

**Book Reviews**

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**Boekresensies**

**Admirable collection on identities in Dutch Cape Town**

**Nigel Worden (ed.), *Cape Town between East and West: Social Identities in a Dutch Colonial Town***

Jacana Media, Johannesburg and Uitgeverij Verloren, Hilversum, 2012

282pp

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R228.00

*Cape Town between East and West* brings together a collection of ten essays, along with an absorbing “Introduction”, written by a number of well known historians in the field of Cape colonial history. As far as the contributors to this wonderfully edited volume go, they constitute the “usual suspects” (apart from two recent PhD graduates, Groenewald and Baartman). As participants in an interdisciplinary research group which was founded by the Universities of Cape Town and the Western Cape in 2003, the authors have trained their collective gaze on Dutch Cape Town and produced exciting new work in the process.

The research on offer is fresh, timely and a welcome addition to Cape colonial historiography. The volume is dedicated to the period of Dutch colonial rule from 1652 to 1795, when Cape Town fell under the control of the Dutch East India Company, although the eighteenth century is dealt with in greater depth than the second half of the seventeenth century. This adds to the book’s value, because the British colonial period during the nineteenth century has for the past several decades received a significant amount of attention and has come to dominate Cape historiography. This is especially so with regard to the theme of social identity in Cape colonial history. Related studies on how ideas of status, respectability and honour functioned in the Cape colonial setting have tended to focus on the nineteenth century. *Cape Town between East and West* represents a moment of re-balancing. It is pleasing to see some of the same historians who produced such excellent work on histories of social identities in the nineteenth century Cape delivering equally compelling research on the earlier colonial period.

With its focus on Cape Town rather than the colony’s rural and frontier zones, the book also forwards a new urban history of social encounters and identity formation in a colonial context. As the editor, Nigel Worden, notes in his introduction to the volume, it has only been in the last ten years or so that the “social history of early Cape Town” has come under serious scrutiny (p xi). The groups which appear in the chapters also point towards new emphases in Cape colonial research. In terms of the colony’s under classes, slaves and labouring Khoesan have tended to be the focus of work associated with the significant expansion of Cape colonial history in the past

30 years. In contrast, *Cape Town between East and West* explores the shaping and re-shaping of social identity among groups that have been largely neglected until now: convicts, artisans, soldiers, sailors, exiles and freed slaves. The compilation also includes contributions that explore social identity among some of the city's elite inhabitants, in particular, Cape burghers and the officials of the Dutch East India Company.

These new research impetuses reflect the effects of a "cultural turn" in social histories internationally. Current avenues of research in South Africanist and Cape colonial historiography are tuned in to this contemporary, global impulse. Since the 1990s social historians have been increasingly influenced by a "cultural turn" and have become interested in themes such as dress, leisure, social attitudes, consumption, living spaces, material belongings, social performance and language as notable forms of social performance and expressions of identity in historical settings. Postcolonial and postmodern ideas have led historians to investigate pre-modern or not-yet-entirely-modern worlds with a view to gaining a better understanding of how identities were expressed and defended in colonial settings by both the colonisers and the colonised.

The prevalence of class-based analyses, which were so characteristic of the revisionist historiography of the late twentieth century in South Africa, has been replaced by a growing interest in the cultural distinctions within and between classes. *Cape Town between East and West* is a consummate example of this trend. To the credit of the editor and contributors, the compilation's focus on the complexity of social interactions in the colonial city setting has not negated "conventional issues of power, class, gender and race" (p xii). Indeed, these structural markers of identity defined notions of status, respectability and honour, determining what was possible and what was not in the realm of self-perception, even as they were open to being contested in the pursuit of a self-fashioned identity. The individual contributions to this volume also illustrate the extent to which historians are influenced by their contemporary context. Contests over identity and subjectivity have come to dominate South Africa's post-apartheid public discourse. South Africans of all races and classes are engaged in re-imagining themselves in a context in which apartheid-inspired identities are being challenged and re-invented.

Looking back, pre-industrial historians are attempting to uncover how issues of identity and subjectivity shaped and were shaped by social interactions in the past. In this vein, the colonial city constitutes an ideal locale for exploring how identities were constructed by their bearers. The case studies in *Cape Town between East and West* all exhibit the tensions that existed between identities as they were ascribed by the power, racial, gendered and class dynamics of the Cape colonial context and identities aspired to by those labelled convicts, soldiers, artisans, exiles, burghers or freed slaves, among other categories. A common thread which runs through all the chapters relates to what extent different categories of person in Dutch Cape Town could mould, and in some cases transcend, their own prescribed status. Worden sums it up neatly when he posits that "men and

women constructed their identities with whatever resources they could, and not always in ways determined by the legal categories of free and unfree, burgher and employee, or in accordance with their class or ethnicity” (p xxii). A greater appreciation for the complexity of the processes of local self-fashioning is afforded by recognising that eighteenth-century Cape Town was made up of a largely transient population. Many inhabitants were temporary sojourners. At any one time the budding city was occupied by visiting sailors and soldiers; farmers from the interior seeking to sell their produce; upcountry slaves and Khoesan servants accompanying their masters to market; officials on appointment to oversee Company matters; as well as other occupants who lived in the city on a more permanent basis.

All the contributing authors have either directly or indirectly highlighted the need to study eighteenth-century Cape Town as a port city which was connected to a “much wider network of interchanges of people, material goods and ideas” (p xiii). As such, the volume yet again manages to achieve an important conceptual balance; this time in its approach to how influences upon identity self-fashioning and the types of resources that made this possible among the city’s diverse inhabitants have been analysed. Dutch Cape Town emerges from the text as a far more intriguing place than has perhaps hitherto been understood.

With identity having seemingly replaced the more standard categories of analysis of class and race, the challenge for historians is to ensure that their arguments are verifiable and specific. Identity is a slippery feature of the human condition. For historians, it would be too easy to uncritically endorse the current, prevailing constructivist viewpoint on identity given the widespread essentialist claims of present-day identity politics. Even as identities are necessarily fluid and prone to change, so too are they susceptible to congealing and crystallising at certain strategic moments. Identity cannot be everywhere, for then it would be nowhere. The important role of performance in identity-making comes into sharp focus in light of this. It is via the critical assessment of the performative that historians are most likely to be able to uncover how people thought about and promoted their identities in past contexts. The performative may also yield clues of how identity was defended.

The contributors to this volume can be commended for making their arguments and conclusions demonstrable. Beginning with Antonia Malan’s discussion of eighteenth-century Cape Town’s spatial and physical context, in which it becomes apparent that a local style of building and use of space began to reflect an emerging local identity among the settlement’s inhabitants, each chapter sufficiently grounds its discussion of an oftentimes obscure concept in tangible evidence. Ward and Armstrong offer new, absorbing insights into the perceptions and experiences of Cape Town’s inhabitants of Southeast Asian origin (exiles, slaves and convicts) and those from China, respectively. Both essays end up questioning the sometimes supposed link between race and status. They suggest that even though members of these immigrant groups may have been categorised by the

Dutch authorities according to their ethnicity, this did not prevent certain individuals from transcending the status boundaries of these categories.

