

ARCHIVE REVIEW

Iingoma Zomzabalazo in Conversation: An Archival Engagement with Recordings of Liberation Songs

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Abstract

This text is a remix of an archival engagement with recordings/performances of 'freedom songs' or 'liberation songs' in a south or southern African context. The authors began this collaborative research project as part of a course in the Masters in History degree programme at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). The essay includes a re-edited, updated transcript of dialogue the authors shared along with two mix(tap)es they produced together. The conversation speaks of songs as archives, archives of song(s), and memory/ies pertaining to anti-Apartheid struggle and ongoing Fallism.

Keywords

archives, liberation music, mixtape, songs, vinyl records

Introduction

As classmate-comrades with shared research interests, we (Lukhanyo and Ben) decided to work together for an elective module – Activist Archives: Struggles in and Over History – convened in semester one of 2020 (devised and taught by Dr Koni Benson). For our final project on the Activist Archives course, we wrote a two-part essay (of over 18,000 words) and co-produced two mixes (or mixtapes).¹ Our long

1 A. Weheliye, 'In the Mix', *Phonographies: Grooves in Sonic Afro-Modernity* (Durham and London: Duke UP, 2005).

essay included an edited transcript of conversations we had shared through the process. For this special issue of *Kronos* we have revisited our postgraduate project, working together this brief introduction with a re-edited, updated transcript of our conversation.² We also include overviews of the two mixtapes and links to where they can be listened to.

Now, as then, we consider how songs (sonic documents) can be read in and off themselves as archives. We draw from our research of a selection of southern African sound archives to see how these songs are archived. This research project is only a partial attempt to consider a small selection of archives which, in various ways, all archive (or house) songs connected to the liberation struggle(s) in southern Africa (directly or indirectly).³ There is a vast body of work on songs/iingoma which we have yet to begin engaging with and far more is still to be researched, including mediation on what might we learn from these songs/iingoma.

The dialogue reflects our research process(es) while connecting our archival engagements with conceptual and theoretical debates. Our contrasting positionalities plus the particular (and peculiar) circumstances of a countrywide lockdown were factors for us to continually bear in mind and negotiate.⁴ We choose to include words in English and isiXhosa (or vernacular) without italicising as a means of emphasising colloquial expressions.⁵ These small-nyana steps are in part to push back at the dominance of colonial languages and other exclusionary formalities in university (and other) life in contemporary South Africa. If we are serious about decolonial work we must stay open to resisting and disrupting the status quo.

This project allowed us to engage in a collaborative approach to research and writing. Our conversation is structured under three themes that came to the surface during the course and research/writing proposal/process. These are titled: Songs as Archives, On Memory, and Archives of Songs. However, we let things find their place; for example, at times the matter of songs being archives is discussed under the Archives of Songs heading as well as its own section. This is subjective and, as Lauryn Hill and Donny Hathaway have sung: everything is everything. We disclose upfront that the script does not exactly replicate the way our conversation went down. In other words, we wantonly skip back and forth through chronometric time, disregarding a linear view of events.

Before we jump into the conversation, we (re-)invite you to listen to the mixtapes as Fela Anikulapo Kuti said, 'with open mind[s].'⁶

2 *Uncut Funk: A Contemplative Dialogue* is a conversation between bell hooks and Stuart Hall. In the book, hooks says: 'Conversation is a place of learning', and that 'Conversation has a polyphonic variety. You can move in it from the mundane to the profound. It ranges from lessons to be learned about the mundane to something that is deeper and more exciting'. b. hooks and S. Hall, *Uncut Funk: A Contemplative Dialogue* (New York & Oxon: Routledge, 2018), 2.

3 See also: The Archival Platform, *State of the Archives: An Analysis of South Africa's National Archival System* (Cape Town: The Archival Platform, 2014) and 'People's Guide to Archives in South Africa', 2019, https://issuu.com/hworkshop49/docs/people_s_guide_to_archives_ok. Thanks to Dr Benson for including these in the course reader.

4 Our contrasting positionalities include differences in how we are racialised; our life experiences and opportunities/privilege related to inherited social class; an age gap of thirteen years; and nationality, citizenship/denizenship.

5 In many ways our position echoes that in the article: R. Pather, 'Othering SA Languages Stops Here', *Mail & Guardian*, 14 April 2016.

6 F. Kuti, 'Shuffling & Shmiling (1978)', 2010, <https://felakuti.bandcamp.com/album/shuffling-shmiling-1978> (accessed 25 June 2020).

The mixtapes: lingoma compilations

As a creative means of archival engagement, we decided to compile two selections of songs from our research in various archives. As with the text-based components of this essay, we consider it an act of co-authorship as although Ben mixed the songs together, Lukhanyo provided extensive constructive feedback and suggested songs to include.⁷ The two different mixtapes are named and briefly expanded upon below. We consider this an attempt to apply the methodology which Lynnée Denise has named 'DJ Scholarship'.

I coined the term DJ Scholarship in 2013 to explain DJ culture as a mix-mode research practice that is subversive in its ability to shape and define social experiences, shifting the public perception of the role of a DJ from being a purveyor of party music to an archivist and an information specialist who assesses and collects, organises and provides access to music that DJs determine to have long-term value. [...] There are four cultural practices that define DJ Scholarship: the first is chasing samples; the second is digging through the crates; the third is studying album cover art review; and the fourth is reading liner notes.⁸

The two mixtapes are also a call to sing, in response to questions posed by Leigh- Ann Naidoo: 'How do you undo academic elitism? How do you reroute knowledge production and distribution, resisting its estrangement from the lives of us all?'⁹

Mixtape #1: Nkosi Sikelela i-Afrika versions¹⁰

This is a short study of 'Nkosi Sikelela i-Afrika', a hymn that became an anthem, and a song with multiple lives. The sequence moves chronologically through versions found in archives named above. These interpretations are performed by: Sol T. Plaatje (1923), Orlando Choristers (1954), Soweto Teachers Choir (1980), The K-Team (1990) and the 'decolonised version' with Koketso Poho as the singist (2016). The makeshift cover art is taken from the rear cover to a current government produced Maths workbook for Grade 6 children in South Africa.¹¹

