with those written in English, making the narrative cohesive and appealing, and carrying the reader back and forth across colonial Africa and the Americas. More telling is that in the chapters of Part One alone, the early modern written cultures of areas in North Africa, Mexico, Chile and Argentina are brought together. This approach is a standard feature of the other four parts of the book, and breaks away from the nationalist outlook of the multi-volume book histories published over the past few decades. They may solicit funding more easily, but such histories tend to overlook the ways in which writing, books, letters, diaries, readers, and writers travel across languages, cultures, countries, and continents.

How the objects carrying writings shape their meaning is another methodological feature demonstrated in some of the chapters. In one example, a Cochimi Californian Indian hides the letter he is carrying behind a stone before eating a piece of bread intended for the letter's recipient. When he is accused after the reader finds no bread, the Indian replies that the "speaking" letter was lying because it could not see him from behind the stone. A locally relevant example is how Dutch publishers re-packaged Peter Kolb's letters to a network of correspondents in Europe about the Cape Khoikhoi. The resulting book presented "travel accounts as being more scientific than literary in their form and content" (p 179) and changed the way Kolb's *Caput Bonae Spei Hodiernum* was read and understood.

This brings us to the challenge that questions and themes of transnationalism in book history or print culture studies require stronger local engagement. Recent initiatives that brought together committed scholars include special sessions at South African History conferences, as well as a couple of seminars and conferences arranged by internal and external institutions. This book, for example, is the product of successful collaboration between the French Institute of South Africa and the University of Cape Town. A half dozen special issues of journals, a few chapters in books, a couple of monographs, and a forthcoming reader on southern Africa's print, text, and book cultures account for the small but growing local scholarship. There is, however, still no institutional home for the research and tuition of book and print culture studies in South Africa.

Some departments of History and literature feature relevant themes as special topics, and even offer postgraduate studies but these are driven by individuals instead of curricula. Despite the initial plans for a research-driven Centre for the Book at the National Library of South Africa, its focus remains presentist and development-oriented. One way forward could be to establish a few regional centres in Africa, or to connect a network of South African book and print culture scholars to existing centres with broader but germane research themes. One example is the Africa Codicology Institute; another is the Institute of Humanities in Africa (HUMA) located at the University of Cape Town that also hosts the Timbouctou Manuscripts Project. There are other possibilities. Transnationalism, as this book demonstrates both practically and conceptually, evinces what the future for book and print culture studies in South Africa could be. A dedicated research centre and curriculum inclusion would secure it.

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### An account of the rise of the Bafokeng

**B. Mbenga and A. Manson, “People of the Dew”: A History of the Bafokeng of Phokeng-Rustenburg Region, South Africa, from Early Times to 2000**

Jacana Media, Auckland Park, 2010

240 pp

ISBN 978-1-77009-825-1

R225.00

The Bafokeng, whose capital Phokeng is situated adjacent to Rustenburg, have been enriched by the platinum mines developed on the farms they acquired in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today their mineral-generated wealth is being invested in extensive residential, commercial, environmental, tourism and educational projects underway and planned for implementation into the mid-twenty-first century. A large display of this vision may be viewed in the foyer of the Royal Bafokeng Administration headquarters in Phokeng.

Mbenga and Manson’s *History of the Bafokeng* is an account of the rise of the Bafokeng to prominence and briefly put, argues that the good fortune that came their way was in large measure the result of thoughtful leadership over successive reigns of their *dikgosi*. The volume was initiated and financed by the Royal Bafokeng Administration (p vii). There is a chronological account that discusses Bafokeng origins; the period of Boer control; land acquisition; the advent of mining; politics during the apartheid era; and struggles with mining conglomerates.

The strength of this *History* is its detailed account of the royal house’s skilful defiance of Lucas Mangope’s attempts to aggregate Fokeng platinum to Bophuthatswana’s largesse, resulting in *kgosi* Edward Patrick Lebone (Lebone I)’s self-imposed exile to Botswana and the repeated harassment and arrests of his wife Semane and members of the Bafokeng Women’s Club. Mangope’s recruitment of ethnographer R.D. Coertze (author of *Bafokeng Family Law and Law of Succession*) to his campaign to delegitimise Lebone, which echoed N.J. van Warmelo’s involvement in a 1950 Bafokeng succession dispute with the Bantu Administration, is particularly revealing. Interestingly, the Bafokeng found ethnographer P.-L. Breutz, who worked under Van Warmelo, very helpful in realising Lebone’s succession a few years later. Meanwhile, Lebone (d. 1995) and his son and successor, Mollwane Bokanyo Molotlegi (Lebone II), proved adept at wresting increasingly better terms from Impala Platinum.

Mbenga and Manson avoid discussing the implications of community ownership of mining rights in the post-1994 dispensation and on the last but one paragraph of the conclusion note without comment, the Bafokeng’s self-designation in 1996 as the “Royal Bafokeng Nation” (p 157). Also unclear are the particulars of land acquisition before and after the 1913 Land Act, a period encapsulated by the “long and influential rule” (p 55) of Molotlegi. During his reign (1896 to his death in 1938), the Bafokeng acquired “at least 11 farms” between 1904 and 1931. Yet the process and details of land purchases, based largely on Native Affairs (NTS) files, are rather jumbled and sometimes confusing, if not contradictory. The farm lists, which appear in tables 4.1 to 4.5 are of little help in this regard. Post-1937 farm numbers are used without the pre-1937 equivalents. Perhaps a clearer picture would have emerged had the authors consulted the farm registers (RAK) in the Pretoria Archives and included maps reflecting the farm boundaries.

Also hard to understand is the authors' claim that the farms were acquired "virtually all under the leadership and direction of Kgosi Molotlegi" (p 101), whereas Molotlegi's tenure was marked by a decline in his popularity in 1906–1907 (p 65); the subsequent rise of Ethiopianism (p 63); protests against his use of public funds in the 1910s and 1920s (pp 67–72); his short term as a "mental patient" in 1927 (p 72); and his poor health thereafter (pp 72–73). Elsewhere, we learn that local DRC missionary Penzhorn considered Molotlegi "pleasant and good natured" but lacking "his grandfather's (Mokgatle) vibrant energy" (p 65) and that one of his people testified in court that Molotlegi "had no education and could not read and write ... consumed alcohol to excess and was very frequently under the influence of liquor" (p 113).

"*People of the Dew*" provides a useful summary of secondary sources to account for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Somewhat mystifying, however, was the authors' dependence on Schapera's *Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*, which pertains to the Tswana bordering the Kalahari, to describe Bafokeng pre-colonial society.<sup>1</sup> Since 1992, it has become clear that the pre-colonial peoples of the Rustenburg area are quite distinct from the western Tswana in their settlement patterns and use of the landscape.<sup>2</sup> The section on Bafokeng-Boer relations is particularly interesting and demonstrates complex and competing interests as revealed in vignettes of Mokgatle's dealings with the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek and its officials. This section is more descriptive than analytical, but will be important for scholars delving into this still largely unexplored dimension of nineteenth-century Transvaal history.

One caveat: the authors translate Bafokeng as "People of the Dew" citing a "well-known Bafokeng tradition" that claims the name derives from the time when the people referred to "reached their present location", when they encountered thick dew (*phoka*) covering the valleys in the morning (p xiii). Yet, Fokeng identity by that name had to have preceded this arrival if we accept the authors' argument (based mainly on Huffmann<sup>3</sup>) that these people originated south of the Vaal River at Ntsuanatsatsi, because, as is well attested, various groups of Bafokeng (Basotho) remained south of the Vaal when the Bafokeng of this volume relocated to the Magaliesberg.

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1. I. Schapera, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom* (1938) is partially cited in the footnote (without the article) but is not in the bibliography. This first (1938) edition is rare and difficult to find, whereas the second edition (1955), and subsequent impressions by Frank Cass, are in common circulation.
  2. J.C. Pistorius, *Molokwane, An Iron Age Bakwena Village: Early Tswana Settlement in the Western Transvaal* (Perskor, Johannesburg, 1992); F. Morton, "Perpetual Motion: Resettlement Patterns in the Western Transvaal and Southeastern Botswana since 1750", *Historia*, 48, 1, 2003, pp 265–282; S. Hall, M. Anderson, J. Boeyens and F. Coetzee, "Towards an Outline of the Oral Geography, Historical Identity and Political Economy of the Late Precolonial Tswana in the Rustenburg Region", in N. Swanepoel, A. Esterhuysen and P. Bonner (eds), *Five Hundred Years Rediscovered: Southern African Precedents and Prospects* (Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2008), pp 55–85.
  3. T.N. Huffmann, *Handbook to the Iron Age: The Archaeology of Pre-Colonial Farming Societies in Southern Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Scottsville, 2007), pp 429ff.

### The burden of empathy

**E. Dommissie, *Sir David Pieter de Villiers Graaff: First Baronet of De Grendel***

Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2011

366 pp

ISBN 978-0-624-05304-0

R250.00

In this biography Ebbe Dommissie investigates the life of Sir David Graaff, a poor, barely educated Afrikaner who became one of South Africa's richest people and an influential politician. Graaff was the sixth of nine children, born on 30 March 1859 on a farm in the Overberg in the Cape Colony. At the age of eleven years he left his impoverished parental home when an affluent and childless great-uncle took him to Cape Town to work in his butchery. Within a few years Graaff was in charge of the butchery and developed into a dynamic businessman and entrepreneur, turning this small enterprise into a prosperous company. As a pioneer of cold storage in South Africa, he developed an extensive distribution network of frozen products, making himself a fortune.

Graaff's wealth made it possible for him to enter politics. As a 23-year old he became a Cape Town city councillor. Between 1890 and 1892 he was the mayor of the city. In September 1891 he was elected to the legislative council, the upper house of the Cape parliament, but his growing business obligations led to his retirement from politics in 1897. He returned to parliament in 1908 as a member of John X. Merriman's government. With the unification of South Africa in 1910, he served in the cabinet of General Louis Botha in various portfolios. Because of ill health he retired from the cabinet in 1913, but returned as the minister of finance in 1915. Health problems led to his resignation in 1916, but he remained a member of parliament until 1920. In this period he was a confidant of Prime Minister Botha and of his successor Jan Smuts. After leaving parliament he devoted his full attention to his business interests. Despite the ravages of the Great Depression of the late 1920s he died a rich man on 13 April 1931. His son De Villiers inherited the baronetcy and became a prominent South African parliamentarian and leader of the United Party. The present baronet, Sir David, also a former parliamentarian, lives on the family farm of De Grendel.

Dommissie tells a spellbinding story, portraying Graaff as a philanthropic businessman with integrity and a strong sense of public duty. As Cape Town's mayor he played a leading role in modernising the city, while as a member of Botha's cabinet he broke the stranglehold of the Shipping Ring, a cartel of British shipping lines, which through collusion set unfair tariffs between Britain and South Africa, restricting trade in the process. Graaff was also a generous benefactor – financing the school in his old hometown of Villiersdorp. And yet, as a result of Dommissie's admiration and subsequent lack of rigour in questioning Graaff's motives and actions, *Sir David Pieter de Villiers Graaff* encourages a perception that the first baronet of De Grendel was not the man he admires, but a ruthless and calculating person who trimmed his sails to prevailing political winds for personal gain. This is especially evident in his highly profitable meat contracts with the British army during the South African War of 1899–1902.

The South African War presented an exceptional business opportunity for Graaff's South African Supply & Cold Storage Company. Between July 1899 and June 1900 the company's profit amounted to £462 874 while a year later it was £1 071 169. Yet Dommissie claims that the contracts meant a difficult political choice for Graaff

because his sympathies lay on the Boer side. Yet as a British subject he had, of necessity, to do business with the British military. According to Dommissie, Graaff had no choice because the military could nationalise his business in terms of martial law if he refused to co-operate. This argument makes no sense because martial law was only proclaimed in Cape Town on 18 October 1901. By then Graaff had already renewed two one-year contracts with the British army. From his correspondence, quoted by Dommissie, it is clear that Graaff worked hard to retain these contracts. His joy on signing a new contract on 24 January 1900, and his optimism that the contract would be renewed in 1902 (it was not), does not reflect a man tortured by doing business with the British army, but one motivated by the pursuit of profit. As a result of his profitable dealings with British imperialism, Graaff became the wealthiest Afrikaner in South Africa. At the same time, however, he emerged from the trauma of the South African War with a reputation as a Boer sympathiser by donating money for medical assistance to women and children in the concentration camps. Indeed, in 1911, his baronetcy was recommended by Botha for his relief work in the camps.

Graaff's standing amongst Afrikaners was also bolstered by stories that because of his Boer sympathies, he was "in effect under house arrest" by the British on his farm, and that he had corresponded with Botha and Smuts during the war. Dommissie argues that although there is no evidence of the alleged "house arrest" this was possible. (In the introduction, however, he states categorically that Graaff was indeed placed under house arrest (p 13).) Dommissie's stance makes no sense because Graaff's "house arrest" would have been splashed in the press; nor does he ask why the house arrests of Marie Koopmans-De Wet and Merriman are recorded while Graaff's is not. Dommissie is more doubtful about the family legend that Graaff corresponded with Botha and Smuts during the war, but does not reject it. How would it have been possible for Graaff to correspond with Boer generals during the guerilla phase of the war? Despite the efforts to place Graaff in a positive light, the impression is created that he was eager to make a profit from British imperialism, while at the same time playing his cards in such a way as not to alienate Afrikaners. In his conclusion Dommissie points out that Graaff realised at an early stage of his career how important good media relations were, and that he ensured that he was portrayed favourably in the press. To use modern day political parlance, Graaff seems to have been a master of "spin".