The strategic role played by performance in the shaping and promoting of identity is clearly demonstrated in the chapters by Baartman and Worden. Using the lens of protests, Baartman illustrates that constituents of Cape Town's burgher population were extremely sensitive about their status and that rather than being based on an exclusionary national or racial consciousness, burgher identity was predicated to a large extent upon notions of status, honour and networking. As such, some descendants of freed African and Asian slaves were able to acquire burgher status. In contrast, Worden investigates how claims to status and honour played out among men of lower rank. Focusing on masculinity and violence among sailors in particular, Worden shows how incidents of public brawling often amounted to more than mere drunken shenanigans on Cape Town's streets. Instead, ritualised violence among such men served to affirm their reputation and maintain self-respect. Like higher-ranking Dutch colonial officials, sailors also drew upon the resources available to them to construct a respectable, masculine identity.

In keeping with one of the book's primary aims, namely to situate Dutch Cape Town in a wider geographical and cultural context, Groenewald's chapter reveals how local burgher identity was shaped by a cultural repertoire drawn from their European background. It thus highlights the significance of transnational stimuli in the process of identity-making in Cape Town. The chapter does so by examining how a group of local entrepreneurs, the alcohol *pachters*, acquired positions of wealth and status and thereafter marked and performed that status. Meanwhile, the essays by Newton-King, and Shell and Dick, utilise new sources (in Shell and Dick's chapter, a notebook that is the earliest known writing of a Cape slave) to examine how freed slaves sought to achieve status.

An eclectic mix of characters appears in this volume. All were in one way or another engaged in shaping their identity in particular ways. By situating burgher, sailor, freed slave and soldier alongside each other, this collection of essays draws out striking similarities in the processes of self-fashioning undertaken by members of these seemingly disparate groups. Varying access to different cultural resources meant that the performance of identity took on different modes. There is little to fault in this work and much to be admired. The value of this compilation to Cape historiography, especially that of the Dutch colonial period, is such that it is hoped it will spur on further related research in the field and perhaps beyond, into nineteenth and twentieth-century social histories of Cape Town as well.

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**A first-hand account of war brought to life**

**Albert Blake, *Boerekryger: 'n Seun se Hoogste Offer***

Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2012

271 pp

ISBN 978-0-624-05343-9

R200.00

It is perhaps a truism, but wars might be short or long in duration, but their legacy, as we know, lives on seemingly forever, with the event itself being re-fashioned, re-interpreted and re-evaluated for decades afterwards. The South African War of October 1899 to May 1902 has left a legacy that has persisted for more than eleven decades after the Peace of Vereeniging.

Much has been written of course on how it shaped the political milieu of South Africa and the division it has sown between all groups of those living in South Africa. The damage which that short conflict wrought on what can be referred to as the “collective psyche” of South Africa is, as we know, not limited to the white minority. As has been well established, it was the conflict that arguably helped to usher in the 1913 Land Act and the virtual permanent disenfranchisement of the black majority. Unity among whites was deemed more important than the rights of African peoples. Then again, is that surprising, given the times and attitudes prevailing more than a century ago? One indisputable fact to come out of the South African War was that, geographically the present South Africa is what it is thanks to that conflict, a fact blithely forgotten in 2010 with the centenary of the Union of South Africa.

It is in this context that one reads and indeed welcomes Albert Blake's latest work, *Boerekryger*, coming in the wake of his equally compelling *Boereverraaier*. There are of course many studies that readers will be familiar with, such as C.J. Barnard's *Die Vyf Swemmers*; Fransjohan Pretorius' *Kommandolewe Tydens die Anglo-Boere Oorlog* and *The Great Escape of the Boer Pimpernel*; Lodi Krause's *The War Memoirs of Commandant Ludwig Krause, 1899–1900*; and of course Deneys Reitz's *Commando*, to mention but a handful of first-hand accounts of the war or narratives relating to the actual fighting, as opposed to the broad sweep of the Pakenham classic *The Boer War* and Bill Nasson's masterful *The War for South Africa*.

This latest study by Blake is a narrative based mainly on the diary of Henning Viljoen from Heidelberg. Blake gives us a reading of Viljoen's diary, having chosen the most riveting and revealing parts, amply contextualizing the events such as the battles at Chrissie's Lake on 6 February 1901, Bakenlaagte in October of the same year, and the skirmish that saw the author of the diary decapitated by a British shell on 6 March 1902 – in full view of his father. Deftly, Blake has interspersed the first-hand accounts with background material on the mood of the times, with the political machinations and conflict of personalities as these pertain to the Henning Viljoen diary.

What is more, there is a consistently rigorous thread of historiographical awareness running throughout Blake's commentary. He makes mention of the fact that all too often the Boers were portrayed as heroes, when in fact there were those who were heroes but also many who were not. Then there were those who were less than enthusiastic about the war and had other priorities. He addresses the issues of *hensoppers* and *joiners*, and his chapter relating to the infamous Morley's Scouts (subtext: a bunch of self-seeking murderous marauders) is particularly chilling. Executions of would-be traitors are also mentioned, where Henning Viljoen had witnessed these; Blake contrasts them with references to the *bittereinder* mentality and provocatively interrogates the fighting spirit that saw many a Boer fight on, despite the insuperable odds facing them. Blake comes to the conclusion that the religious element is not to be discounted and draws a parallel with the religious conviction and zeal that spurred many Boers to continue fighting; he also mentions Boers who fought not out of religious ardour but who merely believed that their cause was just. After decades of hagiography that has informed much of the writing on the Anglo-Boer conflict, especially from Afrikaner academics, it is refreshing that in *Boerekryger*, Blake aspires to a more realistic and dispassionate account of the war. He takes account of the significance of the war from the vantage point of present-day South Africa and reminds us that while the war played a vital role in forging an Afrikaner identity, this does not mean that certain unpleasant facts and attitudes must be swept under the proverbial carpet. Lack of discipline, mistakes and errors in judgment all contributed to the Boer defeat.

What Blake has achieved is a subtle balance between the broader picture, the intimacy and immediacy of the diary and a recounting of the events as they are described in the diary. So, he has more than edited the diary, but when it makes sense to do so he allows the diary to speak for itself. His use of Wilhelm Mangold's diary is also very effective. Another all too common irritation that marks much Afrikaner history writing of a previous era is the positivist notion that the facts are an end in themselves and hence speak for themselves, i.e. that they do not need a wider interpretation. In other words, the significance of facts often tended to be glossed over with the emphasis falling instead on the facts themselves, as if the authors were too hesitant to venture an opinion. Blake, along with a group of prominent Afrikaner historians today, has avoided this trap, and has also taken Afrikaner historiography to much more fertile soil when compared to Afrikaner history writing of yore.

Blake's study also reflects a more sober appraisal of current South Africa and consequently his concentration on the human aspects of the conflict, the woeful destruction and suffering it brought about, is much more poignant for the very reason that it is not a political diatribe.

Engagingly written in an Afrikaans that is readily accessible, that skilfully avoids being *hoogdrawend*, Blake has also taken note of the linguistic features of the diary and the mingling of Dutch expressions in the

Afrikaans of the day, making references to the sense of humour which now comes across to the reader as dated and quaint.

One error though, seems to lie in the photographs. An image which adorns Ludwig Krause's account of the war (referred to above) is labelled as a photograph of Ludwig (Lodi) Krause, taken from a publication by the Van Riebeeck Society (1996). It appears in Blake's book as a photograph of Commandant Johann Kriegler of the Heidelberg Commando. This error, if it is indeed an error on the part of the author or the publishers, symbolises how precarious our hold is on the past.

That said, Blake's study is an invaluable and multi-faceted contribution to our understanding of the war; this he has achieved by bringing a first-hand account of the war to life while all the time respecting and interrogating his sources and by maintaining a suspense and vigour in his narrative.