7 Certain tracks recorded from vinyl have crackles, hisses or other details which mirror the technical setup available to us as well, perhaps echoing the low budget conditions of production we (and other archives) face. At the UWC Centre for Humanities Research Winter School 2022, Sinazo Mtshemla presented on challenges faced at the National Heritage Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS) at the University of Fort Hare. Also, Dickson Chigariro has written of the audio-visual archives at the National Archives of Zimbabwe (NAZ), pointing out that a digitisation process to preserve artefacts and allow for access in the digital realm is not a simple or small task to take on. D. Chigariro, 'Collaboration in the management and preservation of audio-visual archives: a case study of the National Archives of Zimbabwe' (University of the Western Cape, 2014), ii.

8 HKW – Haus der Kulturen der Welt, 'Lynnée Denise: Sampling the Archive', 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSKRIUa_CME (accessed 20 June 2020).

9 L. Naidoo, 'Publica[ct]ion Reflection' in *Publica[ct]ion* (Johannesburg: Publica[ct]ion Collective, 2017), 37.

10 Mixcloud, 'Nkosi Sikelela i-Afrika versions', 2020, <https://www.mixcloud.com/bengubbins7/nkosi-sikelela-i-afrka-versions> (accessed 27 June 2020).

11 Department of Basic Education, 'Rainbow Workbooks for Learners', 2019, [https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/Learning_andTeachingSupportMaterials\(LTSM\)/Workbooks.aspx](https://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/Learning_andTeachingSupportMaterials(LTSM)/Workbooks.aspx) (accessed 25 June 2020).



Figure 1: Screenshot of the Mixcloud interface for the *Nkosi Sikelela i-Afrika versions* mix.



Figure 2. Screenshot of the Mixcloud interface for the *iingoma zomzabalazo* mix.

Mixtape #2: iingoma zomzabalazo¹²

This longer mix features songs sampled from archives we have engaged with. Because part of our initial pre-lockdown plan was to spend time handling and listening to vinyl records in the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) Collection at the UWC-Robben Island Mayibuye Archives, certain selections in this mix riff off the collection, for example when the same song/record cannot be found but there is a record in Ben's collection by the same artist these have been prioritised. As a creative exercise, artistic licence has also been exercised. The mix shared here is the fourth version (or take) following weeks of redrafting with much discussion and feedback between us. A tracklist for the mix, and further discussion, appears later in this article (under 'Archives of Song'). For the cover art, we chose a photo of Dulcie September, Janey Love, Ramni Dinat, Zodwa Dabengwa and Barry Feinberg 'at an IDAF staff party ca 1985 at the offices in Essex Rd., Islington, North London.'¹³

12 Mixcloud, 'iingoma zomzabalazo', 2020, <https://www.mixcloud.com/bengubbins7/iingoma-zomzabalazo> (accessed 27 June 2020).

13 H. Kleinschmidt, 'International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa (IDAF)', 2020, <http://www.horstkleinschmidt.co.za/international-defence-and-aid-fund-for-southern-africa-idaf.html> (accessed 22 June 2020).

SONGS AS ARCHIVES

Ben Verghese: Lukhanyo, in your words, how, why and when do songs function as archives? To me, it almost goes without saying that yes, for sure, songs are archives! And it was great to read/hear Kamau Braithwaite reiterate this.¹⁴ Building on the work of W. E. B. du Bois and *The Souls of Black Folk* (and the chapter 'Sorrow Songs'), *The Black Atlantic* is packed with examples, particularly the brilliant chapter three ('Black Music and the Politics of Authenticity') and short section on the song 'I'm So Proud'.¹⁵ There are too many examples of songs as archives to mention but one local song is 'Mannenberg'. Have you read the John Edwin Mason essay?¹⁶ In brief, he writes how 'Mannenberg' had two lives: the popular 'Cape jazz' song and then, as it was played live by Basil Coetzee, Robbie Janson and band at political gatherings, it became a 'struggle anthem'.¹⁷

Lukhanyo ka Dideka: Since we first penned this piece, I have had the chance to engage that text, and find John Mason's idea of the song as having two lives an interesting one. Especially his demonstration of the song's trajectory from jazz into the genre of liberation songs even though nothing in the song's aesthetic arrangement suggests its political intentions. This is a familiar feature about much of South Africa's liberation songs, a classic example being 'Nkosi sikele' iAfrika' by Enoch Sontonga which has since been revised by the #FMF generation to a more radical version. I am thinking of songs as archives, in the most basic definition of the archive as a carrier, a storage and a preserver of historical knowledge, however, I am curious if one considers that songs can be altered to sound radically different from the original composition. Would such a manipulation mean that whatever historical content was in the song has now lost its historical value, therefore, disqualifying the song as a credible source of history? Perhaps the best thing to do would be to put such songs for interpretation in a similar way that damaged archival sources are treated with diligence so as to extract their content and meaning in history.

To think of songs as archives then, I must think of archives first, and simultaneously work with the archiving of songs, which is the work we have taken up with this Activist Archives Project.¹⁸ Songs then, function in a similar manner as archives, insofar as they host and store immaterial subjects such as emotions and memory; this way they become platforms for historical curiosities and explorations.

14 nosbig44, 'Black Writers Conf. 2010 – Kamau Brathwaite, Poet', 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZl0Ejh99Qg> (accessed 2 June 2020).

15 P. Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993), 94–96.

16 J. E. Mason, *The Making of Mannenberg* (Chimurenga, 2008).

17 Mason, *The Making of Mannenberg*, 6.

18 We know archives function as hosts, storage, platforms and institutions that have at their disposal collections of historical documents that have been systematically put together so as to preserve that which makes them interesting subjects of exploration for research.