The perception of Graaff as a calculating businessman making use of prevailing political winds to his own advantage is bolstered by his behaviour after the war. With the pro-imperial Progressive Party in power in the Cape Colony he remained outside of party politics. According to Dommissie, he abstained from politics out of sympathy with the Cape rebels who had lost their franchise, and because he wanted to pay more attention to his business interests. But would sympathy with the rebels not have been a motivating factor to enter politics to defend the rights of Cape Afrikaners? (He returned to politics in 1908 when an Afrikaner Bond victory was beyond doubt.) It is furthermore odd that while he was too busy to enter politics in the Cape Colony, this did not apply to the Transvaal. He found the time to campaign on behalf of Botha's victorious Het Volk party in the parliamentary election of 1907. Was it not possible that Graaff abstained from politics in the Cape because he did not want to do anything that could harm his business interests with the Progressives in power, while Botha was an investment in the obvious coming man in South African politics, a future prime minister of a united South Africa? Graaff worked hard to cultivate Botha's friendship, as well as that of Jan Smuts, his right-hand man. In 1905, he paid a visit of three to four months to Botha in the Transvaal, while he accompanied the newly elected Transvaal prime minister on his visit

to Britain in 1907. Until Botha's death he would be lavishly hosted and entertained by Graaff. As a result, the ultra-sensitive Botha, struggling to cope with the rough and tumble of party politics, became dependant on Graaff.

Dommissie portrays Graaff as a close friend and confidant of Botha without any ulterior motives, but his *Sir David Pieter de Villiers Graaff* can be read as proof that Graaff's friendship with the prime minister was an investment which paid dividends. Botha's recommendation secured him his much-cherished baronetcy, as well as his post in the first South African cabinet, because Graaff was a minor member of the Merriman government with no obvious claim to such an elevated position. His close relationship also possibly secured a cabinet post for Senator Jacobus Graaff, his younger brother, business associate and, it must be said, a political non-entity. It is baffling that Dommissie quotes Governor-General Lord Buxton as saying that "Botha dislikes him [Jacobus Graaff] extremely and does not trust him, nor does anyone else. He is very different to his brother" (p 219), yet makes no attempt to explain why he was given a cabinet post, or why, in addition, Jacobus was awarded a knighthood in 1917.

The Botha connection certainly had financial benefits for Graaff. In 1918 he accompanied the prime minister to attend the Versailles peace summit. While other statesmen attempted to create a new world order at the peace summit in Versailles, Graaff used his influence with Botha to negotiate the takeover of German diamond interests by South Africans in the former German colony of South West Africa. His own company, The Graaff's Trust, played a leading and lucrative role in the process. Dommissie describes the takeover in detail, but makes no judgment or evaluation of Graaff's behaviour. Nor does he investigate what possible role Graaff's close ties with Smuts played in securing a contract with the government which provided Imperial Cold Storage, of which he was the chairman, a monopoly to transport frozen meat for fifteen years from the mandated territory in South West Africa. In 1928, Graaff paid for Smuts's daughter Cato, to study at Cambridge University. Was this perhaps a case of reciprocating for a past favour, an investment for future use if Smuts should return to power? Or was it simply a helping hand to a friend with a cash flow problem?

Sir David Graaff was a larger than life figure with some admirable qualities, but it is doubtful that he was the idealised figure presented in *Sir David Pieter De Villiers Graaff*. Most biographers struggle to cope with their empathy for their subjects, and it is obvious that Dommissie's admiration for the first baronet of De Grendel has overwhelmed him, making it difficult to see Graaff's frailties.

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### 'n Lesenswaardige blik op vroeë Afrikanerjagters

**M. Doorewaard (red.), *Trekkeerslewe in Brits-Oos-Afrika: 'n Joernaal uit 1911***

Magriet Doorewaard, Pretoria, 2011

88 pp

ISBN 978-0-620-50155-2

R140.00 + R25.00 posgeld

*Trekkeerslewe in Brits-Oos-Afrika: 'n Joernaal uit 1911* is 'n geredigeerde en geannoteerde weergawe van Johannes Francois Kok se selfopgetekende vertellings oor sy jagavonture in Brits-Oos-Afrika (Kenia) gedurende 1911–1912. Hy was een van die sowat 1 300 Boere wat in die dekade ná die Tweede Anglo-Boereoorlog na Kenia uitgewyk het, meestal om finansiële redes – die verwoesting van die oorlog en kleinerwordende plasies as gevolg van die voortdurende onderverdeling van familiegrond. Kok het egter uit 'n vermoënde familie gestam en het volgens sy eie getuienis trekleier Christiaan Johannes Cloete se trekgeselskap na Kenia vergesel “slegs om na die vee om te sien om sodoende 'n jaggeleentheid in Brits-Oos-Afrika te kry” (p 75, nota 13).

Die boek bestaan uit 'n kort inleiding (pp 1–8) waarin Doorewaard die agtergrond van Kok se joernaal en die redigering van sy manuskrip verduidelik, gevolg deur die geredigeerde teks van sy joernaal (pp 9–65); 'n bylae (pp 67–70) wat Kok se geslagsregister tot 1996 uiteensit; aanvullende aantekeninge tot die teks in die vorm van endnote (pp 71–86); en 'n kort bronnelys (pp 87–88). Doorewaard het streng by Kok se oorspronklike teks gehou, daarom staan die werk in die teken van die wit, meer spesifiek Afrikaner, rassevooroordele van die tyd en bevat dit ook die aanstootlike rasseterminologie van daardie era.

Kok se joernaal begin op 28 Februarie 1911 toe hy sy ouerhuis in die Warden-distrik in die Oranje-Vrystaat verlaat het om hom by 'n trekgeselskap van elf gesinne onder Cloete se leiding aan te sluit vir die uittoeg na Kenia. Die trekgeselskap het op 7 Maart 1911 met al hul besittings, insluitende skape, beeste en perde, in Durban skepgegaan en op 18 Maart in Mombasa aan wal gestap. Kok beskryf kortliks hul seereis na Mombasa en hul treinreis daarvandaan na Nairobi, en hoe hy op sowel die skip as die trein met die voer en versorging van die vee gehelp het. Hy verhaal verder hoe die trekgeselskap op Londiane, naby die oewer van die noordoostelike uitloper van die Victoria-meer, met hul vee van die trein afgeklim, hul besittings op waens gelaai en met hul vee effens verder noord na die Eldoret-omgewing op die vrugbare westelike hoogland van Kenia getrek het. Kok het daarna enkele weke vir Cloete op sy plaas gehelp, voordat hy die jagvelde opgesoek het. In dié proses het hy onder meer 'n uitgebreide jagtog in die geselskap van die broers Migaal en Boy Scholtz aan die Nzoia-rivier onderneem.

Kok, 'n veteraan van die Tweede Anglo-Boereoorlog, en sy jagmaats het nie die Boere se historiese reputasie as uitstekende skuts gestand gedoen nie. Hulle het dikwels op kort afstand misgeskiet of diere gekwes. Kok, wat gewoonlik met die Boere se veelgeroemde Duitse Mauser geskiet het (maar soms ook wel met die verouderde Martini-Henri), skryf onder meer oor een so 'n insident:

Ik heb de dach veel geschiet na hartbeeste – gekwes – niets dood, hulle kom party slagen by tot om 50 tree. Ik schiet lat dit zoo dreun. Geen hartbees dood. De aand waar ons gaat slaap, loop ik weder om te schiet. Ik kryg een hartbees. De eerste schoot kwes ik de bok en ik geeft de bok weder vyf kogels voor hy val (p 33).

Kok en sy makkers se jag-etiek het, soos dié baie ander jagters van die tyd, veel te wense oorgelaat. Hulle het gereeld vir die pot geskiet, maar het jag in die algemeen hoofsaaklik vir die genot daarvan, as ’n sportsoort, beoefen. Daarom het hulle feitlik alles wat voorkom geskiet, van allerlei soorte kleinwild, vlakvarke, rietbokke, hartebeeste en waterbokke, tot jakkalse, luiperds (“tiers”), hiënas (“wolwe”), leeus, krokodille, sebras, buffels, seekoeie, kameelperde en renosters. Die plesier wat hulle uit die blote skiet van die diere geput het, blyk onder meer daaruit toe Kok by geleentheid ’n renoster geskiet het en sy broer, Jan, gevra het of hy ook die dooie renoster ’n skoot in die kop kon gee, waartoe eersgenoemde ingestem het “en daar was Jan tevrede” (p 63). Toe broer Jan en sy vriende daarna twee buffels geskiet het, het Kok opgemerk “[d]it was mooi om zulke groot goed dood te sien” (p 64). Kok en sy makkers het ook nie altyd by die perke van hul jagpermitte gehou nie en het byvoorbeeld by geleentheid twee kameelperde geskiet ofskoon hulle net ’n permit gehad het om een te jag. Die jagters het gewoonlik net die velle van die diere afgeslag om te brei of rieme en sambokke te sny, vir eie gebruik en om te verkoop. Hulle het ook van die dierevet (waarskynlik seekoievet) verkoop. Die meeste van die vleis het hulle óf in die veld laat lê vir die roofdiere en aasvoëls, óf vir die plaaslike swart bevolking gegee.

Kok het ’n aantal jare nadat hy permanent na sy geboorteland teruggekeer het, uitgevind dat sy ou jagmaat, Migaal Scholtz, ’n boek getiteld *Voortrekkerslewe in Donker Afrika* onder die skuilnaam Bana Maie gepubliseer het,<sup>4</sup> waarin hy na bewering onwaarhede oor hom (Kok) en onakkuraathede in verband met hul jagtogte in Kenia kwytgeraak het. Kok het gevolglik in 1931 sy herinneringe met die oog op publikasie opgeteken (met behulp van ’n dagboek wat hy in Kenia bygehou het) om dié onjuisthede reg te stel. Hy was veral vies omdat Scholtz geskryf het dat hy laasgenoemde “ze boerdery moes waarneem” en dus by implikasie as ’n bywoner vir Scholtz gewerk het, en in die algemeen omdat daar “hier en daar iets voor[kom] in de boek van Bana Maie wat tot nadeel vir my kinders is” (p 59).

Kok het sy manuskrip aan ’n uitgewer voorgelê, wat dit afgekeur het omdat Scholtz (Bana Maie) se *Voortrekkerslewe in Donker Afrika* reeds min of meer dieselfde verhaal vertel het. Dit is dié manuskrip wat Doorewaard nou verwerk en gepubliseer het. Op die keper beskou, bring Kok se joernaal inderdaad niks werklik nuuts na vore nie. Dit is maar een van baie jagverhale wat uit die pioniersverlede van die Afrikaner, tuis en in die diaspora, opgeteken is.<sup>5</sup> Vir die leser wat in dié tema belangstel, bied dit nogtans ’n interessante, lesenswaardige blik op die opvattinge, lewenswyse en daaglikse handel en wandel van Afrikanerjagters in, soos hulle dit gesien het, “wilde, ongetemde” Afrika.

Deon Visser  
*Universiteit Stellenbosch*

4. J.H. de Bussy, Amsterdam, 1928.

5. Onder die bekendste van hierdie werke tel dié van J. von Moltke, *Jagkonings* (Nasionale Pers, Kaapstad, Bloemfontein en Port Elizabeth, 1943); en *Veldsmanne* (Afrikaanse Pers-Boekhandel, Johannesburg, 1958).

### The making and staging of Coloured identity

**M. Adhikari (ed.), *Burdened by Race: Coloured Identities in Southern Africa***

UCT Press, Cape Town, 2009

240 pp

ISBN 978-1-91989-514-7

R250.00

The title of Mohamed Adhikari's edited collection foregrounds the salience of race in identity construction in the southern African context. In the case of coloured identity, however, the usual opposition of black-white becomes complicated by what Grant Farred calls "the problematic of the middle". Farred argues that "the interstices is a precarious, embattled, under- and (frequently) unrecognised space", one in which the privileging of primary opposition "overwrites (and undermines) the struggles of groups whose racial identity is more vexed and complicated".<sup>6</sup> This book considers the individuals who occupy this space as well as the ambiguities, contradictions and contestations associated with this position.

This is a valuable contribution to the literature on an identity that continues to be susceptible to marginalisation in post-apartheid South Africa. It is also both a useful resource for scholars engaged in research in this field and accessible enough to appeal to potential readers beyond academia. The chapters explore the ways in which coloured identity has developed in the region, with six of the nine chapters focusing on South Africa, and one chapter each on Zimbabwe, Zambia and Nyasaland (Malawi) from 1929–1940. The challenge that is presented in this text is to understand how and why coloured identities emerged, and how they have evolved over time.

Adhikari provides a comprehensive introduction in which he contextualises coloured identity in southern Africa. He emphasises how the status of marginality – both in terms of small numbers and lack of political or economic power – has influenced the development of coloured identity and how variables such as place, class and ideology have influenced and informed the expression of this identity. He provides a useful overview of each chapter, highlighting important trends and themes, and identifies potential areas for future research. What emerges from these debates is the dynamic nature of the field. This book is an important contribution to an ongoing scholarly conversation on the topic.