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### **Krygsgevangeneskap in Indië in die kollig**

**Chris Schoeman, *Vegter en Balling: Boereoorlog-Ervarings van Veldkornet Charles von Maltitz***

Tafelberg, Kaapstad, 2013

221 pp

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R160.00

In die loop van die Anglo-Boereoorlog van 1899 tot 1902, is ongeveer 30 000 Boere en bondgenote (Kaapse en Natalse rebelle, en buitelandse vrywilligers) deur die Britse leër in Suid-Afrika krygsgevangene geneem, terwyl ten minste nog 18 000 Boere hulle vrywillig aan die Britte oorgegee het (die sogenaamde hendsoppers/"hands-uppers"). Die hendsoppers kon na hul huise terugkeer, maar meer as 5 000 het met verloop van tyd besluit om as "joiners" by die Britse leër aan te sluit en téén hul voormalige republikeinse medeburgers te veg ten einde die oorlog so gou as moontlik te beëindig. Die krygsgevangenes daarenteen, is aanvanklik na krygsgevangenekampe in die Kaapkolonie en Natal gestuur, van waar die meeste weldra na kampe in oorsese Britse kolonies weggevoer is. Hierdie kampe was in Indië, Ceylon (die huidige Sri Lanka), Bermuda en St. Helena.

Charles Francois Roos von Maltitz (8 Maart 1869 – 25 April 1929) was een van die groot aantal Boere-krygsgevangenes wat hom met verloop van tyd in die Trichinopoly-kamp in Indië bevind het. Ten einde verveling teen te werk, het die gevangenes hulleself met allerlei aktiwiteite besig gehou, insluitende die maak van ornamente en/of om dagboek te hou. 'n Hele aantal van dié dagboeke het behoue gebly en word onder meer in argief- en ander bewaarplekke gehou. Tot dusver is nie baie van dié manuskripte gepubliseer nie. Kyk egter wel O.J.O. Ferreira (red.),

*Krijgsgevangeneskap van L.C. Ruijssenaers 1899–1902* (Pretoria: Raad vir Geesteswetenskaplike Navorsing, 1977); M.C.E. van Schoor (red.), “The Diaries and Recollections of Jacob Abraham Jeremias de Villiers”, in die *Christiaan de Wet-annale* 8, 1990, pp 2–106; en A.W.G. Raath (red.), “Ahmednagarfort, Indië: Herinneringe en Dagboeke” in die *Christiaan de Wet-annale* 9, 1997, *passim*.

Charles von Maltitz was een van dié Boere-krygsgevangenes wat dagboek gehou het, en wel vanaf 14 November 1900 (toe hy nog in die Groenpunt-krygsgevangekamp in Kaapstad aangehou is). Sy dagboek beslaan 230 handgeskrewe bladsye en word in die argief van die Oorlogsmuseum van die Boererepublieke in Bloemfontein bewaar. Vir dekades het dié dagboek grotendeels vergete daar bly lê, waarskynlik onder meer omdat die handskrif moeilik leesbaar is en daar dus ook geen getikte transkripsie van die teks bestaan nie. En toe bekom Chris Schoeman ’n gefotostateerde kopie van die Von Maltitz-dagboek, danksy die toedoen van ’n kleindogter van Von Maltitz.

Chris Schoeman het die waarde van die dagboek beseef en besluit om dit as basis vir ’n boek oor Charles von Maltitz se ervaringe as veldkornet te velde, en later as krygsgevangene te gebruik. Schoeman is die ideale persoon om Von Maltitz se oorlogs- en krygsgevangene-ervarings aan die vergetelheid te ontruk en op ’n toeganklike wyse aan die breër publiek beskikbaar te stel. Hierdie oudjoernalis en deurwinterde skrywer het reeds talle besondere publikasies die lig laat sien, insluitende *Boerseun: Memoirs van ’n Anglo-Boereoorlogseun* (Kaapstad: Zebra Press, 2010); *Broers in die Stryd: Hollanders in die Anglo-Boereoorlog* (Kaapstad: Zebra Press, 2011); *District Six: The Spirit of Kanala* (Kaapstad: Human & Rousseau, c. 1994); sportboeke soos *Losskrums en Loopedoppe* (Kaapstad: Human & Rousseau, 1999) en *Boots en Brannewyn* (Kaapstad: Zebra Press, 2010) (humoristiese rugbystories saam met Frik du Preez); en medeskrywer van (outo)biografieë van rugbylegendes soos Frik du Preez en Os du Randt, asook die internasionale krieketskeidsregter, Rudi Koertzen. In *Vegter en Balling: Boereoorlog-Ervarings van Veldkornet Charles von Maltitz* doen Schoeman sy reputasie as goeie navorser en skrywer gestand.

In die inleiding tot die boek oor Von Maltitz, skets Schoeman die agtergrond tot, en aard en omvang van, die dagboek wat Von Maltitz tydens die oorlog gehou het. Daarna verskaf Schoeman ’n oorsig van Von Maltitz se familiegeskiedenis, tot op die vooraand van die uitbreek van die Anglo-Boereoorlog (hoofstuk 1). Dan, in hoofstukke 2–13, wat uiteraard die grootste deel van die publikasie uitmaak, vertel Schoeman van die wel en wee van Charles von Maltitz tydens die oorlog, hoofsaaklik na aanleiding van die krygsgevangene-dagboek (hoofstukke 5–13). Die leser volg Von Maltitz vanaf sy tuisdorp (Ficksburg, in die Oos-Vrystaat) na die oorlogsfront. As assistent-veldkornet in die Ficksburg-kommando doen hy aanvanklik diens aan die Basotholand-grens en dan, as veldkornet, aan die Colesberg-front en aan die Kimberley-front. As hoofveldkornet en assistent-kommandant van die Ficksburg-kommando, het Charles die deurslaggewende krygsraadvergadering in Kroonstad op 17 Maart 1900

bygewoon, waar die Boerebevelvoerders besluit het om tot guerilla-oorlogvoering oor te gaan. Vervolgens het Von Maltitz onder meer by Sannaspos, Mostertshoek, Wepener, Biddulphsberg en Lindley aan gevegte deelgeneem. Daarna het hy hom saam met lede van talle kommando's in die Brandwaterkom (tussen Fouriesburg en die huidige Clarens) bevind, waar genl. Marthinus Prinsloo se leër – sonder dat enige weerstand gebied is – vanaf 30 Julie tot 9 Augustus 1900 aan die Britte oorgegee het; in totaal 4 314 burgers, drie generaals en nege kommandante, plus drie kanonne, sowat 2 800 beeste, 4 000 skape, 5 500 perde en twee miljoen rondtes geweer-ammunisie.

Schoeman vertel vervolgens van Von Maltitz se ervaringe as krygsgevangene, met 'n groot aantal direkte aanhalings (in moderne Afrikaans oorgeskryf) uit Von Maltitz se dagboek. Só volg die leser dus vir Von Maltitz vanaf die Brandwaterkom na die Groenpunt-krygsgevangenekamp; van daar na die Bellevue-kamp in Simonstad (Maart 1901) en uiteindelik (in November 1901) aan boord die SS *Armenian* na Indië, waar hy die res van die oorlog in die kamp by Trichinopoly deurbring. Sy dagboek – en Schoeman se verdere inkleding uit 'n verskeidenheid ander geraadpleegde bronne – skets 'n boeiende beeld van die lewe as 'n krygsgevangene; iets wat ook waar is van die ervaringe van sovele ander burgers en offisiere wat in ander krygsgevangenekampe aangehou is. Daar word op onderhoudende wyse vertel van fisieke ontberings en emosionele swaarkry; van dié dinge wat gevangenes deur moeilike tye gedra het; van siekte en dood; lojale ondersteuning, maar ook van ontrouheid (aan die kant van medegevangenes, maar ook van Boerevroue).