BV: Thanks Luks. In class you mentioned that feeling of being taken by the spirit/ song, I can relate to this feeling/experience! How to articulate this in English, to be entranced? And in isiXhosa, what, umoya? What of when songs called spirituals come with cries of 'Let the spirit take you!?' The spirit of the song but also the ancestors (or in the Christian context, the spirit of the Lord). What too of Sufi music and whirling? But perhaps, because song/spirit/music/soul are all one and the same or perhaps different yet interconnected (which can get lost in translation), isn't the call of 'let the spirit(s) take you', also 'let the music take you'? Words I hear as voiced by Johnny Dyani.¹⁹

There's a chapter in Nduduzo Makhathini's thesis on Bheki Mseleku that expands on spirituality (in music/songs).²⁰ And also two of Makhathini's mentors, Zim Ngqawana – overtly so in his album *Ingoma* – as well as Eugene Skeef. Note, a description from elder Bra Eugene:

The word ngoma can be found in many parts of Africa. It has its roots in the holistic nature of the continent's cultural traditions, meaning, variously, drum, dance, song, anthem and divine healing energy.²¹

LKD: Thank you for the link to the paper by Makhathini, I have been listening to his music for some time and am motivated to explore ngoma as a concept for liberation songs. There is a TEDx Talk video of his on YouTube, where he talks about how songs have been part of human history for as long as our memory can recall, and perhaps preceded:

[A]ll human languages and speech. As human beings evolved over the years songs became a passageway for memory, a telling of a story, healing and transcendence to dimensions that are otherwise unseen through our naked eye.

And before he goes off blazing those piano keys he asserts: 'we are the people of song, we are the people of the drum!'²²

Makhathini also accounts here for the overtaking of the body by the spirit, as you enquire above, but he is careful to not make the associations to Christianity, of which I think is good as doing so would enhance its colonial dominance over other spiritual practices, such as 'ubungoma'. By doing this he also avoids the (trap which is an) inevitable comparison, to Western cultural practices, that Bantu Biko thought one is likely to fall into every time they look at African cultural aspects.²³ Nonetheless, the

19 Johnny Mbizo Dyani, 'Let the music take you | sing a song fighter', 2018, <https://singasonfighter.bandcamp.com/track/let-the-music-take-you> (accessed 20 June 2020).

20 N. Makhathini, 'Encountering Bheki Mseleku: A Biographical-Analytical Consideration of his Life and Music' (M.A. dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2018), 51–65.

21 E. Skeef, 'Eugene Skeef's Ngoma Project', 2016, <https://eugeneskuefrhythmforlife.wordpress.com/2016/02/08/eugene-skeefs- ngoma-project> (accessed 16 June 2020).

22 N. Makhathini, 'A New Look Towards Ubungoma Practice and Articulations' (TEDxGaborone, TEDxTalks), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bq9cFt8Wt7k> (accessed 22 June 2020).

23 S. Biko, *I Write What I Like* (Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2004), 45.

pianist affirms the claim I make below of the multiple meanings that are expressed through *ngoma* by asserting that:

[W]e refer to song, a drum, a dance as *ngoma*. But also the same word is found when we speak of healing, or referring to a process of being possessed by song – sometimes called *ubungoma*.²⁴

It is useful to begin to read, and think about, liberation songs in the context of *ngoma*, not forgetting the broader relation between music and life in African societies, so as to be in tune with the significance of liberation songs in post-liberation struggle epochs. Actually this reminds me of a short article by Neo Muyanga, where he is advocating for the use of African concepts in writing about African music and my preoccupation with *ngoma* in the analysis of liberation songs is urged by the scholar's meditation on the language of writing about African music.²⁵

BV: Enkosi for all this! It is great to listen to you speak about *ngoma/ingoma/ubun-goma* and, when you raised this in another class, the importance of breaking from speaking of song in English, the tension (as Prof Paolo Israel put it). Now, you're opening our conversations/project into a super important (and dare we say) decolonial realm: language!

Can we probe more on the use, sometimes interchangeably, of the terms freedom or liberation or struggle to label songs? Are we singing and listening to songs for freedom/liberation? Is the act of singing freeing/liberatory or one of struggle and/or revolt? If we shift out of *isiNgisi* (language of co-colonisers in southern Africa) and say (or sing) *iingoma zomzabalazo* do we tread what I believe to be a more progressive (again we could say decolonial) path? As a monolingual English speaker it is a path that puts me out of a comfort zone (a site of privilege) but this is important!²⁶ And so, I'm keen to pursue this (sonke!).

I asked a comrade-friend (a musician/activist-scholar) about the various names for this emancipatory or liberatory music(s), enquiring how we define and archive these whatever they are. Are they a genre? A feeling? He replied as so:

For me, I think what is central to thinking about these questions is context. The context out of which songs are recorded, written, produced and performed. And what are the relations of that context – how does the music relate to that context, the people in it and the revolutionary and popular processes and struggles underway. Music associated with popular struggles in Brazil, for example, often appear as 'love songs' without political content if heard out of context. But we need to understand their genesis in struggles against the autocratic regime to understand their emancipatory character,

24 Ibid.

25 N. Muyanga, 'When and how do we differentiate our music?', *SAMUS: South African Music Studies*, 36, 2018, 80–82.

26 We are not in Britain! This is southern Africa!

even as songs about love could be considered 'freedom' songs more broadly than that. With regard to their archiving, this varies, right? For example in South Africa's liberation movement tradition, we might think of archiving happening at protests when these songs are sung. Regardless of whether they are captured on film or audio or enter the record as artefacts in that way, the real process of archiving that music, staying true to its historical character, is in participation in actual struggle. But of course there are other ways of doing it too, Neo Muyanga's project 'Revolting Songs' is an example of this too.²⁷ But I think it's important to think about liberation music as something that must have a relationship to a movement, and the practice of archiving is a living practice, itself in motion. Rather than an act of recording things and keeping them stored, which is also important, but I think the question of context and the idea of the archive as continually being produced, shifted and re-worked is fundamental when we think about struggles for freedom, emancipation and liberation.²⁸

Thinking more on this, might Fallist movements (and/or their forebears plus off-shoots) be archived in a way similar to the 858 archive?²⁹ Oh, and you've also prompted me to replay a concert-lecture from iPhupho L'ka Biko.³⁰ Related to this, please, if I may, two language/translation queries. Why iingoma (double i) not ingoma? And secondly, yomzabalazo, zomzabalazo, umzabalazo, mzabalazo... please can you specify the differences?