In the first chapter, entitled "From narratives of miscegenation to post-modernist re-imagining: Towards a historiography of coloured identity in South Africa", Adhikari offers an informative and thoughtful discussion of coloured identity by tracing the trajectory of its historical development. He identifies four approaches that have been used to describe its development: essentialism, instrumentalism, social constructionism, and creolisation. Adhikari himself favours a social constructionist theory of coloured identity because he feels that both the essentialist and the instrumentalist approaches do not sufficiently take into account the complexities of the identity. He is unfortunately quite dismissive of the instrumentalist view, describing it as a "spurious but politically useful rejectionist claim" (p 5) and arguing that the "fatuousness" of this position was made evident by the retention of power by the National Party in the Western Cape in

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6. G. Farred, *Midfielder's Moment: Coloured Literature and Culture in Contemporary South Africa* (Westview, Boulder, 2000), p 1.

1994. It seems to me that his critique in this regard is too harsh, and that this position to a large extent entailed a refusal of the insidious internalisation of racism, whose effects Aime Césaire poignantly describes where he says, “I am talking of millions of men who have been skilfully injected with fear, inferiority complexes, trepidation, servility, despair, abasement”.<sup>7</sup> Given the context within which this position developed, I feel that a more sensitive consideration of this perspective may have been more appropriate.

The next chapter, by Helene Strauss, is an insightful and perceptive application of the theoretical framework of creolisation (using Chris van Wyk’s *Shirley, Goodness and Mercy*) to understanding coloured identity. Adikhari correctly identifies this approach as one which could provide a useful avenue for future research into coloured identity, as creolisation theory offers an astute perspective into the ambiguities and contradictions inherent in coloured identity formation. Invoking Caribbean theories of *how* creolisation occurs, Strauss uses Stuart Hall’s definition of creolisation as one which emphasises “the hybridity of cultures rather than the impurity of breeding and miscegenation” (p 28). Creolisation theory offers a perspective on identity formation that considers how identities are constituted in the light of differences – such as cultural, social, linguistic – and how these identities are negotiated in situations of domination and conflict.

Chapters three and four deal with forced removals in the context of District Six. Both chapters offer an account of the crucial role that memory plays in the construction of coloured identity. In chapter three, Henry Trotter offers a sensitive and nuanced analysis of how the trauma of forced removals, along with relocation to specific geographic areas that were designated exclusively coloured (in opposition to the more racially diverse District Six), created a “narrative community” among coloured residents. He suggests that the ways in which they remember their past can be understood as a “commemoration narrative”, one in which the idealised recollections “help answer the deep emotional need of people who have suffered the trauma of evictions to grieve and come to terms with their loss” (p 62). A different perspective of how trauma shapes memory is presented by Christiaan Beyers (chapter four), who argues that coloured memories of District Six have constructed “partial characterisations” of their past that privilege a nostalgic, coloured-centric, socially exclusionary history of District Six. Beyers raises an important issue, namely that the narratives of District Six may constitute it as an essentially coloured space, so that other voices (Indians, Jews, whites, and particularly black Africans) are elided. He offers a reading of Richard Rive’s *Buckingham Palace* that illustrates this coloured-centric perspective and juxtaposes it with a fascinating reading of Nomvuyo Ngcelwane’s *Sala Kable District Six*.

The ambivalence of coloured identity is aptly illustrated in the next two chapters, which focus on the ambiguities and complexities of coloured identity in the post-apartheid era. In chapter five, Michelle Ruiters provides an excellent analysis of why coloured identity expresses itself in particular ways in the post-apartheid era, a context in which identity discourse is still structured around racial difference, because “South Africans resist a universal citizenship and continuously refer to people as coloured, black African and white” (p 114). Michael Besten (chapter six) explores a different strand in the narrative of coloured identity construction in his explanation of the revival of Khoes-San identity in post-apartheid South Africa. He provides a useful historical background to this identity and how it relates to coloured identity. He ties the revival of Khoes-San identity in the post-apartheid era to the desire for potential material benefits, particularly

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7. A. Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1972), p 7.

that of restitution in the form of land. He also suggests that it may indicate the search for an identity whose social and psychological needs could not be met by coloured identity.

The last three chapters demonstrate different trajectories in coloured identity formation through a consideration of coloured identity in three other southern African countries: Zimbabwe, Zambia and Nyasaland (Malawi). In the case of Zimbabwe, James Muzondidya shows that the emergence of a distinct coloured identity entailed both collaboration and resistance, and that its relation to other black identities was complex, insights that are relevant to the South African context as well. Juliette Milner-Thornton argues that in the case of Zambia, it was specifically colonial sexual relations – the legacy of British colonialism – that created Zambia’s coloured communities. In the final chapter, Christopher Lee demonstrates that the construction of identity is always located within specific spatial and temporal contexts. He argues that the way in which coloured identity emerged in colonial Nyasaland must be seen within the context of contending perspectives and interests, because identity formation is dependent on local contexts and the ways in which these contexts intersect with the broader social milieu. For example, in Nyasaland, the way in which coloured identity developed was contingent on a political environment that favoured an ethnic, rather than a racial, option for rule, in which a “dual mandate” system of governance was proposed between African and British officials. The first-generation of Nyasaland Anglo-Africans therefore had to negotiate an identity in an environment in which they “were marginal to black and white interests alike” (p 215). That coloured identity has developed in a considerably different way in Malawi to that of South Africa and Zimbabwe similarly emphasises the significance of local conditions in the formation of that identity.

In her chapter on coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa, Michelle Ruiters stresses the heterogeneity of coloured identity: that it is “multiple, fluid, hybrid”, as opposed to the homogenous way in which it has been presented in the past, “as if a stereotypical ‘Cape coloured’ identity existed” (p 112). This book skilfully demonstrates that complexity and produces a text that both complicates and enriches our understanding of coloured identity in the regions under discussion.

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#### **A study in leading the way**

#### **H. Hughes, *First President: A Life of John L. Dube, Founding President of the ANC***

Jacana Media, Auckland Park, 2011  
312 pp  
ISBN 978-1-77009-813-8  
R225.00

The year 2012 marks an important halting point for many South Africans, as they reflect on the achievements of Africa’s oldest surviving political party, the African National Congress (ANC), as part of its centenary celebrations. It should also be a time to reconsider what defines South Africans as a nation. In order for South Africans to move forward as a nation, it is important for them to realise that the heritage of the ANC is also the heritage of each and every South African, regardless of their party political

affiliation. It is against this background that Heather Hughes's biography, *First President: A Life of John L. Dube, Founding President of the ANC*, should be evaluated.

Studying the life of John Dube is a challenging undertaking as explained by the author in the introduction to this book. In fact, the rare publication of a work on a person as influential as John Dube speaks volumes about the legacy of inequality from which modern-day South Africa has emerged. But despite these challenges, the author has succeeded in compiling a well-balanced biography of the life and work of John Dube. Tracing the various influences instrumental in shaping his character, important insights are not only gained into Dube's life, but also of a wide variety of subjects relating to South Africa's transition from a rural, more "traditional" society to a country faced with the challenges of industrialisation and modernisation. Dube's cultural background, together with his experiences in the United States of America where he was educated, was to have a lasting impact on the rest of his adult life, specifically his contact with the many influential oppressed black intellectuals of the time. These themes form an important part of Hughes's study.

John Dube was in many ways a towering figure on the South African political landscape. When considering his many achievements in the fields of education, politics, publication and cultural activism, amongst others, one is left with a deep sense of admiration for his contributions towards the betterment of the lives of the people of South Africa. In the years that Dube was active in public life, South Africa, and thus black South Africans, faced many unique challenges. Key to these was a continuing conflict arising between a traditional way of life and modernisation. Throughout his career, John Dube revealed a very moderate approach to the challenges of preserving his own cultural traditions while at the same time adapting to the inevitable changes brought about by the worldwide industrial revolution, together with the discovery of South Africa's precious mineral wealth which transformed the development of South Africa and Africa as a whole. On this aspect of Dube's life, the author is able to conclude that he "... thought it entirely possible to harmonise old and new codes of life, although the precise mix proved elusive" (p 256).

As an educator, Dube's contribution can be described as mammoth. Key to his personal development was the Christian faith; he remained a follower throughout his life, and this formed an integral part of his capacity as an educator. Yet despite the influential role of missionaries and the Christian faith on his development, Dube's vision was one of endorsing and celebrating his cultural heritage, becoming the first author to complete a novel in the Zulu language. For Dube, conversion to Christianity was by no means an end to one's traditional way of life. His cultural heritage was far too valuable a commodity to be set aside.

This moderate approach that Dube revealed towards cultural issues, preserving his heritage while at the same time embracing new approaches to life, also influenced his approach to politics. While he was a man who often displayed a very critical stance towards colonial authorities in campaigning for the rights of the oppressed, he was also known to call for soul searching amongst those to whom he gave a voice. Yet Dube was able to maintain good relations with influential figures throughout his life. This he could do by working within the parameters of the Union administration.

As South Africans take stock of their legacy, they are confronted with an ever-changing environment, resulting in new challenges facing the country on a regular basis.

Many of these challenges are rooted in South Africa's divided past. It is for this reason that Heather Hugh's biography is such a timely book. It is written in very digestible language, and succeeds well in making the legacy of John Dube accessible to all those interested in this towering historical figure. This study is a timely reminder to South Africans of where they came from. Dube's life is testament to one who was a servant to his country and his people, often under very challenging conditions. As a means of building South Africa's collective heritage, this work is also of great value and the author is to be congratulated with this very timely and valuable contribution – a contribution which certainly broadens one's horizons.

During his lifetime, Dube considered himself to be a moderate leader. But this study of Dube's life is by no means a propaganda tool for the moderate political outlook. While Dube's life is being described as a "... mix of defiance and compliance, radicalism and moderation, broadness and narrowness of vision ..." (p 259), Hughes is able to draw the conclusion that

at the end of the day, Dube was a pragmatist rather than an ideologue. While he was animated by a powerful vision of redemption and representation, his chosen means of realising it was to get on with the practicalities: hence the founding of a newspaper, a school, various cooperative schemes, business leagues and assumption of political leadership (p 261).

Although the political landscape facing South Africans today is rather different to that of Dube's lifetime, South Africans are still dependent on pragmatists to show them the way forward. This makes *First President: A life of John L. Dube, Founding President of the ANC* a highly relevant work to all South Africans.

*Barend van der Merwe*  
*Free State Provincial Archives Repository*  
*Bloemfontein*

### **The intellectual origins of Bantu Education**

#### **C. Kros, *The Seeds of Separate Development: Origins of Bantu Education***

Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2010

193 pp

ISBN 978-1-86888-522-0

R210.00

The legacy of Bantu Education has been an enduring one. It was the brainchild of the Eiselen Report and its failure was epitomised by the student uprisings of 1976. The Eiselen Report, like the man for whom it was named, W.W.M. Eiselen, is an ambiguous document. On the one hand it sought to contain the intellectual possibilities of education and hence the political consciousness of African students, while on the other hand it attempted to face the challenges affecting education, many of which remain today.

By tracing the intellectual life and influences of W.W.M Eiselen, Cynthia Kros is able to look at the events shaping Bantu Education, viewing it not simply as a product of apartheid policy but as shaping apartheid ideology itself. In the introduction to *The Seeds of Separate Development: Origins of Bantu Education*, Kros draws parallels between Eiselen and Adolf Eichmann, men who, driven by their ideological beliefs, saw themselves as

“idealists”. Using Hannah Arendt’s work on Eichmann, Kros suggests that Eiselen played a significant role in the normalising of apartheid – the “banalisation of evil” (p xvi). Nevertheless, Eiselen cannot be divorced from his context.

Kros continues this theme in the first chapter, “Rising Nation and Nationalism”, where she assesses the existing historiography relating to Afrikaner nationalism and the creation of the apartheid state, drawing upon the work of O’Meara, Giliomee and Dubow. Dan O’Meara allocates the rise of Afrikaner nationalism to the emergent Afrikaner middle class, while Hermann Giliomee resists this view of Afrikaner nationalism as a product of capitalism, emphasising not only the historical identity of Afrikaners as developed from the seventeenth century, but also the way in which the global context of the 1930s and 1940s helped shape apartheid. This is integral to the work of Saul Dubow, where he demonstrates that in the aftermath of the Holocaust, ideas of racial inferiority were justifiably unpopular and notions of culture instead became a marker of difference. It is the latter intellectual trend that was to influence Eiselen. Kros’s biography of Eiselen is thus an attempt to combine the world of ideas with that of lived experience and through the lens of this deeply ambiguous figure, a means of understanding Bantu Education and the origins of apartheid ideology.

Eiselen’s early influences form the subject matter of the second chapter, “Son of the Berlin Mission”. Growing up in Botshabelo, his parents members of the Berlin Mission Society (BMS), Eiselen was hardly unaware of the belief system of the BMS, especially when it came to an understanding of culture. The German missionaries stood on the fringes of two worlds, belonging to neither English nor Afrikaner settler society, nor indigenous African societies. They did not follow the ideology of the British missions with their emphasis on the “civilising mission” and the ultimate incorporation of indigenous people; nor did they countenance the “Boers’ vulgar racism” (p 17). Instead, the BMS focused on the *volkseie* which can be interpreted as the unique cultural aspects of a group. Preaching in indigenous languages gave them an understanding of the value of indigenous culture. In terms of education, instruction in the mother tongue would help in the preservation of indigenous culture against Western encroachment.