Schoeman/Von Maltitz beskryf gewaagde ontsnappingspogings, konflik tussen die onversetlike republikeine (“bittereinders”-ingevangeneskap) en die pro-Britse Afrikaners. Von Maltitz se skerp insig en raak waarnemings bied inderdaad 'n unieke blik op die alledaagse lewe in die krygsgevangenekampe. Sy besondere humorsin sorg ook vir kostelike beskrywings en dit is hierdie humorsin wat hom ook red wanneer sy poging om te ontsnap misluk, en hy vervolgens vir etlike weke lank in eensame aanhouding is. En dit alles te midde van die eensaamheid, frustrasies en bekommernisse wat gepaardgaan met die maande en later jare se afskeidinge van familie – en van jou plaas en vaderland.

Charles van Maltitz se merkwaardige dagboek verdien om, danksy Chris Schoeman se speurwerk, navorsing en rekonstruksie van die verhaal van 'n Boerekryger, 'n tweede lewe gegun te word. Die boek lees gemaklik en behoort dus by die algemene leserspubliek aanklank te vind. Vir die ernstige navorser is daar ook die 437 eindnote (wat meesal na die oorspronklike dagboek verwys, maar wat ook ander bronverwysings en addisionele inligting bevat), asook 'n bronnelys en indeks. Die fotoseksie bevat 23 toepaslike foto's wat die teks toelig. Chris Schoeman se *Vegter en Balling: Boereoorlog-Ervarings van Veldkornet Charles van Maltitz* is 'n welkome toevoeging tot die historiografie van die Anglo-Boereoorlog, sal hopelik wyd gelees word, en kan beslis 'n bydrae lewer tot nog meer debat

oor hierdie ingrypende en traumatiese konflik in die veelbewoë geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika.

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### **Magisterial work on the pre-history of the ANC**

**André Odendaal, *The Founders: The Origins of the ANC and the Struggle for Democracy in South Africa***

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569 pp

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R224.00

To typify these early generations as a hopelessly compromised, dependent bourgeoisie, or a class of black Englishmen who were somehow not real Africans, is to miss completely the nuance and drama of their lives and the major contribution they made in shaping modern South Africa (p 479).

André Odendaal writes this in his major new study of the founders of the African National Congress (ANC).

In 2012, the Congress (ANC) celebrated its centenary. The roots of the ANC, however, predate the year 1912. The formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910 was merely the catalyst that united representatives of various African political bodies which had already for a long time shared common goals. The story of the “struggle” in the run-up to the formation of the ANC is what forms the basis of this work. It has for long been one of the more neglected aspects of the history of black resistance in South Africa, and in more ways than one, *The Founders* is a work that fills a pressing need.

As a work detailing the run-up to the formation of the ANC, which is ostensibly a national organisation in South Africa, a large part of this history is told from the perspective of the Cape Colony. Apart from it being the only colony before the formation of the Union to grant voting rights to black citizens, it was also here that great numbers of the educated elite that were to shape the leadership of the ANC during the early twentieth century received their education. Odendaal later concludes that because the Eastern Cape no longer retains its almost monopoly-like share in the education of ANC leaders in the more recent past, the province’s influence has dwindled in post-apartheid South Africa.

*The Founders* chronicles in great detail the struggle of Africans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Amongst the discriminatory legislation of the nineteenth-century Cape Colony, the Glen Grey Act, passed by Cecil John Rhodes’ government in 1894 stands out as an important forerunner of what would later prevail in South Africa. The act was passed with the aim of forcing Africans off the land to fill the need for cheap

labour – laying the foundation for a system that was to become entrenched in twentieth-century South Africa.

Despite the strong focus on the Cape Colony, the “national” foundations of what would later become the ANC is also carefully explored. There is also a whole chapter dedicated to the politics of the British protectorates. The Free State Republic, often referred to as a “model” republic, is sketched in grim terms as a place of near slavery and a fertile ground for hostility – perhaps best captured in a quote from *The Friend* newspaper in 1884: “The native is a child, a minor to our law, so that they have to rest satisfied with the laws made for him by the white man” (p 167).

Apart from the role of education which is greatly stressed in this study, it is also the historical role of Christianity that deserves special attention. Apart from numerous leaders within the various churches also playing a political role, finding inspiration and even quoting passages from scripture, for example Psalms 68:31 (p 193), the church also served as a stepping stone for greater collective activism. It is a well known fact that through the process of colonisation, African societies became fragmented. On this note, Odendaal is able to conclude that “through the churches, long-articulated African ideas and notions of African unity were given organisational content and became more visible in the politics of the educated activists” (p 199).

In researching this volume, the author was able to gain rich insights from important newspapers of the time. This is fitting, because not only do these provide an important window into the events of the past, but the newspapers in themselves also played a mammoth role in the struggle for democracy. In the run-up to the formation of the Union of South Africa, politically hostile groups often clashed along organisational lines and newspapers served as their mouthpieces. The Union of Native Vigilance Associations and the South African Native National Congress (SANNC) were both very influential yet they found themselves often at odds. Again, highlighting the role that churches played in politics, the SANNC supported the separatist church movements while the Union did not.

Another exceptional feature of this work is the space it allocates to the role of sport in the shaping of the early ANC – as one would expect from an author who has also done sterling work on the history of cricket in the Cape Colony. This is a welcome feature, for although the role of sport in the unification of people is well known and recognised, apart from the 1995 Rugby World Cup, sport is sometimes neglected as part of serious studies on the history of South Africa, especially as an integrated part of a larger history. Most fascinating is the central role that the city of Kimberley played in South African sport during this period, as detailed by Odendaal.

It is fitting that there is also a chapter dedicated to the role of women. Odendaal notes in this chapter that South African historiography often ignores the discrimination endured by many generations of women. The fact that women have been overlooked in this way provides great opportunities to future historians. We are, however, still too slow in waking up to the great

contributions women made, not only in the founding and development of organisations like the ANC, but in South African history in general.

The Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902) was in many ways the final nail in the coffin for African franchise. The Cape parliamentary process, in which Western-style educated Africans for so long played their part, was never to be extended to the rest of South Africa – as educated Africans had for long hoped it would. Moreover, during the course of the twentieth century, black South Africans in the Cape would also eventually lose their franchise.

In many ways, *The Founders* is a work which causes discomfort to the modern South African because it demonstrates how future developments had their roots in the period of the turn of the twentieth century. Commenting on the looming formation of the Union of South Africa, A.K. Soga observed in 1907 that “... this will be a glorious country for corporation pythons and political puff-adders, forced labour and commercial despotism, but no fit place for freemen to live in” (p 335). It cannot be disputed that South Africa is a country that was born out of ruthless capitalist ambitions. More than a century later, we are still wrestling with this legacy. Yet it is from these disturbing foundations that new identities and bonds were forged. It is fitting that we have a magisterial work such as this one, as we reflect not only on the dividing role of the 1913 Land Act, but also the one hundred years of a movement committed to greater non-racial unity.