Also, on language, the Amandla Cultural Ensemble record illustrates how in processes of packaging the music transcription and translation, errors happen. With isiXhosa butchered to 'Kosa' and abazali becomes 'abazale'. Such mistakes, presumably due to non-indigenous language speakers typing these titles are frequent, a detail missing in Drewitt's analysis in *Composing Apartheid*.³¹

LKD: True, language is the carrier of all cultures, whether indigenous or colonial, working class or bourgeoisie; the death of any language is the death of the culture it embodies. Yet, this is a channel I want to deliberately avoid at this point in time, by focusing on the appropriation of concepts from indigenous languages to deploy for meditation purposes in another (colonial) language. Like I am doing with ngoma to explore the significance of music in African societies, liberation songs in South Africa in particular, through the concept's variations in ways that would be limited by the (English) concepts of song, dance, drum or healer which are all encapsulated by the ngoma concept. This postulation should not be taken to mean that there is no

27 Pan African Space Station, 'PASS Presents: Revolting Songs (Neo Muyanga)', 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggM9mG05REw> (accessed 16 June 2020).

28 Email correspondence between Ben Vergheese and Asher Gamedze, 4 June 2020.

29 858. n.d., '858.ma – An archive of resistance', <https://858.ma> (accessed 25 June 2020).

30 Pan African Space Station, 'PASS Presents: Ingoma Yomzabalazo with iPhupho L'ka Biko', 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQUjnj0lb30> (accessed 16 June 2020).

31 M. Drewitt, 'Packaging Desires: Album Covers and the Presentation of Apartheid' in G. Olwage, *Composing Apartheid: Music for and against Apartheid* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2008), 115–135.

need for one to clarify which ngoma they are exploring in particular, however it suggests an interconnectedness of ngoma mediums, as the musical life of black people, in African societies.

Instead of directly having the language discussion then, we could through the engagement on iingoma/ingoma (songs/song) have a similar conversation that points out the shortfalls and disadvantages of colonial languages in making sense of the realities of the colonised. But there is no doubt in my mind, we are still colonised; this exchange in your language for instance Ben affirms my point of colonisation – not by you per say, but you know ... your English bloodline.

The variations for me do not matter as much, so long as we are referring to this genre of songs sung by people in political constituencies (and in protest), that are then taken into other spaces, platforms and genres, and/or vice versa. For this is their common denominator, we sing to (be) free/liberated and to revolt/struggle all at the same time; it is the latter that shall take us to the former. This way, songs are then utilised to create a feeling of liberation and a synergy between those in revolution as we struggle against oppression. So yes, let us make the shift, for I argue that it opens us up to other possibilities in an instant, and importantly, it lays bare the propensity of iingoma zomzabalazo. This shift will bring us to the realisation of the need and importance of evaluating existing archives on liberation songs, and the demand that must be made for the prioritisation of liberation songs in archival institutions such as Mayibuye Archives, just as written documents and artefacts have been given. Subsequently, it will also allude to the need for an alternative definition of archive, as the work of Critical Research is calling for, with the concept of archival autonomy, just as your good comrade-friend has done by basing it on context and actual participation in the struggle.³²

Answering your language questions – it is just an issue of singularity and plurality, nothing much, so ingoma (song) and iingoma (songs). Same goes with umzabalazo/mzabalazo (which means struggle) and yomzabalazo (the prefix 'yo' is to signal that this is a song 'of' the struggle). If there were more songs, we would say iingoma zomzabalazo, 'songs of the struggle', and the prefixes 'ii' and 'zo' would suggest the plurality of the subject matter.

ON MEMORY

LKD: It is interesting to think about how, and when, do songs function as memory, or how does the work of remembering relate to songs and music in general. Songs carry with them the lived realities and experiences of a people, and they trigger and evoke emotions and feelings that are shared by a collective, taking people back to experiences that they had to endure. A song becomes a device that we use to store these events in our memory, and subsequently, a platform onto which to perform/write/ and tell history from one generation to the other.

32 J. Evans, S. McKemmish, E. Daniels and G. McCarthy, 'Self-determination and archival autonomy: advocating activism', *Archival Science*, 15, 2015, 337.

Of course, each generation takes a song and does what it wants with it, yet in many instances the essence of the song has been able to live many generations on after its composing generation. Take for instance, the journey travelled by 'Nkosi Sikelela iAfrika' and how the many versions of it, in and out of South Africa, indicate to the 'map of experience' by many generations who have come to 'own' the song and deployed it for their particular context. David Coplan writes that '[this] process of transmission of popular history over time transforms it into cultural memory and its tacit knowledge'.³³

Also, due to the changing times and shifting material conditions of each generation, the same song might have its own meaning for a particular generation, and its use and accessibility as part of our cultural and collective memory is fairly loose and open to all. However, the dominance of capitalism over every aspect of our lives, with regards to insisting on attaching individuality to things, has ensured, and led to, some legal dispute between individuals and music companies. I am thinking of the paper 'Song, Memory, Power and the South African Archive' by Christopher Ballantine here when he writes about how 'Thula Baba', a song that exists in the collective memory of black people as a traditional song, was taken by a white woman, Bertha Egnos, using 'new commercial opportunities to exploit black music and musicians'.³⁴

Ballantine also demonstrates that the woman was in contact and had worked with some black performers who, surely, taught her the song amongst many others, before she signed to Gallo in 1963 who then listed her as its composer, and themselves as the copyright owners.³⁵ Furthermore, the author posits that the song was commonly known to be a traditional song by black people, insofar as it was in the public domain and available for all to use, 'hence Umoja [a musical theatre production] owed royal- ties to nobody, and Gallo's claims to the rights were invalid'.³⁶

BV: Regarding memory, I looked back through the course reading packs. In seminar six there's a chapter by Martin Legassick in *History Making and Present Day Politics: The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa* (2007), but it's a different chapter from the book that caught my eye by Professor Bernard Magubane. Sjoe, he speaks truths! The closing summary is:

[A]ny discourse on historical memory in South Africa which deals with the experience of the African people should of necessity focus on the African memory, something which is glaringly absent from past South African historiography.³⁷

33 D. B. Coplan, 'Popular History; Cultural Memory', *Critical Arts: South-North Cultural and Media Studies*, 14, 2 2000, 154.