After his postgraduate education in Germany, Eiselen took up a senior lecturership at the University of Stellenbosch. This was during the Pact Government where the “native question” loomed large due to the competition between black and white labour culminating in Hertzog’s restrictive legislation. Hertzog’s discriminatory policies were strongly opposed by Christian liberals such as Edgar Brookes. Eiselen’s response to Brookes was a defence of the separation of races, demonstrating the influence of scientific racism and showing his support of the Afrikaner nationalists. He was later to moderate these views but his emphasis on mother tongue instruction and a “strong rejection of assimilation” (p 25) were to remain.

Although the University of Stellenbosch had a history of association with prominent Afrikaner nationalists, Eiselen did not find himself at ease there. The Stellenbosch academic at the time focused on his academic and intellectual influences forming what Kros, drawing upon the work of Aletta Norval, cites as the “horizon of intelligibility” (p 30). In effect Eiselen operated within a particular intellectual and cultural milieu which shaped his thinking. As a student, one of his graduate teachers was Dietrich Westermann, a former Berlin missionary who believed in the use of language to understand the belief system of cultural groups – a view that was espoused by the proponents of indirect rule during the colonial period. Anthropology at Afrikaans

universities was influenced by the German school of thought but Eiselen drew also upon the British approach, in particular the work of Malinowski with its emphasis on the complexity of indigenous societies and their structures of power and knowledge, which Eiselen incorporated into his own thinking. He often found himself more readily able to identify with the English-medium universities such as Wits, eventually resigning from Stellenbosch to become the chief inspector of “native” education in the Transvaal in 1936. As such, Eiselen does not fit easily into the mould of Afrikaner nationalists like Verwoerd, for instance.

Eiselen’s emphasis on indigenous languages and the use of mother tongue instruction was not simply a product of nationalist views of segregation but had its origins in his BMS background and his academic training. Although mother tongue instruction and cultural difference came to be seen by 1976 as a hated feature of Bantu Education, Eiselen’s views were by no means reviled at the outset. The growing division in indigenous groups between the mission-educated, English-speaking intellectual elite and others meant that some African educators supported Eiselen’s policy on mother tongue instruction, especially if they had not received mission education. Moreover, the 1930s and 1940s were a period of increasing radicalisation in black politics which emphasised the value of indigenous culture and language within the ambit of African nationalism. Cultural distinctiveness was not the sole prerogative of ardent Afrikaner nationalists. When Eiselen resigned his post in “native” education, many Africans believed it to be in protest to segregationist policies – an astonishing view of a man who was a member of both the Broederbond and New Order.

In Chapters 5 and 6, Kros pays greater heed to the context of the 1940s, drawing attention to the limited purview of liberalism in this period which viewed assimilation as only a distant possibility, focusing instead on the “civilising mission” and acknowledging cultural distinctiveness. According to the recommendations made by the liberal Social and Economic Planning Council, the government should take responsibility for the education of natives and make the “reserves” viable through the improvement of agriculture and establishment of industry on the periphery. The United Party government, in line with international trends, particularly Roosevelt’s New Deal, envisioned a greater role for the state in providing health care, primary school education and pensions to Africans. On the other hand, the National Party concern was with the “poor white” problem. This occurred against a backdrop of rising African militancy – the African mineworkers’ strike, bus boycotts in Alexandra, Communist Party activism against the carrying of passes, protests against betterment policies and the riot at Lovedale, which forms the focus of Chapter 6. Kros views this as being not dissimilar to 1976 with students protesting having to engage in manual labour, hierarchical and preferential treatment and an education policy “recommended as appropriate for African students being prepared to meet the world of segregation” (p 80).

The focus of “Prelude to the Eiselen Commission” is on the Fagan and Sauer Reports. The former, utilised by the United Party but rejected by Eiselen, acknowledged the presence of Africans in the urban areas of South Africa, suggesting that complete segregation was unattainable. Criticised as being riddled with “ambiguities”, these ambiguities nevertheless, according to Kros, reflected the friction evident in the country. In contrast, the Sauer Report was a concrete symbol of National Party emphasising the value of total segregation as protecting white and black interests. Eiselen himself embraced the report, pointing out “the alienating nature of Native Education” (p 90) which left little place for African intellectuals in either white or black society. He

criticised the Fagan Report for its acceptance of African urbanisation which relegated Africans to perpetual inequality as well as leading to an over-reliance on cheap black labour, exacerbating the “poor white” problem.

In her final chapter, Kros discusses the Eiselen Commission and Report, pointing out that they need to be contextualised as a project of the modern state with education playing a key role. The unrest of the 1940s had suggested the collapse of “traditional authority” and the solution was an emphasis on culture and mother tongue instruction to contain African political awareness and alleviate the disruption brought about by modernity. This would be the new vision of native education. The Eiselen Report which became a hallmark of apartheid ideology was however not simply a product of Afrikaner nationalist thinking. As Kros painstakingly demonstrates in her argument, it was a product of intellectual ideas about culture, the role of the modern state and even liberal values. Kros thus shows that the Eiselen Report, and its subsequent effects on Bantu Education, was not only a key feature of apartheid rather than a mere by-product, but that apartheid itself takes on a more nuanced aspect, shaped by its context and bounded by the intellectual horizons of the 1940s. For Eiselen, a policy so heinous could indeed have a moral foundation.

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#### Fort Hare from the inside

#### **D. Massey, *Under Protest: The Rise of Student Resistance at the University of Fort Hare***

Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2010  
310 pp  
ISBN 978-1-86888-542-8  
R250.00

Despite its fame, Fort Hare and its history has remained relatively little-studied, its sources under-used. There have been some attempts: a memoir-history by 1950s lecturer Donovan Williams,<sup>8</sup> some official histories,<sup>9</sup> and theses,<sup>10</sup> but they do not plumb Fort Hare’s complex past from the perspective of students. Recently, however, there has been a student’s memoir, by Nomsa Mazwai, *Sai Sai: Little Girl*.<sup>11</sup> Now Daniel Massey, who studied there in the 1990s and wrote an excellent Master’s thesis on student politics,<sup>12</sup> has revised and published it in the Hidden Histories series.

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8. D. Williams, *A History of the University College of Fort Hare, South Africa, the 1950s: The Waiting Years* (E. Mellen, Lewiston, 2001).
  9. Notably A. Kerr, *Fort Hare 1915–48: The Evolution of an African College* (Shuter, Pietermaritzburg, 1968).
  10. Z. Ngwane, “The Politics of Campus and Community in South Africa: An Historical Historiography of the University of Fort Hare”, PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 2001; and (less persuasively) M. Seboni, “South African Native College: Fort Hare 1903–54”, DEd. thesis, UNISA, 1959. Seboni, as Massey observes (p 177), was regarded by many students as “a pawn of the apartheid regime”.
  11. N. Mazwai, *Sai Sai: Little Girl* (University of Fort Hare Press, Alice, 2008).
  12. D. Massey, “The History of Fort Hare and its Student Activists, 1933–73”, MA thesis, University of Fort Hare, 2001.

After a brief outline of Fort Hare's birth in 1916 and its early history, Massey focuses squarely on the four decades from 1933 to 1973. Drawing chiefly on three dozen interviews of student and staff alumni, together with surviving records, the five chapters narrate and explain the tides of student activism. And what a stellar cast of informants it is, representing different generations, descent paths, and political persuasions: Govan Mbeki, Wycliffe Tsotsi, Thenjiwe Mtintso, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, Joe Matthews, Frank Mdlalose, Henry Makgothi, Andrew Masondo, George and Kaiser Matanzima, and Barney Pityana to name a few – not to forget lesser-known figures such as G.C. Oosthuizen and Rama Thumbadoo. These memories provide intimate insights into campus life, from Govan Mbeki's ballroom dancing proclivities to Buthelezi's enforced "bed-wetting" of *collaborateurs*, whilst dozens of photos, many previously unpublished, also bring campus history to life. There is an appendix of brief (post-Fort Hare) biographies of informants that complement the potted biographies binding together the main text. This strong biographical emphasis helps readers understand a complex history and opens up new research, though on occasion it crowds out analysis or disturbs the narrative flow or structure.

Massey traces the development of student protests, at first over local issues such as poor food, harsh discipline and attempts to censor politics but later around the broad socio-political goals of national liberation. He first sketches the more dispersed protests of the 1930s and then treats in more detail the rise of the Youth League on campus from the late 1940s, giving due deference to the impact of leaders such as Oliver Tambo and Robert Sobukwe, but also the obscure tactical machinations of young activists such as Frank Mdlalose. Then it's on into the 1950s and the onset of Bantu Education, the state's steamrolling of Fort Hare autonomy and resistance of students and progressive lecturers.

An interesting interlude is given in Chapter 2 on campus diversity, a fine working model of tolerance and multiculturalism that makes its destruction by apartheid bureaucrats after 1959 all the more tragic, the theme of Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 analyses the growth of Black Consciousness and the rise and fall of the South African Student Organisation on campus. Ironically, mass expulsions of students and sackings of academics (including historians (p 168) contributed to a broadening of Black Consciousness ideas to high schools as many such alumni turned to teaching. Along the way, many interesting events are detailed and connections explored, such as the solidarity between students and nearby nurses and with Federal Seminary faculty (such as Desmond Tutu) who offered a safe haven from apartheid police. Another important and recurring theme is the seeming oblivion of managements that never understood student protests or their wider social framework.

Massey makes many salient points, which he brings together in a conclusion that if over-estimating the role of students as the locomotive of historical change (p 243), presents a cogent analysis of the intersection between college and society, and of patterns of student politicisation and their causes. The greatest strength of the book is that it tells us so much about the students and their politics and pastimes, as well as their imaginative protests and from these narratives readers also gain insight into the lives of academics, most notably Z.K. Matthews and his wide influence, and administrators. Massey supplements his interviews (at times rather laboriously recounted) with official files, from which he extracts the administrative context. That students later followed different political pathways is well explained, as is how a Fort Harian *esprit de corps* remained a tangible unifying force. The author brings out well the full majesty of Fort Hare's multiracial tradition and just how hard students (and some faculty) fought to maintain

academic independence and integrity. Across the above fields, and in his effective use of neglected oral and archival sources, Massey has opened up new pathways for Fort Hare studies.

There are a few minor glitches. SANNC should read SANC. And like many Masters theses there are some lacunae, though this does not detract from the book's usefulness. Massey does not detail the formative years<sup>13</sup> due to a paucity of sources and a wish to rely on interviews. He has a hunch that student activism only started in 1933 with Eddie Roux's visit, and his reliance on later generations means youth radicalism of the 1910s and 1920s is forgotten (p 33). In accounting for earlier moderation, the visit of Aggrey in May 1921 was a factor, as was D.D.T. Jabavu's address to students on the Israelite affair of the same month. But might not others have preceded Roux, say from the ICU? Whilst the author consulted white newspapers, including *Alice Times*, he did not venture into the black press (such as *Imvo Zabantsundu* or *Inkundla ya Bantu*) whose vernacular columns may well reveal more on *Koleji e Fort Hare*. It is unlikely the widely-publicised student "riots" at Healdtown in 1918, and across the veld at Lovedale in 1920, would not have impacted Fort Hare. It is also likely that early students knew something of the ANC – *Abantu-Batho* (in which D.D.T. Jabavu published) was sent there on exchange. The interest of the black press in Fort Hare was intense, with J.T. Jabavu its greatest champion, and *Abantu-Batho* joining him to urge its black staffing.<sup>14</sup> Scholars might also try and locate *S.A.N.C. Magazine*, a student quarterly first published in 1918, and *Christian Express* carried a regular "Lovedale and Fort Hare News" column, whilst the 1930 student Christian conference at Fort Hare suggests it was not all cricket and ballroom dancing in the early days.

But these and other periods and themes may safely be left to others – indeed the period after Massey's book has now been covered by Rico Chapman.<sup>15</sup> In the meantime, I encourage you all to read Daniel Massey's splendid history – and ponder the salutary lessons it brings to post-apartheid South Africa.

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### South Africa's lamentable legal legacy at the UN

#### J. Shearar, *Against the World: South Africa and Human Rights at the United Nations, 1945–1961*

Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2011  
298 pp  
ISBN 978-1-86888-598-5  
R260.00

Jeremy Shearar's book is "in essence an historico-legal survey", which sets out to explore the mindset of the members of the South African government and "administration officials behind events, whose public faces have often been chronicled". It aims to

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13. Covered very briefly in M.D.S. Norwala, "University of Fort Hare from 1916–26", BA thesis, University of Fort Hare, 1984, but in need of a more detailed study.
  14. See P. Limb (ed), *The People's Paper* (Johannesburg, forthcoming).
  15. R. Chapman, "A Culture of Resistance: Student Activism at the University of Fort Hare, South Africa, 1970–1994", PhD thesis, Howard University, 2008.

contribute to the “external” study of the history of human rights law by considering the constitutional, political, economic and social factors which have impacted on the development of that law and in which South Africa might have played a part” (p 2).

The book successfully achieves this goal. In 2007 a democratic South Africa, a self-perceived beacon of human rights promotion, fell foul of such a title in its first term as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. The issue of national interest in opposition to the promotion of human rights is a complex, contentious and, as demonstrated by Shearar’s book, long-running area of debate. In contrast to a transformed, contemporary South Africa, it is interesting to attempt to understand the thinking behind the leadership of a post-1945 non-democratic South Africa and its position on human rights law at the very beginnings of the UN organisation.