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

### **Fighting with the Germans against their own people**

**Gordon McGregor, *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Vrykorps van Duits-Suidwes Afrika***

Protea Boekhuis, Pretoria, 2013

99 pp

ISBN 978-1-86919-917-3

R160.00

Almost forgotten, never (fully) told: This could apply to the story of a little-known sideshow in the context of the South African military campaign against the German colony of South West Africa (SWA) which began on 23 August 1914 (with a cattle-rustling incident) and which ended on 9 July 1915 (with the final German surrender).

As the title indicates, this slim volume recounts the beginning and end of the short-lived Boer Volunteer Corps (in German *Südafrikanisches Freiwilligen-Korps*, in Dutch *Vrywillige Coor*).

The *Vrykorps* was not a German creation. It was put together by Andries de Wet, a former officer who had served on the Boer side in the

Anglo-Boer War (1899–1902). He was one of the Boer irreconcilables who refused to live in the Union of South Africa under the British flag, and had emigrated to the neighbouring German colony (p 26). A considerable number of Boers were already resident in German SWA and it was from among their number that the men for the *Vrykorps* were recruited on a voluntary basis (p 23).

The *raison d'être* of the *Vrykorps* was to lend whatever support it could to the 1914 Boer Rebellion in South Africa, the first stirrings of which became evident shortly after the Union government had ranged itself on the side of Britain when the First World War broke out in August 1914. The Union's rebels were strongly opposed to the planned invasion of German SWA. They also considered that in view of Britain's total engagement against the powerful Reich, the time was opportune to restore the freedom and independence which the Boer republics had lost in 1902 (pp 2 and 12).

The *Vrykorps* was formed in (the then) Windhuk on 9 September 1914 as an independent fighting unit but under the direct command of the local German Imperial Force, or *Schutztruppe* (pp 32–33). Its formation and objectives carried the full approval and support of Governor Dr Theodor Seitz. He reckoned that it would be politically and strategically advantageous in terms of the overall German strategy in the war to support such a unit. He counted on the Boer Rebellion in the Union overthrowing the pro-British government of Louis Botha and Jan Smuts. Whatever proxy help he could render, would be a good thing because the outcome would be a German-friendly, Boer-controlled regime in Pretoria and a consequent waning of British influence in the subcontinent (pp 13–14, 27 and 32).

In exchange for guns, ammunition, an attached German artillery division, uniforms, equipment, training and military pay for each man, the Germans expected the *Vrykorps* to assist the Boer rebels in the northern Cape Province by harassing the Union Defence Force (UDF) units that were stationed there. They urged the *Vrykorps* to attack and occupy Upington, a strategic centre (pp 18–38 *passim*).

Although the hastily and inadequately trained *Vrykorps* was involved in several battles and skirmishes against the vastly superior UDF, all too soon it became apparent to the German command that its efforts would fizzle. Upington was never taken; there were indications of vacillation instead of determination and forcefulness among the men; the will to fight against a much stronger and superbly equipped force (and, it should be noted, against their own countrymen) began to evaporate; the rebel leaders often disagreed among themselves; and finally, prompt and honest communication with their increasingly exasperated and suspicious sponsors across the border in German SWA all but broke down. For all the Germans knew, their protégés seemed to be constantly on the run (pp 60, 63, 69).

It was the collapse of the Boer Rebellion in the Union and the surrender of the last rebel units near Upington to the UDF on 2 and 3 February 1915 (p 74) that pulled the rug from under the *Vrykorps*. On 15

February 1915 Governor Seitz decreed in an official notice that the unit would be disbanded, effective from 1 March 1915 (pp 75–76).

Once the rebellion was quashed, and with the localised if somewhat pathetic “supporting role” of the handful of SWA Boer sympathisers in the northern Cape nullified, the road lay open for the conquest of German SWA. The by now battle-hardened UDF under General Louis Botha made short work of the diminutive *Schutztruppe*. The capital, Windhuk, was taken unopposed on 9 May 1915 and became Windhoek, while the German surrender was signed at Khorab in the north only two months later.

McGregor’s small book is a translation into Afrikaans from his original (unnamed) manuscript written in English. It is divided into an undated foreword, seven chapters, a source list and an index. Chapters 1 to 4 include an introductory survey, the establishment of the *Vrykorps*, its military operations, and its dissolution. Chapters 5 to 7 provide information on the *Vrykorps*’s casualties (6 dead, 11 wounded, 1 died of sickness, 19 taken prisoner); a nominal roll of (all?) 69 officers and men; descriptions and details of the *Vrykorps*’s German-supplied uniforms, ranks, weapons and equipment, with much explanatory information in footnotes. The source list includes documents consulted in the National Archives of Namibia, newspapers, books in English, Afrikaans and German. The author mentions that he had several interviews with descendants of *Vrykorps* members, but does not name them.

Although McGregor has drawn on a variety of primary and secondary sources to produce a well-researched book, the somewhat stodgy text is a straightforward narrative giving mainly the bare historical facts concerning the *Vrykorps* with a blow-by-blow chronicle of its brief military adventures.

I found it irritating that the author always uses the clumsy designation “Imperiale Koloniale Troepe” (imperial colonial troops) when referring to the German defence force. Why not just say *Schutztruppe*? But I appreciate the care that has been taken to render German names correctly, complete with those pesky umlauts where necessary. Exceptions are *Schutzenhaus* (p 41) where the “u” needs an umlaut, and *Grenzschutzregiment* (twice on p 67) which should be *Grenzschutzregiment* (with two z’s). And 1814 (p 56) should obviously be 1914, and 1815 (p 71) should read 1915.

The book contains 45 full-colour and black-and-white plates arranged in two separate sections. A regrettable omission is that neither the plates nor the pages on which they feature, are numbered, making easy reference between the text and the relevant pictures onerous if not impossible. The pictures show a wide range of subjects, including contemporary photographs of the *Vrykorps* leaders and groups of volunteers; South African Boer leaders; some German civilian and military figures (but no picture of Seitz – why not?); and there are plenty of reproductions of official notices and other printed and handwritten documents.

Much space is wasted in that the texts of some of the clearly legible documents are repeated word by word in the respective chapters! Some illustrations add nothing to the story, for example there is an unnecessary half-page reproduction of the old ZAR *vierkleur* flag as well as a full-page reproduction of its very first coat of arms. Am I missing something here? Another thing: Johannesburg's Military Museum has two First World War German automatic cannons (also called Pom-Poms). These may or may not have seen service with the *Vrykorps*. Guess what – not just one but *both* cannons are depicted: one photographed from its right and the other one from the left, with identical captions!

One would expect a military history to have at least one good-sized map showing the dispositions and/or movements of the opposite forces in the war.<sup>1</sup> This work has one dreadfully amateurish and highly inaccurate map in a small, squashed format showing no more than most of the place names in German SWA and in the adjacent northern Cape where the actions took place. Puzzling omissions from the map are places such as Sandfontein, Ramansdrift and Hasuur (all mentioned in the narrative). And if Nakop was at the time a South African police station, why is it shown inside German SWA? Then, unbelievably, there are non-existent rivers that are shown flowing southward into the Orange River!

Although very much a niche military history, this little book should be counted as a useful addition to the literature of the 1914–15 Boer Rebellion, the First World War in southern Africa, and perhaps even of the Afrikaners *per se*. However, let it be said that this book could provide the stimulus for a more probing, critical and analytical investigation into the *Vrykorps*, with many more questions and theories being raised and (hopefully) answered. For example, the relationship between Germans and Boers in German SWA, and especially the role and status of the resident Boers there, could do with a much closer and more critical examination.