34 C. Ballantine, 'Song, Memory, Power, and the South African Archive', *The Music Quarterly*, 99, 2017, 62.

35 Ibid. 62.

36 Ibid. 62.

37 B. Magubane, 'Whose memory – whose history? The illusion of liberal and radical historical debates' in H. E. Stolten (ed), *History Making and Present Day Politics: The Meaning of Collective Memory in South Africa* (Stockholm: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2007), 279.

Which brings back to mind a quote of Wendell Hassan Marsh:

Because memory is so often developed from non-written texts, these narratives are more difficult to trace because of the scarcity of traces; but deep in the ideologies, practices, and politics of those denied history is an ethereal yet very real memory that is un-stated but nonetheless dis-static. In other words, History is the science of the state, while memory is the art of the stateless.³⁸

On memory and song, it would be good to look more at Valmont Layne's theses too. I was skimming through his PhD thesis and a reference leapt out to the book *Cape Town Harmonies: Memory, Humour and Resilience*. There the authors reiterate that memory is not history.³⁹ Gaulier and Martin also raise two questions which I hear as speaking loudly to the way we are thinking about songs as archives and archives of songs. They ask:

How can music contribute to organising memory? How can memory be kept in music and resurface through music, beyond the oblivion that conceals past events which are not, or have not been, utterable?⁴⁰

There are also passages in another of Martin's books – *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa*. There's a lot in that book actually, for example:

Playing music and singing songs are a way of marking a territory, of drawing its boundaries and of claiming it: 'our' place is indeed where 'our' music can be heard.⁴¹

This quote prompts me to contemplate the many occasions black people reclaim the notoriously exclusionary citybowl of Cape Town, as shown in Fallist videos we have seen/heard sonke. But, returning to our approach of going about archival work, how is the 'Nkosi Sikelela i-Afrika versions' mixtape for you?

LKD: I must admit first that I couldn't help but feel disconnected with most parts of the mix; it is certainly not in the way the songs were put together, of which I think were great. I like how the songs played on till the last one without any breaks in between. Perhaps, this disconnect is caused by my own biases, in that I have never been a choral music fan, and this actually reminds me of choral music shows that used to play on SABC 1 growing up, called *Imizwilili* – I could not stand it for a moment.

38 W. H. Marsh, 'Re-membering the name of God', *Chimurenga Chronic: New Cartographies*, 2015, 19.

39 A. Gaulier and D-C. Martin, *Cape Town Harmonies: Memory, Humour and Resilience* (Somerset West: African Minds, 2017), 60.

40 Gaulier and Martin, *Cape Town Harmonies*, 59.

41 D-C. Martin, *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* (Somerset West: African Minds, 2013), 25.

Surprisingly though, choral music has a different effect to when one witnesses it live, at least this is the case with me.

Obviously choral music has strong ties with the church; in fact when 'Nkosi Sikelela' was first composed by Enoch Sontonga in 1897, it was for a mission school choir he was conducting at the time, and concurrently a school he was teaching at. The song quickly gained popularity soon after the conductor and his choir performed it nationally at various choral music competitions. However, this accelerated at the turn of the century when the song was adopted by other groups and tweaked it to fit their style of singing, 'and shortly after the composer's death, the song was inau- gurated into the political sphere of South Africa in a closing meeting of the African National Congress (then known as the South African Native National Congress).'⁴²

If anything, then, this mix attempts to bring those various versions and genres of the songs together from the different archives we have been working through, namely SAMAP, Flat International and YouTube.⁴³ The first three songs feel caged for me, very choral, of which I think does not do it any justice as it takes away exactly what makes liberation songs potent and powerful, afterall, the song was originally composed as a choir song. Hence, I come alive when Koketso's voice comes through to salvage the song from all those old voices and records with the decolonised version of 'Nkosi Sikelela iAfrika'. Maybe this is my biases being confirmed again as I was very much part of the moment when the latter was being echoed across the country in higher institutions of learning with students calling for the scrapping of fees and the decolonisation of the curriculum.

42 ka Dideka, 'Senzeni na Nkosi?', 18–19.