Former ambassador and South African permanent representative to the UN, Shearar is well placed to discuss the subject of the emergence of human rights law at the UN and South Africa’s position in relation to that role post-World War II. Academics, interested observers, South African historians and human rights buffs would all find this book an interesting exercise in dissecting the complex issue of international human rights law versus state sovereignty. One of the most important examples history can afford us is the opportunity to analyse events, after the fact, from a position of perspective. Shearar makes use of primary sources mainly found in South Africa’s Department of External Affairs (later Foreign Affairs) in an attempt to provide as accurate an account as possible of the thinking behind the practise of South African officials and law advisors at the UN.

The study is broken down into ten chapters, each of which covers a specific theme in the period 1945 to 1961. The first six chapters are dedicated to the evolution of human rights at the UN, including the fashioning of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, amongst other covenants. Shearar sets the scene with great clarity, UN legal lingo included, by describing the birth of the UN and the role played by South Africa’s wartime prime minister, J.C. Smuts, in the writing of the Preamble to the UN Charter. Shearar also tries to make sense of Smuts’ thinking behind South Africa’s domestic debate on whether to ratify the UN Charter. He offers his impression of Smuts as “living in another world” (p 18) and as playing the role of a global politician without reference to South Africa’s domestic politics.

Chapter two continues with the UN’s first General Assembly, in June 1946, and the complaint by the government of India over the South African government’s treatment of Indians in South Africa. Smuts responded to this agenda item by dismissing it as an internal matter, because it dealt with Indians who were nationals of South Africa and not Indian nationals. The Indian question was discussed more than once, including in 1948 when the National Party came to power on the platform of apartheid. The chapter also describes how the initial General Assembly debates on the treatment of South Africa’s Indians “set the tone for the arguments on the respective roles of the UN and the International Court of Justice [ICJ] on deciding the limits of domestic jurisdiction” (p 49). The next two chapters discuss South African law advisers’ comments on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the two covenants on human rights in comparison with South African legislation at the time. Shearar offers a quirky interpretation of how South African officials’ consistent abstention policy on covenant articles may have given the erroneous impression that the Pretoria government was demonstrating “open hostility towards the liberal human rights philosophy” (p 99) which characterised the majority of the General Assembly.

This is followed by the fifth chapter's examination of the UN's *Yearbook on Human Rights (YHR)*, whose task it was to collate all member states' human rights bills and declarations. Although South Africa's contributions to the yearbooks were often done with little enthusiasm, the chapter does account for them. Most importantly, perhaps, it attests to the increasing gap between South Africa's statute law and developments in the growth of international human rights law. This is further examined in chapter six, where human rights laws pertaining to the rights and duties of nations; the rights of women and children; refugees and the right of asylum; and self-determination and independence; are discussed. Shearar succinctly sums up the consequence of South Africa's persistent low profile in UN debates on the issues listed above as contributing to the isolation of the country from the rest of the world. Moreover, South Africa's inability to support the conventions on the political rights of women and that on the status of refugees, merely cemented allegations of discrimination based on these issues in its domestic legislation.

Chapter seven offers interesting insights into how South Africa's consistent use of the UN Charter's Article 2(7), the domestic jurisdiction principle, which Shearar describes as "obstinate adherence" (p 5), became increasingly singled out. In other words, the sentiment frequently expressed by South African representatives was that "domestic jurisdiction trumped allegations of human rights" (p 150). However, in light of the expanding number of developing nations to the Assembly, whose focus it was to advance the cause of human rights in their draft resolutions and to chip away at the validity of the use of Article 2(7), South Africa's pig-headedness was very quickly becoming an irritation. Certainly, when it came to South Africa's support of other nations' use of the principle, it often found itself far from sure-footed, resorting instead to making ambiguous comments on such issues.

Apartheid is dealt with in chapter eight, including a reference to the South African Minister of External Affairs, E.H. Louw's speech in the Fourteenth General Assembly, offering an "apologia for apartheid in the UN" (p 181). The Sharpeville killings are covered in chapter nine, as well as South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth and from the Commonwealth bloc at the UN. This is followed by a general study of the weakening relationship between South Africa and the UN between 1945 and 1961 in the final chapter.

In this book Shearar sets out to provide a survey (not a judgment) of the history of human rights law using South Africa's involvement, and in some cases its non-involvement, in shedding light on the development of that law. He does so with incredible detail and in a reasonably coherent way as to suggest that the reader need not be a professor of law to fathom its insightful contents.

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**A thought-provoking tale of the “cost of conscience”**

**G. Frankel, *Rivonia’s Children: Three Families and the Cost of Conscience in White South Africa***

Jacana Media, Auckland Park, 2011

338 pp

ISBN 978-1-43140-220-5

R175.00

In the “new” South Africa, it is easy to forget the draconian character of the old order when apartheid laws controlled all dimensions of public and private life. For its primary victims, “separate development” was merely a redefinition of oppression: it was, moreover, a cynical means to divide and rule. For the system’s beneficiaries, it was a means of addressing the so-called colour question while maintaining cheap labour and political power. When necessary, this meant brutal repression, as in the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 where at least 69 innocent black people were killed.

Some liberally inclined whites saw this outrage and the subsequent state of emergency, including the outlawing of the ANC and SACP, as a reason to emigrate; others turned to armed struggle. Among the latter were a group of selfless and brave individuals engaged in varying brands of activist fervour, Marxist and non-Marxist.

It is their story that is reconstructed in this new edition with masterly precision by Pulitzer prize-winner and *Washington Post* staff writer, Glenn Frankel.<sup>16</sup> Of particular concern to the *Post’s* onetime southern African correspondent (now head of the School of Journalism at the University of Texas, Austin) are the lives of Rusty and Hilda Bernstein, Joe Slovo and Ruth First, and Harold and AnnMarie Wolpe. More importantly, his focus is on the “cost of conscience”, the subtitle of the book.

The *dramatis personae* include a veritable who’s who of South African activists. Using memoirs, contemporary accounts, newspaper clippings, trial records, documents and extensive oral testimony, Frankel has woven a remarkable story, full of pathos but ultimately edifying and inspiring.

In 1961, Lilliesleaf farm in Rivonia, on the outskirts of Johannesburg, was purchased “as an incubator for a revolution” (p 71). It was, explains Frankel, set up as the secret headquarters for the underground Communist Party and as a safe house for political fugitives. One July afternoon in 1963, the special branch carried out a successful raid. In the aftermath of this swoop, nine comrades and Nelson Mandela (who was not among those surprised at Lilliesleaf, but was arrested shortly afterwards), were charged with sabotage.

Following a trial which ran from October 1963 to June 1964, life sentences were imposed on eight of the accused. The trial itself must surely rank as one of the great show trials of South African legal history; political theatre at its most profound. On the one side were heroes of the struggle; on the other side, representatives of a malevolent and illegitimate state, bent on destroying popular opposition.

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16. *Rivonia’s Children* was first published by Jonathan Ball in 1999. This new edition has a brief revised introduction and some minor factual changes.

It was during the trial that blacks saw in stark form the presence of at least some whites in the fight for liberation and that Mandela delivered his now-famous “it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die” speech (p 236) from the dock.

Frankel has dramatically captured a heroic and uplifting drama; the trauma of families split apart by a vicious security system; the dramatic escape of Harold Wolpe and Arthur Goldreich, aided by the indomitable AnnMarie Wolpe; the unwavering principles of Bram Fischer; and the talents and warmth of Hilda Bernstein.

We are introduced to the flamboyant James Kantor, brother-in-law of Harold Wolpe, to Ruth First, the Rosa Luxemburg of the resistance movement, and many others, including shadowy special branch figures. We also see in operation the arrogant prosecutorial skills of the ambitious state prosecutor, Percy Yutar. Essentially, however, the story revolves around the Bernstein, Wolpe and First/Slovo families where the “cost of conscience” was indeed massive.

One of the many issues judiciously considered by Frankel is the disproportionate number of Jews in the liberation struggle and the extent to which “Jewishness” was a factor in their political activism. On the surface it was of no consequence. Many Jewish activists were “openly hostile to Judaism and Jewish causes” and “Jewishness quickly ceased to be part of their self-identity” (p 44). But, adds Frankel, many of these radicals came from a left-wing Lithuanian-Jewish tradition: “... even as rejectionists they were firmly within the larger family of their contentious and self-contradictory faith” (p 45).

That sort of assertion is difficult to prove. A final answer explaining the disproportionate involvement of Jews (however defined) in the struggle may never be possible. Certainly an interesting literature has developed around this phenomenon, both in South Africa and beyond: the ethics of Judaism, social marginality, self-hate and the desire to escape Jewishness, the loneliness of migration and other factors have been suggested.<sup>17</sup>

Frankel reminds us too that very often the Jewish establishment was embarrassed by its radical co-religionists. Neither can we ignore the fact that the state prosecutor was Jewish. These issues continue to engage Jews and Jewish historians. Certainly the high visibility of Jews within the radical left was not lost on the state and the National Party press. “Where does the Jew stand in the white struggle for survival?”, asked Dirk Richard, editor of *Dagbreek*.<sup>18</sup>

*Rivonia's Children* is a magisterial tale, inspiring and thought-provoking. Frankel is a consummate writer, concerned with motives and perhaps more importantly, with implications. Quite clearly those whites who challenged the apartheid order contributed to the notable degree of racial reconciliation in the new South Africa. As Frankel explains:

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17. For thought-provoking accounts on the Jewish left and its motivations in South Africa, see James Campbell, “Beyond the Pale: Immigration and the South African Left”, in Milton Shain and Richard Mendelsohn (eds), *Memories, Realities and Dreams: Aspects of the South African Jewish Experience* (Jonathan Ball, Cape Town, 2002), pp 96-162 and Gideon Shimoni, *Community and Conscience: The Jews in Apartheid South Africa* (University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press and David Philip, Hanover, New Hampshire and Cape Town, 2003).

18. Cited in R. Mendelsohn and M. Shain, *The Jews in South Africa: An Illustrated History* (Jonathan Ball, Cape Town, 2008), p 148.

The fact that even a small group of whites was willing to put aside their privileged status and fight alongside blacks for racial justice meant to Mandela that people could not be judged solely by their skin colour; all whites should be given the chance to participate in the new society (p xviii).

For that alone, the Rivonia trialists and their families deserve the recognition and appreciation of white South Africans. Of course, ultimately, all South Africans benefit from racial reconciliation.

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### A vivid decade and a powerful legacy

#### **D.R. Magaziner, *The Law and the Prophets: Black Consciousness in South Africa, 1968–1977***

Jacana Media, Auckland Park, 2010  
300 pp  
ISBN 978-177009-910-4  
R185.00

With the current malaise of the ANC, interest has piqued in the history of Black Consciousness, with its moral compass and the powerful memory of its martyrs less sullied by the politics of expediency associated with post-1994 democracy. Daniel Magaziner's *The Law and the Prophets: Black Consciousness in South Africa, 1968–1977* has come as a timely contribution to the scholarship on Black Consciousness in South Africa and his study casts many of the young black student leaders of the 1960s and 1970s in clear and dramatic relief. The scholarship on Black Consciousness in South Africa lacks monographs, as Magaziner notes early on, and his book is a particularly welcome addition.

*The Law and the Prophets* is unashamedly an intellectual history of “anti-apartheid politics” that aims to push beyond “great” men and women to “broaden the category of African intellectual history” (p 5). Previous studies have looked to place Black Consciousness in the wider narrative of resistance to apartheid, stressing similarities and differences in approach from Charterism and Pan Africanism. This approach fails to sufficiently engage the originality and depth of the discourse; looking to understand the Black Consciousness movement, social scientists did not sufficiently engage with the originality of Black Consciousness’ ideas. *The Law and the Prophets* demonstrates the strength of the historical perspective to gauge and assert the broader impact of Black Consciousness on South Africa and to give closer attention to its ideas. A key success of Black Consciousness, Magaziner shows, was to overcome the climate of fear that pervaded South Africa in the 1960s in the wake of the banning of African political parties and the imprisonment of black leaders on Robben Island. It was this psychological victory, he implies, that made an event like the 1976 Soweto uprising possible.

The compact format of *The Law and the Prophets* is a distillation and refinement of the insights of Magaziner’s substantial University of Wisconsin doctoral study. A most helpful contribution is to ask different questions of Black Consciousness than standard treatments have done thus far. The real research thrust is an engagement with the process of translation of international theological currents, particularly Black Theology, into a political set of ideas to counter apartheid’s religion of separation. Magaziner is

particularly interested in the intricacies of faith: how a minority of Christians embraced a radical Christianity in the 1960s and 1970s, influencing black activist culture to live faith politically. Activists claimed the right to speak the true Gospel of political freedom and cast apartheid as the prime evil. Magaziner emphasises “contingency” (p 9) in the development and unfolding of the account of Black Consciousness and introduces an intricate unfolding of state repression and activist response. His focus is acute from the start and his eye is quick to draw on nuance, eschewing broad brush strokes, a feature that makes his study demanding of the reader.

The book is divided into three parts: the first gives close attention to the development of Black Consciousness ideas in student seminars and explores the periodical, *SASO Newsletter*, between 1968 and 1972. The second focuses closely on theological debate. The third examines the confrontation between the “law” of the apartheid state and the “prophets” of the Black Consciousness movement, emphasising a shift from debate and flexibility to a later stance of confrontation and a greater rigidity in ideas.