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### **Valuable insight into South Africa's violent past**

**Robert Edgar, *Because they Chose the Plan of God: The Story of the Bulhoek Massacre of 24 May 1921***

Unisa Press, Pretoria, 2010

78pp

ISBN 978-1-86888-544-2

R110.00

It has become increasingly evident in recent years that knowing about past injustices can help in teaching important lessons for the future as well as

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1. See for example Gerald l'Ange's book, *Urgent Imperial Service: South African Forces in German South West Africa 1914–1915* (Ashanti Publishing, Rivonia, 1991), which has several excellent situation maps.

healing the wounded South African nation. This little book comprising eight chapters, along with numerous illustrations, provides a narrative of the Bulhoek Massacre of 1921. Various historians have written about the origins of, the casualties in and the reactions to this massacre. Flowing from his PhD thesis on the Bulhoek Massacre, completed in 1977, Robert Edgar here provides a summation of that material as well as some updated information on the topic (this book is essentially a reprint of the 1986 Ravan Press edition). In order to explain how and why this massacre happened, the book describes the life history of Enoch Mgijima, an African prophet, and the activities and beliefs of his followers, the “Israelites.”

In the first chapter, Edgar provides an introduction to the causes of the massacre, which took place on 24 May 1921 when a force of 800 white policemen and soldiers marched to a place called Bulhoek, about 25 kilometres southwest of Queenstown in the present Eastern Cape Province. These policemen and soldiers had been instructed by the government to confront Mgijima and his followers who were accused of squatting illegally on the land they were using for praying. Failure between the Israelites and the law enforcement agencies to settle their differences amicably led to the massacre of 200 people. I expected that the author would provide more information on the causes of the massacre rather than merely highlighting one aspect of the incident.

Chapter two briefly discusses who Mgijima was and how he grew up. It was during this period that many Africans were converted into Christianity and European missionaries had a great influence over the Africans among whom they laboured. The chapter laments that the Africans were dispossessed of their land which led in turn to poverty in most of the villages. Mgijima grew up under such conditions. However, the author does not explicitly elaborate on how these conditions turned him into the kind of the leader he later became.

Chapter three discusses how Mgijima’s Christian conversion changed his life. According to Mgijima, the spirit of God touched him and he experienced a vision in which an angel revealed many things to him. Interestingly, in this vision, an angel snatched him up and took him into the heavens where he grew wings and flew. As a prophet, Mgijima started telling others about his visions. For example, when Halley’s Comet appeared in April 1910, he believed that that the “blazing ball in the sky” was a sign that God was angry with human beings and that they should return to their Old Testament beliefs. Edgar does not, however, elaborate on how the independent churches such as the Shembe influenced Mgijima spiritually.

Chapter four begins with Mgijima’s 1919 prophecy about the Hlubi, Xhosa and other African groups who were summoned to his village of Ntabelanga to await the Lord’s coming. Here the Israelites are presented as political heroes who took a stand against an oppressive system when they were requested by the government officials to vacate the site which the authorities claimed was illegally occupied by the Israelites

Chapter five highlights the attempts to arrest Mjigima and remove him from his supporters. The authorities later realised that such a move could cause violent reactions. Despite this, Edgar argues that attempts were made to destabilise the activities of the Israelites in the area. This chapter also discusses some of the religious beliefs and practices which Mjigima and his people followed. For example, there was a story that when the police tried to shoot the Israelites, their bullets had turned into water. Edgar, however, fails to provide any further explanation as to what triggered this myth or what its origins might be.

Chapter six explains the intransigence of the Israelites against the government officials. Their militancy grew. This was evident in 1921 when they prevented all white people from coming near Ntabelanga. Tax collectors were not allowed to enter the village. This led to the use of force by the police against the Israelites, which is narrated in chapter seven. The police weighed several options about the type and level of force they would use. One was to send aircraft overhead in a display of power to measure its effect on the Israelites. Another was to drop some bombs around the Israelite village. They decided against the second tactic. The chapter includes sketches showing how attacks were launched by both sides. The battle between the two groups apparently lasted for about twenty minutes.

Nearly 200 Israelites were killed and almost 100 were wounded. Only one policeman suffered a stab wound. After the battle, 141 Israelites were arrested and their trial took place in Queenstown in November 1921. A total of 129 of their followers were sentenced to between 12 and 18 months' hard labour. The rest were given suspended sentences.

In the final chapter the author discusses the aftermath of the massacre. It was because of this unfortunate incident that the Israelites received tremendous support from black political and trade union groups, and their story became part of the history of resistance to white oppression in South Africa.

The Bulhoek Massacre as narrated in this book remains a standard feature in accounts of South African history. This brief publication – essentially aimed at senior school learners and undergraduates – provides a synopsis of the confrontation and tries to address the various distortions that have arisen about this incident. As such, it is recommended to all South Africans for a greater understanding of South Africa's violent past and the role of African resistance in the making of modern South Africa.

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**Excellent and concise overview of a neglected topic**

**Bill Nasson, *South Africa at War, 1939-1945 (A Jacana Pocket History)***

Jacana Media, Johannesburg, 2012

160pp

ISBN 978-1-4314-0382-0

R79.96

Written in an engaging and humorous style for a lay audience, *South Africa at War, 1939–1945* by Bill Nasson offers a useful introduction to the involvement of South Africa in the Second World War. Between the extremes of the perspective of Smuts who emphasised the contribution of the South African war effort and the neglect in the international historiography of South African participation in the Second World War, the truth of the country's role in the conflict lies somewhere in the middle. In his opening chapter, "General Perspectives", Nasson highlights the past and current disregard of the Second World War in South African historiography.

The formation of the apartheid state in 1948 and the rise to power of those who opposed South African participation in the war led to a silencing of the war in the historiography. The advent of full democracy in 1994 continued this act of silencing in favour of the history of liberation. Perhaps part of the reason for this lay in the failure of the Second World War to initiate democratic change in South Africa in a similar manner to the impetus it provided for anti-colonial struggles on the African continent and elsewhere.

The ambivalent way in which the conflict is perceived is by no means recent. As Nasson shows, the outbreak of war in September 1939 exacerbated divisions within parliament between Hertzog's faction, who called for neutrality and Smuts' belief that neutrality would mean a lack of Commonwealth support should the Germans decide to regain South West Africa. The narrow margin of victory in parliament for the Smuts coalition led to Hertzog's resignation as prime minister with Smuts taking on the leadership position. These divisions were mirrored by South African society as well.

In his fourth chapter, "Neutrality Averted and Early Shadow-boxing", Nasson highlights the tensions in South African society that were laid bare by the war – an Afrikaner opposition that desired neutrality; hostile Afrikaner nationalists that actively supported Nazi Germany; and black political groupings that saw little value in participating in a war fought ostensibly for democracy when they were a politically oppressed majority. The country was also unprepared for war in terms of defence and industrial capabilities.

Yet, economically, South Africa emerged from the Second World War stronger than ever before. Industry had expanded to meet war demands with job opportunities opening up for black men and white women because white men were released for combat. The chapter, "What, Who, Where and Why" shows the South African war machine in action with the South African

Naval Force coming into its own as did the South African Air Force. White women and black men were recruited into the various auxiliary services and the vehement opposition to arming black men saw men of the Native Military Corps armed with assegais to defend the country's important installations. Patrols were carried out along the country's coasts and borders but because fighting never actually occurred in South Africa, the impact of the war was not nearly as devastating as it was in Europe, for instance.