43 In part one of the original project we wrote overviews of each archive we selected to study. Here follows these summaries: South African Music Archives Project (SAMAP) is an archival platform for rare audio clips of South African popular music and culture. The archive (<https://samap.ukzn.ac.za>) boasts of containing around 13,000 audio samples and associated metadata from the Chris Ballantine Collection, the Jürgen Bräuninger Collection, Hidden Years Music Archive Project (HYMAP), International Library of African Music (ILAM), UKZN Music Library (UKZN) and Shifty Records. In addition to the option to search with keywords, the website features a sidebar of 'Tags' sub-divided into three categories: People, Language and Place. These are presented as a word cloud whereby the more popular the search the large the word/name appears. Thus our eye is caught by 'Tracey, Hugh', 'Sukuma', and 'Zulu' (in category of People), 'Chopi', 'Swahili' and 'Zulu' (for Language) and 'Tanganyika', 'Tanzania', 'South Africa' and 'Zimbabwe' (for Place). The platform's cataloguing ensures that the differentiation in language between the songs is maintained and made visible through description of songs. This is interesting, yet problematic to us at the same time, in that we feel it perpetuates and reinforces tribalism, by making unnecessary language/ ethnic differentiation between the songs. For instance, with 'Nkosi Sikelela iAfrika', the archive has some records catalogued as isiXhosa and some as isiZulu. Yet, there is no sharp lyrical difference between the two languages to necessitate for such a distinction to be made. Flat International (<http://www.flatinternational.org>) is an archival platform containing a project known as the South African Audio Archive which seeks to set up rare South African audio documents as artefacts in a visual archive form. The project aims 'to provide a searchable database as a resource for those researching South African audio history'. They have noted that their database is by no means exhaustive, as it is still early days, however, Flat International hopes that as time goes on more data will be accumulated and 'provide researchers with valuable information currently unavailable on the web, such as discographies of many lesser known South African artists, labels, and companies'. The archive hopes to work as a respectful complement to already existing sites on South African music such as, SA Rock Encyclopedia, Electric Jive, Soul Safari, Matsuli, music.org.za, SAMAP ILAM and 3rd Ear Music, amongst others. Flat International seem to be open to criticism as they stress the point that, if any of the artefacts provided may come across as offensive then the public should feel free to be in contact with them; otherwise, the material is meant to serve nothing but research purposes, as the project is a nonprofit-making initiative. The material, according to their site, offers an uncensored view of the complex history of South Africa, which is embedded in race relations and this may offend many, as such Flat International highlights that the views expressed in the content are not, necessarily, those held by them. YouTube channels: If we are to believe what we read online, there are over five billion videos uploaded to YouTube. For this project, we focused on a selection of YouTube channels which archive(d) songs sung by Fallists through 2015–2016. These are: Avi Media, Black Talent SA, Media For Justice, Mosses Tolom, Paulos Lekala Marutha, and Thando 'Moziah' Sipuye. Another notable channel of music connected to our research interest is Wabangi Video run by the late (DJ) Jumbo Vanrenen.

BV: This is fascinating to hear! And a meritable difference in opinion to Coplan and Bennetta Jules-Rosette or Siemon Allen.⁴⁴ In the second mixtape, your voice is audible in the rendition of 'eMakhaya'. What are your memories of taking to the streets on that occasion? It was November 2015 neh? What traces of them stay with you? And, as the force of Fallism has shifted in the years since then, the campaigns of 2015–16, how are these struggles as you see them currently? Thinking of the *Publ[ic]a/cJtion* text by Mnqobi Ngubane which chronicles a year of moves to end outsourcing at UWC, have conditions for workers at UWC (in particular cleaning and landscaping staff) improved in the years since?

LKD: I remember that I was fairly young then, 19 exactly, and only in my first year of university in 2015. Honestly, I learnt a great deal in that chaotic two year period and what was perhaps the greatest achievement of the #FMF movement was the bridging of the gap between workers and students. This resulted in the insourcing of workers in some universities and salary increases. This relationship and synergy is beautifully relaid and illuminated in the song 'Isikhalo somfundi/Zizojika izinto', that rings on my mind and that my little cousin remembers from my graduation day, which presses to the students and workers that things will change hence they should not cry about what is happening:

(call) Isikhalo somfundi/somnt'ana sihoye	Heed the cry of the
student/child (response) Thula mnt'anam	Quiet my child
(call) Wena ukhalelani?	What are you crying for?
(response) Thula mnt'anam wena ukhalelani?	Quiet my child, what are you crying for?

The lead singer, who makes the call, comes back and changes the initial call to, 'Zizojika izinto' (things will change), which should be read as saying that change is inevitable for as long as we fight for what is due to us (workers and students); therefore do not cry my child, soldier on! Songs thus function as a reminder of times that have passed. They are archives of feelings and emotions that are conjured every time songs are sung.

ARCHIVES OF SONGS

LKD: To think about how songs are and how they function as archives, it is important we think critically of the archives they are in. That is, to look into the archival processes deployed by Mayibuye Archives so as to tell of the ways in which liberation songs appear and feature in the archive, an approach which led us to discover that the preservation of songs at Mayibuye Archives was by chance, or to put it in the words of the Mayibuye staff member, they were more 'accidental than incidental'.⁴⁵ The staff

44 Flat International, 'The South African National Anthem: a history on record', <http://flatint.blogspot.com/2013/10/the-south-african-national-anthem.html> (accessed 16 June 2020).

45 Informal video call conversation between Lukhanyo ka Dideka, Ben Verghese and an anonymous staff member of Mayibuye Archives, 18 June 2020.

member thought that the dominance of ANC songs in their archive was due to the movement's well-functioning cultural groups, such as Amandla and Mayibuye.⁴⁶ He also shared with us that the elementary years of the archive saw a contingent of activists working there as archivists, a revelation which I thought of as a pivoting of the Liberation Archive to tell the story of the ANC in the fight for liberation, and as a means of asserting the party as the true and sole liberator of African people from the dark centuries and decades of colonial-apartheid rule.⁴⁷

In many ways then, this practice affirms Stoler's comment of the archive as a product of state machines and, in other words, it subsequently functions as a tool that extends and enforces the dominance of those who govern the state.⁴⁸ In your response to seminar three, you wrote:

Macro political agents – be they democratically elected parties or overtly fascist governments – benefit from archives continuing to replicate long-established archival techniques: collecting, classifying, locking away to limit access and so on. When business carries on in this well established fashion, [...] whistleblowing historians, activists, journalists and other students of archives can be marginalised or otherwise silenced.⁴⁹

Continuing in a similar vein, if we think a bit longer we would be able to see a problem that exceeds that of the archive. Previously I wrote it would be clear to:

[T]ell that the problem with the liberation archive is a symptom of a malady the post-apartheid state is suffering from; that of inheriting, not only Tuynhuys, Parliament, and the Union Buildings from the colonial-apartheid state but also its methodologies and practices of knowledge production (in the writing and telling of the History of the liberation movement/struggle).⁵⁰

This is, nonetheless, an impediment which makes it possible to begin to think of, and consider, other platforms, such as YouTube, as archival sites worthy of critical exploration in our project, so as to account for other songs that do not make it to the 'chance archive' of liberation songs compiled by Mayibuye Archives, but that are important and necessary for our work on archives (of songs).⁵¹

46 In exile, the ANC had (at least) two cultural ensembles, first the Mayibuye group and then the more official Amandla group (led by Jonas Gwangwa). See also: S. Gilbert, 'Singing Against Apartheid: ANC Cultural Groups and the International Anti- Apartheid Struggle', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33, 2, June 2007, 433.