The sixth chapter crucially delineates the development of a locally expressed theology of liberation and the creation of “the Black Messiah”. Increasing state repression of the movement demanded Black Consciousness to discursively confront death, which activists did by a close rhetorical association with the death of Christ. The religious logic, Magaziner argues, came to be the overriding impetus, because as a “sense of mission” overrode the earlier “dialogic tension” (p 132) that was at ease with intellectual independence. In so doing, he argues, by the mid-1970s Black Consciousness asserted orthodoxy and in some sense challenged its own basic premise: of Black Consciousness being a way of life, of continual searching. It was through a mixture of contingent events and political intent that Black Consciousness assumed its shape, Magaziner argues. Chapter 8, “The Age of Politics: Confronting the State”, turns to explore the mobilisation of its ideas behind an expressly political purpose to birth, the shaping of what Magaziner describes as “Black Consciousness the Movement” (p 140). As state repression quickened and the movement radicalised, “events spun out of Black Consciousness’s control” (p 141). The expulsion of SASO president, Themba Sono, indicated its change from intellectual openness to doctrinaire party politics over the issue of Bantustans (p 147).

*The Law and the Prophets* shows particular sensitivity to the gendered dimensions of Black Consciousness discourse, which is synthesised into the overall analysis, noting the early efforts of black students to counter the emasculating effects of apartheid. Magaziner takes a strong stand on the question of Black Consciousness’ apparent blindness to gender oppression, asserting the concurrent movement of “international feminism” (pp 34–35), and asserting a strategic choice to mute the challenge of gender and assert the primacy of black masculinity. The discourse conflated this masculinity with maturity, as Black Consciousness laid claim to mature, adult selves.

*The Law and the Prophets* is impressive in its mastering of sources. Substantial oral history research conducted with close to 60 activists, archival material and secondary literature are all deftly interwoven. Trial transcripts are a prominent source, pursued in search of the interior lives of activists and the human drama, personalities and disappointments of the decade. A real strength of the book is thus its ability to depict clearly the language of Black Consciousness activists. The reader is introduced to a wide range of characters including theological student Sabelo Ntwasa, theologian Manas

Buthelezi and martyr Abraham Onkgopotse Tiro. Magaziner is particularly strong when unpacking complex concepts, for example exploring in detail the links between Kaunda's humanism and Biko's concept of African culture (pp 45–46) and the deployment of Paulo Freire's concept of conscientisation by South African activists (pp 125ff). Not surprising, given its university birthplace, Black Consciousness was a modern enterprise, a self-aware and self-conscious search for identity, and thus very much a product of the "Western academic tradition" (p 41). Cultural production is also a prominent theme; Magaziner acknowledges the creative ferment associated with Black Consciousness and is quick to use the insights of literary analysis. He concludes his study with a consideration of South African consumer culture and artistic production.

*The Law and the Prophets* is strong on context, asserting the primacy of the radicalism of the global 1960s movements for social change. The book helpfully links Black Consciousness to the literature of Black Power in the United States and the detailed footnotes draw comparisons with wider contexts in African history and the history of the US Civil Rights Movement and the American New Left. The critical South African context, Magaziner asserts, was the loss of the freehold township, Sophiatown, and its crushing blow to black creative and intellectual ferment. This was an event that left a gaping void that the black students of the 1960s and 1970s were painfully conscious of. However, the study stresses the original and new in the discourse, asserting its preoccupation with existential questions of being rather than the more conventional "political" debates of Africanism or multiracialism (p 8). As the pressure on the Black Consciousness Movement intensified, a shift to a more conventional politics finally overtook the "totally new reality" South African activists initially envisioned, prioritising the narrower and immediate focus of victory over apartheid.

One weakness is that the study lacks an engagement with other political movements underway; a requirement of a history of Black Consciousness surely must pose the question of its importance vis-à-vis concurrent political movements for change. The lack of consideration of contemporary labour activism, for instance, looms large and the 1973 Durban strikes are passed over with the briefest mention. At worst this omission misrepresents the 1970s because the study claims to bring this decade back into critical consideration. Without a focus on the momentum of civic organisations through the 1970s, Magaziner is also not able to adequately address the burst of "civic organisations" (p 185) he mentions, or the mutations of Black Consciousness into a leftist vanguard party in the 1980s. The close focus on theology also renders silent those in the movement, such as Strini Moodley, who rejected the premise of faith. Biko's own highly individual form of religious expression fits somewhat uncomfortably within the delineation of the pervasive religiosity of the movement that Magaziner asserts was characteristic and ubiquitous.

*The Law and the Prophets* comes as a particularly welcome addition to the scholarship on Black Consciousness, bringing a high calibre of research to bear on a vivid decade and a powerful legacy that needs to be intelligently and rigorously revisited as an integral element in the struggle for the democratisation of South Africa.

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## Die storie van “Pikkewyn”

**T. Papenfus, *Pik Botha and his Times***

Litera Publications, Pretoria, 2010

1029 pp

ISBN 978-1-920188-34-4

R395.95

Talle biografieë oor prominente Suid-Afrikaanse politici het al die lig gesien maar min van hulle lees soos 'n roman. 'n Roman met elemente van spanning, ontroering, ontugtering en humor. “Pikkewyn”, oftewel Pik Botha, se verhaal is een van 'n begaafde en besielende Nasionale Party (NP) politikus wat hom gestaal het teen talle politieke en persoonlike uitdagings en terugslae. 'n Politikus wat in politieke denke, beleidsformulering en uitsprake sy tyd in sommige opsigte vooruit was, en in sekere opsigte 'n vars bries in die bedompige Suid-Afrikaanse politiek van die 1970's en 1980's gebring het. Sy uitsprake en politieke denke het hom dikwels in diep waters laat beland by kollegas en kiesers maar dit het hom nie van stryk laat bring nie. Dit is die verhaal van iemand wat daarvoor bekend was om gedigte op die agterkant van sigarettdosies te skryf; 'n ware ambassadeur was wat in Suid-Afrika se toekoms geglo het; iemand wat 'n deeglike begrip gehad het vir al die land se probleme maar ook besef het dat sy demokratisering teen 'n prys sou kom.

Pik Botha was nie die stereotiepe stroef, akademiese, donker-raam-bril politikus van sy tyd nie. Hy kon maklik sosiaal verkeer en in ligte luim oor die enorme politieke uitdagings van Suid-Afrika skerts. Blykens die hoofstuk, “The ladies man”, was hy glo ook 'n gunsteling onder vrouens binne en buite die Nasionale Party.

Botha word in hierdie omslagtige en deeglike biografie weerspieël as 'n mens wat betekenisvolle gedigte kon skryf – iemand wat geworstel het met diep emosies soos liefde, hartseer, teleurstelling en moedeloosheid. Teleurstellings – polities en persoonlik – was daar baie, soos blyk uit die hoofstukke, “Cowboys don't cry” en “At the Rubicon”. Eersgenoemde is 'n goeie voorbeeld van hoe talle NP-ondersteuners nie die werk, uitgangspunte en uitlatings van Botha verstaan het nie. Dit het daartoe gelei dat hy in sy tyd talle dreigemente van gewone burgers ontvang het, wat groot persoonlike teleurstelling meegebring het. In “At the Rubicon” loop die tema van teleurstelling soos 'n goue draad deur. Die gebeure voor en rondom P.W. Botha se welbekende Rubicon-toespraak het Botha baie teleurgestel. Sy hoop dat die staatspresident in sy hervormingstog Suid-Afrika verder weg van apartheid sou lei het in die niet verdwyn. Pik Botha het 'n kardinale rol gespeel in die opstel van 'n toespraak wat die staatspresident op 15 Augustus 1985 sou lewer ten aanskou van die hele wêreld waarin hy fundamentele verandering in die NP se beleid sou aankondig. Maar dit het nie gebeur nie, met die gevolg dat Pik Botha geweldige verleentheid moes verduur nadat hy persoonlik voor die tyd die media ingelig het dat groot veranderinge verwag kon word. Sy teleurstelling was dus groot.

Hierdie indrukwekkende werk van Theresa Papenfus wat 1029 bladsye beslaan (en talle foto's insluit) is die resultaat van jarelange diepgaande navorsing. Volgens Papenfus het die boek reeds in 1996 sy beslag gekry; of selfs 30 jaar vroeër in Worcester toe sy een middag ná skool *Die Burger* opgetel het met die opskrif, “Suid-Afrika wen”, met verwysing na Suid-Afrika se oorwinning in die Wêreldhof om Suidwes-Afrika (nou

Namibië) te behou as deel van die land. Haar biografie is 'n gesaghebbende bron van inligting, op die man af, sonder enige voorbehoude of verskonings.

Papenfus slaag suksesvol daarin om Pik Botha te plaas teen die politieke en sosiale agtergrond van sy tyd. Sy beeld hom uit as 'n politieke leier wat vanaf die 1970's tot die 1990's deurlopend sy oog gehou het op die toekoms van Suid-Afrika. Botha was 'n gesoute politikus tydens 'n stormagtige tydperk in die geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika wat reeds vroeg in sy politieke loopbaan geskool is in die wandelgange en raadsale van die Verenigde Nasies, die Amerikaanse Withuis en verskeie diplomatieke vestings in Europa. Hy het egter baie kommentaar ontlok gedurende sy politieke loopbaan, en self daarna. So het Aartsbiskop Desmond Tutu per geleentheid in September 2003 die opmerking gemaak: "He ... did a commendable job defending the indefensible, I mean apartheid!" (p 2). Vic Zazeraj, Botha se privaatsekretaris oor baie jare heen, het 'n stappie verder gegaan en beweer dat: "If there was one man who dragged South Africa towards democracy, kicking and screaming, it was Pik. Not F.W. de Klerk" (p 309).

In die hoofstukke, "A Style of his Own"; "We Want Pik"; en "A Black President" word Botha nie net uitgebeeld as 'n gesoute politikus nie, maar ook as 'n gewone mens met 'n unieke styl en groot aanhang onder NP-ondersteuners. Die hoofstuk, "A Black President", verskaf 'n goeie voorbeeld van hoe sommige uitsprake van Botha hom in diep water laat beland het by sy eie kollegas en ondersteuners. Botha was van mening dat Suid-Afrika eendag deur 'n swart president gelei sou word en het bygevoeg dat hy geen probleem daarmee sou hê nie. Hierdie uitlating, asook die feit dat hy vir sommige kollegas en ondersteuners 'n té populêre voorkoms gehad het, sou 'n negatiewe uitwerking hê op sy kans in die leierstryd wat in 1989 binne die NP ontstaan het – 'n faktor wat goed toegelig word in die hoofstuk, "Wind of Change – and a Scuffle on the Bridge".

Papenfus se werk is belangrik om vier redes. Dit is 'n omvangryke, wetenskaplik-nagevorste stuk werk. Die skrywer verskaf 'n gedetailleerde oorsig van Pik se agtergrond, sy grootwordjare, en hoe en waar hy betrokke was in die politiek van die tyd. Die vroeë hoofstukke, "The Making of Pik Botha"; "The Early Years"; "The Frozen North"; "The Wonderboom Seat"; en "New Boy", is voorbeelde hiervan. Die boek slaag daarin om Botha se optrede en politieke motivering in perspektief te plaas sodat die leser tot 'n beter begrip kan kom van wie hy werklik was. Daar is dikwels in die verlede deur baie NP-lede opgemerk dat Pik Botha goedgegunstiglik Suid-Afrika sou oorhandig aan die swart meerderheid. Hierdie boek van Papenfus slaag daarin om hierdie uitgangspunt suksesvol te verduidelik, en selfs te weerlê aangesien die leser tot 'n beter begrip kom van waarom, hoe en vanuit watter verwysingsraamwerk Botha opgetree het. In die tweede plek is hierdie boek belangrik omdat dit die leser deurgaans bewus maak van die ingewikkelde binnelandse verwickelinge in Suid-Afrika, self vóór Botha aktief was in die NP en politiek. Verder illustreer dit goed die moeilike omstandighede waaronder Botha by talle geleenthede Suid-Afrika en sy apartheidsbeleid in die buiteland op verskillende verhoë moes gaan verdedig. Vergelyk in hierdie opsig, die hoofstukke "The Weary World and the Truth"; en "Ambassador to the United Nations".

Derdens is hierdie biografie van belang omdat daar nie net nuwe inligting oor die persoon Pik Botha aan die leser bekend gestel word nie, maar ook nuwe inligting rakende aspekte waaroor daar nie baie in die verlede geskryf is nie. 'n Voorbeeld hiervan is die bespreking in die hoofstuk, "Nkomati in Tatters", van die rampspoedige vlug waarin Samora Machel, die president van Mosambiek, omgekam het en die negatiewe invloed

wat hierdie gebeurtenis gehad het op die reeds wankelrige Nkomati-akkoord. Suid-Afrika is vanuit verskillende oorde – waaronder Mosambiek, Zambië en Moskou – verantwoordelik gehou vir die vliegongeluk. Hierdie voorval het ook nuwe druk op Suid-Afrika geplaas ten opsigte van die apartheidsbeleid.

Die boek is in die vierde plek belangrik omdat dit die leser weer opnuut bewus maak van die ongemaklike en moeilik posisie waarin Suid-Afrika homself binne die internasionale politiek bevind het weens sy binnelandse beleid, en wat die rol van Pik Botha hierin was. Die hoofstukke, “A Sea of Troubles”; “Pik and the Rhodesians”; en “South-West Becomes Namibia”, handel oor aangeleenthede waarin Botha ’n belangrike rol gespeel het om oplossings te vind vir uitdagings wat gevolg het op die winde van verandering wat sedert die 1960’s oor Afrika gewaai het. Uit hierdie hoofstukke blyk dit ook duidelik dat Botha die groter wêreldspoliteik verstaan het en besef het dat internasionale druk op Suid-Afrika sou toeneem ten einde ’n demokrasie daar te stel.