South African troops fought in East Africa and then in the desert of North Africa where the surrender at Tobruk marked the lowest point of support for the war effort. The less than uniform support for the war meant that security remained an issue. "Not Fighting on the Beaches" highlights the tense situation on the home front with sabotage carried out by the right wing Ossewa-Brandwag (OB) and a plot by the OB in conjunction with the Germans to assassinate Smuts and topple the government.

South African involvement in the Second World War had political ramifications as well. The exigencies of war and the shortage of manpower raised the possibility of arming black soldiers. Simultaneously, political groups such as the ANC and the Communist Party of South Africa argued for equal participation in the war. In Chapter 7, "Gain, Pain and Wane", Nasson discusses how increasing urbanisation brought about by the war led to a relaxation of influx control and pass legislation in the wake of Tobruk. Plans were made to extend social benefits to urban black residents in the form of pension and health schemes as well as education opportunities. The demand for black labour led to a steady decrease in the wage gap between white and black workers. In the Union Defence Force itself, the Army Education Services sought to inculcate "liberal" values in servicemen. However, as the war progressed to its conclusion, these possibilities for social, political and economic change were not realised. Nowhere was this more evident than in the Native Military Corps where servicemen were compensated with bicycles for their war service. The need for Smuts' government to appease so many different interests in South African society led to the enactment of further repressive legislation and the suppression of trade union activism, with a rising conservatism that would eventually culminate in the apartheid state.

The Second World War has often held a nostalgic place in our collective memory with generations raised on the stories that came to define the period. Nasson acknowledges this. Interspersed with the account of the war are the narratives that have captured the popular imagination – stories of the Royal Navy dog, Just Nuisance; the Lady in White who sang soldiers off to war from the quayside in Durban harbour; Major-General Dan Pienaar, war hero of both the First and Second World Wars who was killed in a plane crash in Kenya; and a protest of poor conditions aboard the ship, "City of Canterbury" in Durban. The book concludes with a quirky "Postscript" detailing one of the stranger impacts of South Africans at war when English shoe designer, Nathan Clark, inspired by the adapted footwear of South African troops "up North" created an internationally popular "desert boot".

In the spirit of the Jacana Pocket History series, Bill Nasson's *South Africa at War, 1939–1945* gives an excellent overview of a neglected aspect of South African historiography. While by its very nature, it cannot focus in detail on important themes such as identity and political activism, Nasson's work does flag these in a manner that piques the interest of the reader and paves the way for future engagement with these very relevant issues.

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### **Towards a new model of liberation history**

**Hilary Sapire and Chris Saunders (eds), *Southern African Liberation Struggles: New Local, Regional and Global Perspectives***

UCT Press, Cape Town, 2013

316 pp

ISBN 978-1-91989-593-2

R210.00

The title emphasising multiple struggles is an accurate reflection of this well-written and accessible collection of essays which re-explores different facets of the liberation wars to end colonial rule in southern Africa, covering the period broadly from the 1950s onwards. The book is what it claims to be: new, regional and global in reach, showcasing the work of both new and older scholars. This is a well-structured collection and the smooth transition between chapters reflects the skill of the editors.

The emphasis of the collection is not on comprehensive coverage of southern African liberation struggles, but rather to offer a spark for new insights and perspectives drawn from the selected case studies. The intersection of these perspectives allows for a more holistic interpretation of southern African liberation movements than has been possible before, with an emphasis on balance and nuanced accounts. What emerges is a picture of liberation movements struggling simultaneously with internal political, ideological and ethnic tensions. This review will discuss some of these perspectives in turn.

The Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns, the attempts by Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) command to infiltrate armed units through Rhodesia into South Africa, emerges strongly, covered by different chapters (pp 76, 125, 216) and pointing to its importance as a watershed failure that led to the Morogoro conference of 1969, the subject of Hugh Macmillan's detailed and insightful chapter. Macmillan draws attention to the fractious internal politics of the ANC in exile in Zambia, of which the period "1969 to 1973 marked one of the lowest points" (p 91). Macmillan's argument points to the importance of changes within South Africa for a shift in fortunes for the ANC in exile, beginning with the Durban strikes in 1973, the independence of Angola and Mozambique in 1974–1975 and crucially, the Soweto uprising in 1976, presenting a boon for the ANC due to "the influx of new recruits that came after it" (p 92). This interplay between local developments in southern

Africa and their impact on the exiled liberation movements is a prominent theme throughout the volume.

Thula Simpson's chapter on the ANC in Swaziland shows the shifting attitude towards the liberation movement in the country, with secret support from King Sobhuza II running into conflict with distinct camps within the government that were much more reticent in their attitude towards the organisation. His chapter paints a vivid picture of the espionage and diplomatic tensions between the Republic of South Africa and Swaziland, an account which also raises prickly questions of complicity and betrayals by high-ranking Swazi leaders. However, the Swazi officials also emerge as skilful brokers of South African favours, sharing information of their "secret" briefings with the ANC as readily as they communicated ANC movements to the South Africans.

Elements of the "new" in this volume include Arianna Lissoni's study of the neglected history of the Pan Africanist Congress, particularly in Basutoland, which flags some of the fatal errors made by its leadership. As Lissoni shows, the elision of the PAC from the history of liberation is at odds with its prominent role in the early 1960s, a prominence the organisation lost due to poor leadership and tactical blunders. Liazzat J.K. Bonate, in her chapter on the role of Muslims in Northern Mozambique, also points to their neglected history, at odds with the support they gave the Mozambique African National Union (MANU) and the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO). Although Muslim participation became less visible after 1969, Bonate recognises, due to Portuguese secret police persecution, the crucial factor in their sidelining by the liberation movement was FRELIMO's adoption of a "doctrinaire and radical Marxism after 1969" (p 71). This imposed ideological orthodoxy led to the erasure of the group's contribution, as Bonate notes, Muslims were "denied a place in the history of the independence war ... along with groups that did not fit the profile of secular and militant Marxist revolutionaries" (p 71).

The volume provides instances of many splits in the international response to apartheid. As Colin Bundy shows, the Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) was closely wedded to the African National Congress, and followed the ANC in their suspicion of the Black Consciousness Movement and the independent Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) (p 221). In contrast, according to Christabel Gurney in her chapter, the British Council of Churches met with representatives of the Black Consciousness Movement "to the exclusion of the liberation movements" (p 237). The presence of exiled liberals in London, also suspicious of the degree of communist influence in the African National Congress and Anti-Apartheid Movement, led to further fissures in what would otherwise have been a broad front opposing apartheid. The book demonstrates not only fractious anti-apartheid politics, but also portrays political leaders scrambling to keep up with internal developments in South Africa. Steve Davis, in his fascinating account of the use of radio by the liberation movements, writes of political movements in the wake of the Soweto uprising of 1976

attempting to “superimpose their particular brand of politics over new forms of struggle evolving in South Africa” (p 129).