47 Informal video call conversation between Lukhanya ka Dideka, Ben Verghese and an anonymous staff member of Mayibuye Archives, 18 June 2020.

48 A. Stoler 'Colonial Archive and the Arts of Governance', *Archival Science*, 2, 2002.

49 B. Verghese, 'History 849: Seminar 3' (History Department, UWC, 2020).

50 L. ka Dideka. 'History 849: Seminar 3' (History Department, UWC, 2020).

51 Relating to song and societal issues, we ask how can we protect public assets from private interests? This is further complicated when we consider how the Robben Island Museum (who 'own' the Mayibuye Archives) is one of the one hundred and thirty-one State-owned Enterprises (SOEs). Are museums and archives serving public interests? And if so, what or which public? It's a lot! See also N. L. Iaga Ramoupi, N. Solani, A. Odendaal, and K. ka Mpumlwana, *Robben Island Rainbow Dreams: The Making of Democratic South Africa's First National Heritage Institution* (Cape Town: BestRed, an imprint of HSRC Press, 2021).

BV: Absolutely. This is addressing the 'politics of collecting' as Premesh Lalu put it, no?⁵² Rereading the 'virtual stampede' essay, along with another essay on the Aluka Project, brought to mind the messiness around how archives serve institutions and (ideological) agendas.⁵³ It also clicked (after browsing the Action for Southern Africa website) how 'archives of the liberation struggles in Southern Africa' can reinforce the liberal myth that apartheid ended in 1994.⁵⁴ Hence archives (national or anti-apartheid) can be closed to new acquisitions (such as Fallists singing!) because *the struggle* is perceived as being over. There is also a gigantic cloud of a question: how do we study/use all this archival material/work to shape a more loving/less-violent future?

On the significance/possibilities of vinyl records as physical archives of songs (and ideologies, politics and/or aesthetics), there are a few points I would like to make. In *Composing Apartheid*, Michael Drewitt quotes a photographer, Brian Griffin:

[A vinyl record sleeve] is *the vehicle* (for artistic expression), because it gets into the living room, as opposed to some art sanctum. It's on the streets, it's in the shops, it's in the home, and it stays around for a very long time. [I'd add here it's also in the clubs/places where we listen/dance!] The most important aspect of it is the psychological one. The twelve-inch square is just right when you hold it at arms' length; it's an absolutely perfect viewing space, in feel, space and size.⁵⁵

The visual information to read from records, this context and history, is one aspect of what Lynnée Denise has named as DJ Scholarship, as outlined earlier. Also, while I agree with Michael Bhatch's statements that 'crate digging is a form of cultural archaeology' and 'crate diggers are [...] sonic archaeologists and music scholars'; maybe another conversation is that crate digging and deejaying can be cultural appropriation too.⁵⁶ I say this reflecting on my positionality as someone who listens to songs in languages/cultures outside of my experience/understanding and has to rely on translation to try grasp the gist. On the act of digging for, or collecting, records, I'm curious as to how records came to be collected by the IDAF, whose materials were donated to become what is now the Mayibuye Archives. As we were told, the process was 'more accidental than incidental', which makes me wonder, who at the IDAF was buying these records? Or were they donated by artists in support of the cause?

52 P. Lalu, 'The virtual stampede for Africa: digitisation, postcoloniality and archives of the liberation struggles in Southern Africa', *Innovation*, 34, June 2007, 29.

53 A. Isaacman, P. Lalu, and T. Nygren, 'Digitization, History, and the Making of a Postcolonial Archive of Southern African Liberation Struggles: The Aluka Project', *Africa Today*, 52, 2, Winter 2005, 56.

54 Action for Southern Africa, 'ACTSA | South African campaigning organisation', 2017, <https://actsa.org> (accessed 20 June 2020); Lalu, 'The virtual stampede', 38.

55 Drewitt, 'Packaging Desires', 116.

56 M. Bhatch, 'Somali songs reveal why musical crate digging is a form of cultural archaeology', 2018, *The Conversation*, <https://theconversation.com/somali-songs-reveal-why-musical-crate-digging-is-a-form-of-cultural-archaeology-100285> (accessed 23 May 2020).

In redrafting the second mixtape, I moved away from vinyl and other studio recorded versions of songs to listen closer and spend more time studying the YouTube channels you identified. This shift is a search to include more of those moments when songs are sung in the collective act of protest/struggle. On the streets, in the train stations, or campuses. There's so much powerful archiving in the YouTube channels! Of song(s), of protest, of prolonged periods of acceleration in a longstanding movement.

LKD: I have spent some time listening to the first version over and over again. I enjoyed the jazz there I must admit. However, it is rather loaded with too much jazz and does not really do justice to liberation songs as an all-encompassing term and genre. In some ways, I actually feel like it is doing exactly what we are criticising of the existing archival platforms, which is to disregard and relegate liberation songs to the periphery of the archive. Because liberation songs are made up of various genres I don't think there should be anyone that does (or dominates) more on the mix than the others are doing; if anything, I think the mix should make it clear that liberation songs are not locked in one genre and that it is a multi-genre type of music.