Papenfus wend ’n goeie poging aan om, in 39 omvangryke hoofstukke met treffende titels, nuwe (en meer) lig te werp op die politikus Pik Botha se lewe – nie net sy politieke loopbaan nie, maar ook sy lewe daarvoor en daarna. Die leser word in hierdie hoofstukke as’t ware op ’n reis geneem deur die lewe van Botha in die politiek teen die agtergrond van Pik die mens, eggenoot, pa en digter. Papenfus slaag daarin om op ’n doeltreffende wyse Pik Botha se verwysingsraamwerk, persoonlikheid, politieke loopbaan en al die faktore wat daarop ingewerk het, te verduidelik. Hierdie nuwe biografie verteenwoordig dus ’n goeie en deeglike toevoeging tot die biblioteek van biografieë van groot politieke rolspelers in die Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis.

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### **Die oorlog is verby, maar die sielkundige letsels bly**

#### **A. Feinstein, *Kopwond: Vergete Slagoffer van die Bosoorlog***

Tafelberg, Kaapstad, 2011

228 pp

ISBN 978-0-624-05287-6

R170.00

Uitgewers publiseer steeds boeke oor die Namibiese Vryheidsoorlog en die daarmee gepaardgaande betrokkenheid van die destydse Suid-Afrikaanse Weermag (SAW) in Angola (’n uitgerekte stryd wat vanaf 1966 tot 1989 geduur het). Dit is duidelik dat daar by baie (hoofsaaklik wit) Suid-Afrikaners die behoefte bestaan om meer te wete te kom omtrent hierdie uitmergelende oorlog, wat die Suid-Afrikaanse belastingbetaler baie geld uit die sak gejaag het. En dan is daar die ouerwordende groep “oudstryders” (die meeste van hulle wit, nasionale dienspligtiges uit die jare ’70 en ’80 van die vorige eeu) by wie daar die behoefte bestaan om “my storie” te lees, miskien in die hoop om dit wat destyds gedoen en ervaar is, beter te begryp; miskien ook om vrede te maak met daardie verlede, om afsluiting te kry.

Die boeke, wat sedert die einde van die 1970’s oor bogenoemde “Grensoorlog” of “Bosoorlog” gepubliseer is (die meeste het egter die afgelope dekade of wat verskyn), handel hoofsaaklik oor die militêre gebeure wat in die noorde van Namibië en/of in die

suide van Angola afgespeel het. Nou is daar egter 'n boek wat fokus op die sielkundige effek wat die oorlog “op die grens” en “in die bos” op sommige van die Suid-Afrikaanse soldate gehad het.

Anthony Feinstein se *Kopwond: Vergete Slagoffer van die Basoorlog* het oorspronklik ook in 2011 in Engels as *Battle Scarred: Hidden Costs of the Border War* (Tafelberg, Kaapstad) verskyn. Die outeur het as afgestudeerde mediese dokter sy twee jaar verpligte nasionale diensplig aan die begin van die 1980's gedoen en vervolgens is hy ook vir 'n aantal kampe opgeroep. Hy is in die psigiatriese afdeling van die Suid-Afrikaanse Geneeskundige Diens aangewend en het in die loop van sy dienspligtermyn 'n groot aantal Suid-Afrikaanse soldate psigiatries geëvalueer en behandel: aanvanklik in Namibië se Ovamboland; later, tydens sy kampe, by townships soos Sebokeng en Sharpeville (waar lede van die SAW in die 1980's ontplooi is om wet en orde te handhaaf, of te herstel, in die jare toe groot dele van die land deur onluste en gepaardgaande geweldpleging geteister is). Feinstein het deurgaans dagboek van sy ervaringe gehou en dié notas gebruik in die skryf van *Battle Scarred/Kopwond*.

Feinstein fokus in die meeste van die boek se twaalf hoofstukke op 'n aantal gevallestudies: op persone wie se verwikkelde simptome 'n onmisbare indruk op hom gemaak het. Ten einde te verseker dat die vertrouensverhouding tussen dokter en pasiënt nie geskend word nie, het Feinstein mense se name verander en hul identiteit ook waar nodig gewysig. Op dieselfde wyse probeer hy ook om die identiteit van sy kollegas te beskerm. In die boek se “outeursnota” (voorwoord) meld Feinstein verder (p 10) dat:

Die dialoog in die boek is die produk van rekonstruksie, my onvolmaakte herinneringsvermoë en digterlike vryheid. Niks daarvan is gegrond op aanhalings wat verbatim neergepen is nie. Waaraan egter nie gekarring is nie, is die gevalle self. Tekens en simptome en hoe dit tot uiting gekom het, is getrou aan die aantekeninge wat ek op die bepaalde dag gemaak het.

Feinstein neem die leser tot binne die psige van getraumatiseerde soldate – en dit wat hy skets, is uiteraard nie altyd mooi nie.

Die gevolg is 'n boek wat amper soos 'n storieboek lees, waarvan die kern (hopelik) histories korrek is, maar wat tog fiktiewe elemente bevat. Gevolglik is dit moeilik om die boek histories-wetenskaplik te ontleed en te evalueer. Dit is nie 'n tradisionele historiese bron nie, maar gee ook nie voor om een te wees nie. Dit vang wel die gees en atmosfeer van die lewe as soldaat in diens van die destydse SAW (en die apartheidsregering) goed vas, en stel die leser bloot aan die trauma en onsigbare wonde waaroor soldate inderdaad selde praat. Daar word nie doekies omgedraai oor drankmisbruik, slapeloosheid en gewelddadigheid nie. Die taalgebruik is kru (kyk byvoorbeeld pp 72–74), maar konteks- en waarheidsgetrou. Op patrollie ervaar Feinstein hoe die bloedige konflik selfs geharde soldate tot breekpunt dryf.

Uiteraard is daar in hierdie tipe herinneringsgeskrif geen voetnote of bronnelys nie. Daar is egter wel 'n hele aantal foto's (waarskynlik deur die outeur self geneem of laat neem). Feinstein vertel die verhale van oorlogslagoffers met begrip, maar plaas nie die gebeure tydens die Namibiese Vryheidsoorlog in 'n breër historiese konteks nie. Die belangstellende leser, maar iemand wat nog nie oor die gevolge van oorlogstrauma tydens, byvoorbeeld, die Eerste en Tweede Wêreldoorlog gelees het nie, kan dus gerus kennis neem van die feit dat daar vroeër ongenaakbaar (sonder begrip en wreed) teenoor diegene wat deur oorlog getraumatiseer is, opgetree is. Tydens die Eerste Wêreldoorlog

het die Britte en Franse byvoorbeeld honderde van hul eie soldate, wat ons vandag weet aan post-traumatische stres gelyk het, weens “lafhartigheid” tereggestel. Kyk ook die berugte “face-slapping incidents” waaraan die befaamde Amerikaanse bevelvoerder, luitenant-generaal George S. Patton, hom in Augustus 1943 in Sicilië skuldig gemaak het. Gelukkig was daar teen die 1970’s reeds veel meer begrip vir die “kopwonde” wat oorlog kan veroorsaak.

Streng akademies gesproke is Anthony Feinstein se *Kopwond: Vergete Slagoffer van die Bosoorlog* nie ’n baie bevredigende werk nie, maar dit belig ’n tot dusver verwaarloosde aspek van die oorlog in Namibië en Angola, en voeg ’n belangrike dimensie by tot die sogenaamde “grensoorlogliteratuur”. Die volledige verhaal van hierdie “ander oorlog”, die oorlog wat binne in mense gewoed het en wat geestelike en sielkundige letsels gelaat het, daardie verhaal moet nog behoorlik wetenskaplik nagevors en geskryf word. Intussen sal Feinstein se boek mense hopelik wel aan die dink sit, help om die konsep “oorlogslagoffer” te verbreed en mense help om met meer begrip na sommige oorlogslagoffers te kyk en te luister. Daar is immers nog baie ander verhale wat (ook om terapeutiese redes) na geluister behoort te word en verkieslik ook opgeteken moet word, sodat daar met verloop van tyd ’n meer volledige historiese beeld van “kopwonde” gevorm kan word.

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*Universiteit van die Vrystaat*

### Toeganklike boek oor die kern van die Grensoorlog

#### **A. van Wyk, *Die Roem en die Rou: Stories agter Honoris Crux***

Litera Publikasies, Pretoria, 2008

309 pp

ISBN 9781-920188-31-3

R245.00

Dit is moeilik om nie die rye nuwe publikasies oor die sogenaamde Grensoorlog (oftewel die Namibiese Vryheidsoorlog, 1966–1989) mis te kyk wanneer ’n persoon sy of haar naaste boekwinkel besoek nie. Menige veterane van die oorlog en ander belangstellendes stel tans die verhale en ervaringe van gewone Suid-Afrikaanse troepe op skrif. Hierdie geskryfte dek alreeds ’n verskeidenheid temas, wat daartoe gelei het dat kundiges op die gebied daarna verwys as “grensliteratuur”.<sup>19</sup> At van Wyk lewer ook sy bydrae tot hierdie gesprek met sy werk, *Die Roem en die Rou: Stories agter Honoris Crux*, wat handel oor die ontvangers van die mees gesogte militêre toekening wat deur die destydse Suid-Afrikaanse Verdedigingsmag (SAVM) toegeken kon word. Hoe nuut die boek is, is ’n ander saak aangesien Van Wyk erken dat die manuskrip grotendeels gebaseer is op navorsing wat hy in die 1980’s voltooi het. Van Wyk het alreeds in die laat 1970’s en vroeë 1980’s onderhoude gevoer met soldate wat die toekening gekry het vir (wat die SAVM beskou het as) “heldedade”. Wat hierdie heldedade behels het is nie altyd aan die Suid-Afrikaanse publiek openbaar nie. Die verhale wat Van Wyk destyds bymekaar gemaak het, word nou uiteindelik vertel.

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19. Vergelyk bv. A. Wessels, “Laaste Woord oor dié Oorlog nog nie Gespreek”, *Historia*, 56, 2, November 2011, p 227.

At van Wyk, wat voorheen aan die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika verbonde was, is nie 'n nuweling op die gebied van Suid-Afrikaanse militêre geskiedenis nie. Van Wyk se werk oor die parlement se debat oor die Unie se toetreding tot die Tweede Wêreldoorlog word in menige bronnelyste aangetref, maar sedertdien het sy fokus meestal geval op die Grensoorlog. In 1983 het sy eerste weergawe van die ervarings van SAVM-soldate die lig gesien en dit is selfs uitgesaai deur 'n radio-omroeper wat Van Wyk se eerste Honoris-Crux boek stuk-stuk aan die publiek bekend gestel het. Sedertdien is die verhale weer bekend gestel, met nuwe feite in die teks wat volgens Van Wyk nie vir die generaals van ouds aanvaarbaar was nie.

Met die eerste oogopslag lyk dit asof die boek nêr oor die bitterheid en hartseer van die Grensoorlog handel. Met 'n aanhaling op die stofblad soos volg: "Pa't mos gesê ek moet vir Pa 'n ding doen!" verwag 'n mens vertellinge oor 'n gebreinspoelde generasie jong mans wat tevergeefs vir Suid-Afrika moes gaan veg. 'n Treurige narratief, soortgelyk aan Bertie Cloete se boek, *Pionne*,<sup>20</sup> blyk die leser se voorland te wees. Die leser word egter vanuit die staanspoor aangenaam verras deur Van Wyk se mooi uiteensetting van die Grensoorlog, die betekenis van die Honoris Crux-medalje, en hoe dit gebeur het dat manlike Suid-Afrikaanse skoolverlaters diensplig moes gaan doen op 'n grens waar bitter min van hulle ooit voorheen was. Myns insiens slaag Van Wyk goed daarin om die basiese historiese konteks van die oorlog aan die algemene publiek te verduidelik. Van Wyk het die vermoë om soldate se persoonlikhede en sienings vernuftig vas te vang in sy beskrywing van die ervarings waarvoor hulle die Honoris Crux ontvang het. Die boek maak dit maklik om te begryp wat die soldaat gesien en beleef het toe hy sy makker verloor het, of sy vyand se geskut moes trotseer.

Die boek bevat 54 verhale en dek dus nie al die Honoris Crux-ontvangers se stories nie. Helaas verskaf die skrywer nie 'n rede vir sy seleksie nie. Dit bly 'n raaisel hoekom iemand soos sersant-majoor Trevor "Porky" Wright se heldedaad nie vertel word nie, veral aangesien hy nog steeds in die Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Verdedigingsmag dien en dus maklik genader kon word. Daar is ook geen duidelike verbintenis tussen die onderskeie soldate se verhale nie, behalwe dat elkeen 'n ontvanger van die Honoris Crux was. Van Wyk rangskik die geselekteerde stories chronologies, sodat die intensiteit van die oorlog vanuit die verskillende ervarings na vore kom. Die "Rou" stories wissel van die Suid-Afrikaanse loodse wat in Rhodesiese uniform moes veg teen die "rebellemagte" van die huidige Zimbabwe, tot hoe die Suid-Afrikaanse gemeganiseerde troepedraers flenters geskiet is deur Kubane in Angola. Verder is daar verhale oor hoe soldate vriendskappe gesmee het en in lewensgevaarlike situasies mekaar tot hulp gesnel het, waardeur die ligter en meer roemryke kant van hierdie oorlog na vore kom. 'n Goeie voorbeeld hiervan is die verhaal van sers. Rosentruach en wrn. Kussendragter wat in 'n lokval hul beseerde bemanning met hul ambulans, genaamd Suzi, moes verwyder om die lewens van die 140 man by Quilengues te red (pp 105–107).