One of the most exciting chapters, written by Elizabeth Williams, flags the importance of the anti-apartheid struggle in Britain for its immediate resonances with British domestic politics. Williams shows that black British support was divided between moderates, such as the West Indian Standing Committee (WISC) formed in 1958, who were open to alliances with whites, and black nationalists, such as Black Action for the Liberation of South Africa (BALSA), formed in August 1986, which placed central importance on the need for black agency and was highly suspicious of cross-racial coalitions. Williams identifies a major failure of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain in its lack of engagement with racism in British domestic affairs, which alienated the organisation from many potential black supporters in the country. As Williams argues, black British responses to apartheid South Africa spoke to “the growing discontent black citizens felt towards the British state” (p 257). It was in the AAM’s nature, as “a single-cause” organisation, focusing almost exclusively on the destruction of apartheid, that points to a weakness. This is picked up by Chris Saunders, in the next chapter on the question of Namibian solidarity, in which he shows that liberals found a cause they could support, which would not force them to work with the communist sympathisers in the AAM and ANC, thus taking the lead on the question of Namibian independence (p 277) and separating it to a degree from the anti-apartheid cause.

The instructiveness of such recent history rings out most clearly in the rigorous manner in which the book engages with the memorialisation of history. Whether this is addressing events in the liberation struggles, that showed undemocratic and Stalinist tendencies in the liberation movements (such as forced confessions from “spies” in SWAPO camps) or to the issue of which soldiers to name in the Freedom Park memorial, the subject of a chapter by Gary Baines, where SANDF soldiers killed in action were not included.

The book is a much needed corrective to nationalist revisionism. Perhaps most troubling is the silencing of accounts, such as that presented by Christian Williams of the SWAPO camps. Drawing on the literature surrounding the history of witchcraft, Williams points to the slipperiness of the concept of the “spy”, and the tendency of Namibians from the south, who tended to be lighter-skinned and spoke Afrikaans, to be accused of spying for the South Africans. The harrowing account of forced confessions under torture of such “spies” is corroborated by Steve Davis’ study of Radio Freedom, in which he points to the tensions between the Western-trained, intellectual “aristocrats” who staffed the radio, and the poorly educated, Eastern European-trained security police, *Mbokodo* (p 133). This led to the majority of the Radio Freedom staff being detained and a number being killed.

The strength of the volume is its balance. The chapters do not attempt to simplify or make the particular histories more palatable. Complexity and

difficulties in such local, regional and global perspectives are flagged by the authors as real and pressing. It is not surprising in a volume of this nature that there should be omissions, and indeed the editors make no claim to comprehensiveness. As such, there are areas that are not addressed. One that looms large, perhaps due to the recent publications of the voluminous South African Democracy Trust's series, *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*, is the absence of rigorous engagement with aboveground opposition in South Africa over the period covered.

The perspective of the book, although it refers to "local" history, is more that of the exiled liberation fighter, the anti-apartheid activist, looking in at southern Africa. Of course, there are intimate accounts of local histories – Thula Simpson's and Christian Williams' are fine examples – but overall the tone and focus of the volume is on the transnational and regional. Janet Cherry's article is also the exception here, because she presents a consideration of community struggles in the Eastern Cape region in the 1980s. However, her article is focused on resolving a historical debate rather than providing a social historical account. There is nevertheless a degree of self-reflexivity in the collection, which points to its incompleteness and that it instead seeks to model a type of history, which will be instructive for further local, regional and global histories to come.

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### **The making of South Africa's tenth province**

**Robert Crawford, *Bye the Beloved Country? South Africans in the UK, 1994-2009***

UNISA Press, Pretoria, 2011  
182 pp  
ISBN 978-1-8688-613-5  
R172.00

*Bye the Beloved Country* not only shares a pun with Alan Paton's amazing work of love, hope and endurance in a country full of racial injustice, but Paton's work also embodies the complex history of South Africa in the twentieth century forming a backdrop to Robert Crawford's book. It was the historical events and structures touched upon in *Cry, the Beloved Country*, which gave rise to apartheid and eventually, after the fall of apartheid South Africa, a range of historical consequences which motivated the emigration of thousands of white South Africans to different parts of the globe.

Crawford's book is a contemporary historical study which analyses the discourses of South African emigration to the United Kingdom in the period from 1994 to 2009. Each of the six chapters examines a different aspect of emigration by mainly white South Africans.

Crawford begins his analysis with the so-called "chicken-runners", a section of the book which deals with the discourse on South Africa's current

and future security. Bearing this in mind, the significance of beginning the study in 1994 becomes evident, because this was a time of insecurity as far as many white South Africans were concerned. Crawford concludes that “the flight of the chicken-runners” was motivated by the fear of a spiralling crime rate; the perceived ineptitude of the new South African government; and the alienation caused by Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action policies. The underlying factor behind all these reasons can be boiled down to a single issue, namely race. Crawford states that immediately after 1994:

chicken runners think that only their skin colour has made them victims of crime; chicken runners think that their skin colour has made them victims of the ANC government’s incompetence and discriminatory attitude; chicken runners have no place in South Africa (p 30).

However, only one of the discourses and was mainly propagated by South Africans in South Africa. Crawford deals with another strong motivation to emigrate, namely the opportunity to graze in greener pastures.

Throughout Crawford’s book his points are illustrated by statistics on studies done on South African emigration to the UK. In examining why white South Africans chose the UK, he used, among others, the 1999 British Council survey of young South Africans’ opinions, and comes up with the information that 74 percent of the respondents favoured the UK because of its stable economy; strong currency; education system; patriotism; and multicultural society. This shows that running from South Africa’s problems was not the only motivation behind emigration, but as the words of one South African in the UK illustrates, they were seeking greener pastures: “We choose to live in this country because it affords us security, wealth and opportunity” (p 32).

Citing labour as another of the primary reasons for immigration, Crawford then looked at the visas and passports used by South Africans to gain insight into the patterns of emigration and to establish a clear picture of who the “expats” are. In this way he shows that the specific type of South African expatriate arriving in the UK is quite different from those settling in Australia and Canada. Here he touches on the so-called “brain drain” and argues that it is mainly white professionals who leave for the UK, with London being the location they choose to start their new lives. The consequences for South Africa, and the perennial issue of losing crucial skills, make for interesting reading.

South Africans not only immigrated to the UK, but also had to establish a kind of community as a consequence. Here the case looks similar to that of pre-1994 South Africa. According to Crawford the South African expatriate community lacked an umbrella organisation and a social centre. Their interaction with one another were thus characterised by a series of loose networks, which included the SA *Gemeente* church, Afrikaans festivals, and friendship networks encompassing more than just the love of “braai and rugby”. This disparate nature of social relationships

between South Africans in the UK, characterised by loose links, informal networks and individual interest, is according to Crawford uniquely South African.

Expatriates also had to forge a new identity in a foreign country. Like the tangle of loose connections characterising South African's social networks in the UK, their identity also has a tangle of contradictions. According to Crawford this struggle for identity reflects the complex nature of South African identity which is extremely heterogeneous. For the expats themselves this sometimes meant that they were simultaneously alienated by and attracted to both countries and felt neither here nor there. This identity crisis raises questions about the future of the expats: will they remain in the UK or will they return home? The last part of Crawford's book deals with this issue and explores how South African expatriates revealed themselves as not being unpatriotic chicken runners.

Although Crawford uses a wide range of sources, his focus is mainly on the South African based and expatriate media. As such, the information in his book, and the conclusions he draws, do not come as a surprise to one who has followed the media these past twenty years.

Central to Crawford's argument is the relationship between the future and the past and how the complex historical consciousness of white South Africans motivated their emigration from, and in some cases their return to, South Africa. His book covers most of the phases of South African emigration to the UK and the discourses of identity politics of South Africans at home and abroad. Although at times a tedious read, the book makes us reflect on the idea of the South African diaspora in the UK and the possibilities of the future with South Africans abroad still maintaining ties with their country and contributing to a mutually beneficial relationship.

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