Hierdie boek verskaf ruimte aan die "helde" van die SAVM. Dit verskaf dus 'n nuttige bydrae tot die groter debat oor die Grensoorlog aangesien dit die ervaringe en ondervindinge van soldate op voetsoolvlak uitlig. Daar moet ook bygevoeg word dat Van Wyk die ironie van sommige Honoris Crux-aanbevelings besonder mooi uitlig – veral in sy beklemtoning van die eerste en laaste aanbevelings.

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20. B. Cloete, *Pionne* (Hemel en See Boeke, Hermanus, 2009).

Die boek word afgesluit met 'n lys van al die ontvangers van die Honoris Crux. Hierdie register is handig om enige verdere verwysings na 'n ontvanger of 'n gebeurtenis met gemak na te slaan. Wat gemis word, is 'n verklarende woordelys wat al die onbekende terme in die boek aan die leser verduidelik. Indien kaarte van die gebiede waar die verskeie operasies plaasgevind het ingesluit was, sou dit die leser gehelp het om die area ter sprake beter te verstaan en die gevegte uit te pluus. Daarenteen moet genoem word dat die foto's van die onderskeie Honoris Crux-ontvangers, wat aan die begin van elke verhaal verskyn, die leser help om die soldaat se ervaringe te visualiseer.

Ná die lees van die laaste verhaal oor "Piet die Medic" (pp 286–287), wat selfs ná 'n kort verduideliking steeds 'n skim vir die leser bly, sal mens verskoon word indien hy of sy onsteld is oor die realiteite wat blanke Suid-Afrikaanse dienspligtiges moes ondergaan. Dit is miskien hier waar die boek se swakheid vorendag kom. Net sommige van die verhale onthul wat ná die oorlog met die "helde" gebeur het. Die verromantisering van hul ervaringe sou sekerlik versag kon word deur 'n meer nugtere (of selfs ontnguterende) blik op hul na-oorlogse heraanpassing in die burgerlike samelewing. Dit is wel waar dat hierdie soldate in 'n oomblik 'n verskil gemaak het, maar die vraag bly staan: het hierdie enkele episode 'n positiewe verskil aan hul lewens gemaak? Dit was miskien die geval gewees met dié soldate wat die hoogste eer verwerf het, maar dit is hier waar Van Wyk se werk 'n gaping laat wat deur toekomstige navorsers ondersoek sal moet word.

*Die Roem en die Rou* raak die kern van die oorlog aan en Van Wyk slaag daarin om dit toeganklik te maak. Alhoewel die boek nie 'n deurtastende bron vir enige streng-akademiese studie oor die Grensoorlog is nie, sal dit vir seker van nut wees vir enige aspirantkenner van die oorlog om ook die verheerliking van die oorlog te probeer verstaan.

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### **Kroniek van 'n volksanger**

#### **M. Slabbert en D. de Villiers, *David Kramer: 'n Biografie***

Tafelberg, Kaapstad, 2011  
384 pp  
ISBN 978-0-624-04967-8  
R195.00

'n Biografie van David Kramer is al lank nodig. Slabbert en De Villiers het hierdie taak aangepak en 'n belangrike optekening van 'n Suid-Afrikaanse musikant se lewe gelewer. Die biografie is in samewerking met die Kramers gedoen en ontbreek derhalwe 'n paar kritiese komponente as biografie. Dit wat wel gedoen is, is egter omvattend en noukeurig. Dit is duidelik dat die Kramers gesteld is op hulle privaatheid, wat die werk van die twee biograwe aansienlik bemoeilik het. Veral Renaye Kramer, David se vrou, bly 'n vae randfiguur in die David Kramer-fenomeen. Hulle is alreeds sedert hulle skooldae saam en sy bestuur die sake- en administratiewe sy van sy musiek. Dog weet ons nie uit die biografie of sy ook, nes haar man, van Joodse afkoms is nie.

Die boek bestaan uit vyf dele, voorafgegaan deur 'n langerige skrywersnota en 'n

inleiding. Elke afdeling beslaan drie of vier hoofstukke wat die tema van die afdeling chronologies hanteer. Die afdelings oorspronke chronologies met mekaar, wat steurend werk in hierdie biografie. Die skrywersnota verduidelik dat die aanvanklike idee was om die werk van David Kramer na te speur en te kontekstualiseer. Die bereidwillige samewerking van die Kramers het dit egter in 'n biografie omskep. Dit is geensins krities nie, alhoewel die biograwe die stelling in die skrywersnota maak.

Die inleiding verskaf die agtergrond van Kramer se Joodse oorsprong, wat soortgelyk is aan dié van menige Joodse immigrante na Suid Afrika, en sy gesin se vestiging in Worcester, waar Kramer dan ook gebore is. Die Kramers het vinnig hul Joodse geloof afgeskud, wat hulle skynbaar as iets van die verlede beskou het wat hulle net in die toekoms sou belemmer. Deel 1 behandel Kramer se kinderjare. Die gesinslewe was klaarblyklik gesond en die normale omgang van sosiale byeenkomste was aan die orde van die dag. Slabbert en De Villiers doen moeite om die konteks van die tydsgleuf weer te gee. Daar word ook gefokus op die plaaslike musiektooneel op Worcester en die jong Kramer se blootstelling daaraan. Dit het hom heelwat stof vir van sy latere musiek verskaf. Ongelukkig verskaf die biograwe nie meer detail oor hoekom Kramer so intens aangetrokke tot dié musiek was nie. Waar en wanneer hy sy eerste kitar gekry het en hoe hy homself geleer speel het, is byvoorbeeld aspekte wat 'n mens sou verwag het groter aandag in 'n musikant se biografie sal geniet.

Deel 2 dek Kramer se vertrek uit Worcester: eers om diensplig te gaan doen en daarna om in Engeland tekstielontwerp te studeer. Hier het hy die volle lewe van die vroeë 1970's se vryhede ervaar. Daar kon hy baie musiekopvoerings bywoon van musikante wat wissel van Leonard Cohen, Paul McCartney, David Bowie tot McGhee en Terry. Kramer was ook baie produktief in sy eie werk en skryf tydens dié periode baie gedigte wat hy later in liedjies sou omwerk. Hy doen ook 'n toer saam met Renaye deur Europa. Dit is duidelik dat hierdie tydvak intellektueel vir Kramer stimulerend was, maar dat dit nie vir hom noodwendig aangedui het wat die rigting is waarin musiek hom sal neem nie. Hy keer na Suid Afrika terug nadat hy gegradueer het en werk as 'n tekstielontwerper in Worcester waar hy begin om optredes te hou. Na 'n mislukte poging deur Kramer en sy vrou om te emigreer, verskuif hulle Kaapstad toe. Hy begin meer optredes gee, maar behou steeds sy werk by 'n tekstielmaatskappy. Dit is jammer dat die biograwe nie die mislukte migrasiepoging beter ondersoek het nie aangesien dit steeds 'n kontensieuse aspek is vir wit Suid-Afrikaners. Wat sy musikale ontwikkeling betref, gee Kramer gereeld optredes voor klein intieme gehore by privaathuise. 'n Mens is verstom om te dink wat die struikelblokke was om 'n musikant in die voor-digitale era te bemark. So het dit Kramer 'n goeie vier jaar gevat om sy eerste langspeelplaat vry te stel.

Deel 3 begin met die uitreiking van Kramer se eerste langspeelplaat, "Bakgat". Dit is dan ook sy eerste kennismaking met die lewe van 'n openbare persoon. Dit is 'n tema wat die biograwe hiervandaan in die boek baie goed ontgin. Hulle skets die teenstelling tussen Kramer die mens en dié van sy publieke persona. Enersyds kry hy die beeld as 'n liberale "folk" sanger onder sy Engelse aanhangers en andersyds as "Almal se pel" onder sy Afrikaanse volgelinge. Dit is "Hak hom Blokkies" wat hom onder die Afrikaners vestig as 'n volksanger. Slabbert en De Villiers skep die indruk dat Kramer half verleë was oor sy sukses met die album in die lig van die internasionale liberale teenkating van die 1981-Springboktoer na Nieu Zeeland. As hy verleë was, het hy dit egter goed verbloem met "Royal Hotel" wat daarop dui dat Kramer goed geweet het dat sy Afrikaanse ondersteunersbasis baie groter en meer lojaal was as die liberale Kaapse Engelse klik.

Gevolglik reik hy 'n reeks albums uit wat 'n mens as “plattelands” kan bestempel. Hy word baie produktief en tussen 1980 en 1990 reik hy nie minder nie as nege langspeelplate uit. Hy word die advertensiegesig vir Volksiebus en word 'n bekende figuur in Suid-Afrika – self bekender as Paul Simon, soos hy self vertel. Slabbert en De Villiers doen moeite om die boodskap, die sosiale kommentaar, die ironie en die humor van Kramer se lirieke weer te gee. Ná 1985 word sy lirieke al hoe meer polities, veral met die album, “Baboondogs”, waarin die liedjie “Skipskop” opgeneem is. Die waarde van Kramer as 'n sosiale kommentator word in hierdie hoofstukke deeglik ondersoek. Dié deel van die boek raak-raak ook aan die musikale aspekte van Kramer se musiek sonder om dit diepgaande te ontlee. Met die term “blik” verwys Slabbert en De Villiers na Kramer se inskakeling by die “Musiek en Liriek-beweging”, maar daar word nie gesoek na die musiekgenre wat hy verteenwoordig het nie. Hoewel die biograwe letterkundiges is, kon hulle by ander kunstenaars kers opgesteek het oor Kramer se musiek. Hierdie aspek verdien dus verdere aandag.

Deel 4 handel oor die Kramer-Pietersen vennootskap met musiekblyspele. Dit skets die vriendskap en samewerking met die skryf, eerstens, van “District Six” en die fenomenale sukses wat hulle daarmee gehad het – eers net plaaslik en later ook internasionaal. Dié hoofstukke neem ook Kramer verder weg van sy “Almal se pel”-persona af totdat hy eindelijk in 'n ernstige depressie beland waarmee hy lank daarna steeds sou sukkel. Daarmee saam beweeg die biograwe ook verder van die mens Kramer af en nader na die besigheid “Kramer-Pietersen”. Die sukses van “Kat and the Kings” maak die twee internasionaal bekend en hulle ontvang nasionale sowel as internasionale toekennings. Baie tyd word in Londen gespandeer. Hierdie hoofstukke verskaf 'n goeie dokumentering van die sukses van die musiekblyspele en die hoeveelheid werk wat hulle vereis het. Ongelukkig is daar baie min persoonliks in hierdie hoofstukke. 'n Mens sou meer detail verwag oor presies hoe Kramer en Pietersen saamgewerk het. Maar daar is niks daaroor nie. Selfs met Pietersen se dood word die boek nog meer onpersoonlik, en bly die Kramers in Londen om die media-blootstelling te ontsnap. Die redes hiervoor word nie gegee nie. Dit kan nie eers uit die boek afgelei word of Kramer op Pietersen se begrafnis was nie. Hierdie aspekte word nie verder ondersoek nie, en die vierde deel word dus onbevredigend afgesluit.

Die laaste deel bevat die slothoofstuk, “Huiستoe”, wat ook die naam is van Kramer se jongste album. Kramer was, op versoek van Jan Horn, op soek na kitaarspelers van die Karoo. Dit lui 'n nuwe kreatiewe fase vir Kramer in, waarmee hy ook finaal sy depressie oorkom. Kultuurhistories lewer Kramer met hierdie werk 'n belangrike bydrae. Sy rondreis in die Karoo verskaf 'n ryk volume werk vir Kramer en 'n groot deernis vir hierdie soms ontgogelde mens. 'n Mens sidder as jy dink hoeveel armer Suid-Afrikaners sou wees as Tokas se manier van kitaarspel nooit opgeteken en opgeneem is nie. Eweneens was die optekening van die musiek van Helena Nuvveld net betyds voordat sy 'n paar jaar later sinneloos vermoor is. Die “Karoo Kitaar Blues” is opnames wat soos kleinood bewaar moet word. Kramer self lewer twee nuwe CD's, “Klipphard” en “Huiستoe”, wat verbasend meer Afrikaans is as van sy eerste albums. Hy voltooi ook die “Storie van Koos Sas” waarin hy die verhaal van die voortvluggende Koos Sas vertel en sy misdade probeer verontskuld. Kramer word deur sommige mense gekritiseer dat hy hiermee die geskiedenis verdraai. Hy begin ook weer voor gehore optree en tree nou gereeld by kunstefeeste op. 'n Derde album, “Hemel en Aarde”, word in 2007 uitgereik. Die biograwe lewer met hierdie laaste hoofstuk myns insiens hulle beste werk deur beide die konteks en die inhoud van Kramer se musiek behoorlik te

hanteer. Die enigste hinderlike aspek is dat die chronologie van hierdie deel ooreenstem met die chronologie van die tweede helfte van deel 4.

Slabbert en De Villiers se studie van David Kramer en sy musiek is geslaagd en verteenwoordig daadwerklik 'n noodsaaklike kroniek van een van Suid-Afrika se voorste musikante en kunstenaars.

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