Something less jazzy that I am thinking about, and which actually reminds me of the workers' struggle for insourcing at UWC, as accounted by Mnqobi Ngubane, are the songs 'Idabi labantu/labasebenzi' and 'Basebenzi/bafundi manyanani'. Ngubane gives an account of the workers' efforts to be insourced by UWC, and his article also is an indication of the student-worker alliance that lay as the foundation of the fallist movement. I like the link he makes between the sculpture by David Hlongwane, titled *Ending and Beginning*, and 'the popular struggle song: "my mother was a kitchen girl, my father was a garden boy; that's why I'm an educator"'.⁵⁷ Now that I think about it, the statue in its own right is a symbol of the alliance that has come into formation between the workers and the #FMF students of UWC.

Although Mnqobi is reminded of another song when he looks at the statue by David Hlongwane, two songs that featured prominently in #FMF and that symbolise the student-worker alliance were the two I mentioned above. The first is a song that reminds the workers/the people (and the students as the ally) that their struggle will not be led by the chartists/bourgeoisie in Parliament. This is another PAC song that was popular during the demonstrations of the Fallist movement; it seems to suggest that Parliament, or mainstream politics, is complicit in the exploitation of the workers by corporates and private businesses. As such – though this is not stated explicitly – the workers ought to lead their own struggle.

However, to fight private business and big corporates – such as the outsourced service providers in universities – is not a task that is to be taken lightly, hence the alliance between workers and students needed to be constantly negotiated and forged into something solid that could stand the wrath of those in power when they bring it down on the poor and vulnerable. Thus, the song 'Basebenzi/bafundi manyanani'

⁵⁷ M. Ngubane, 'Workers' Struggle with Outsourcing at the University of the Western Cape: The Beginning of the End' in *Publica[ct]ion* (Johannesburg: Publica[ct]ion Collective, 2017), 38.

was deployed to strengthen and solidify the worker-student alliance; what this song also does is to pull workers and students together, as parents and children towards realising that their strength lies in their unity, which is the 'beginning and ending' of their struggle for insourcing and free education.

The sculpture by Hlongwane therefore, functions as a symbol of unity between the workers and the students, and in many ways, since it has been displayed on UWC's public grounds it could thus be interpreted to be the institution's support for the struggle of the working class for a better life. The irony of it all, of course, is that UWC is nowhere close to insourcing the cleaning and landscaping workers on its campus, regardless of having declared to be looking into insourcing avenues way back in 2015. The workers look to every new year, new council chairperson and ex-ecutive with hopeful eyes, yet nothing ever comes to fruition, as there have not been signs that suggest the will to commit to insourcing, from the side of the institution – though they have contributed towards increasing the salaries of workers to at least a minimum that is above R4,000 per month.

BV: Again, enkosi kakhulu for all this. For sure, the struggle for workers (and students!) at UWC still continues and this is yet another area to follow up and keep on with. As, for your feedback on version 1 of mixtape #2, this is very constructive and good to chew on. Comments from my partner on the first draft/version included that there's 'Too much English!' and how it sounds like 'Academia speaking of the grassroots!'

All the songs we selected speak directly to the themes of freedom/liberation/struggle. An intention is to move through internationalism and calls for solidarity, land, remembering 'freedom fighters' or cultural workers who died in the struggle, alternative anthems, then to sign out with a song to (perhaps) encourage dancing. I believe it is vital we free these songs, these records out of the archives, dust them off from the shelves and let them be heard. So we can study by listening and, if the music takes us, dance!

Your point on how the first version of the mixtape is/was 'loaded with too much jazz', is one acted on, with redrafting for versions two and three not so 'jazz-forward'. However, a couple of responses – firstly, as you've also said, surely yes 'liberation songs' cross a variety of styles/genres. If we listen to the compilation album *Mayibuye Archives* released we predominantly hear songs that are either choral or being *toyi toyi'd*.⁵⁸ These are archetypal examples of what a freedom/liberation/struggle song sounds like. We appreciate these but can also push against it, giving space to musicians (including Louis Moholo or Basil Coetze) who either at home or in exile have made music in the context of struggle and as a practice of freedom. There are the questions we raised in our analysis of 'Cherry' too; for instance must *ingoma*

⁵⁸ Discogs n.d., 'South African Freedom Songs – Inspiration For Liberation', <https://www.discogs.com/Various-South-African-Freedom-Songs-Inspiration-For-Liberation/release/13341975> (accessed 16 June 2020).

yomzabalazo have lyrics?⁵⁹ Listening to other versions/variations of 'Nkosi Sikelela iAfrika', does this composition transition from being a hymn to a freedom song (or song of/for freedom) at times like when it was performed live in 1979 by Johnny Dyani on his *African Bass* LP (Red Records, 1980)?⁶⁰ Or in 2000 by Louis Moholo- Moholo with Keith and Julie Tippett and Canto Generàl?⁶¹ Incidentally, in those two reworks of Sontonga's composition, titled 'Afrikan Anthem' and 'South African National Anthem' respectively, Dyani's version is credited as a traditional song that he has arranged (which hopefully meant he received publishing royalties) whereas on the Viva La Black version it is credited 'E.Sentonga, [sic] traditional'.

Looking through our tracklist again now, the second mix arguably has an over- emphasis of songs recorded in exile – the Amandla and Mayibuye cultural groups, Miriam Makeba, Blue Notes, Jabula and the Liberation Orchestra (arranged by Abdullah Ibrahim and Sathima Benjamin) – however, this speaks to leanings in both the IDAF collection and the records I've collected through the years (which are a reflection of music that moves me most as well as having been mostly sourced in Europe). Musing more on the IDAF, what songs were being played (and sung/danced along to!) at the party with Dulcie September, Barry Feinberg and comrades in the photo used for the mixtape's cover art?

The tracklist for version four of mixtape #2, *iingoma zomzabalazo* is:

- ~ Countdown, Rhodes is falling! ~
- 1. AMANDLA – Sobashiya Abazale
- ~ Mayibuye call for solidarity ~
- 2. SWAPO Singers – Afrika
- 3. Miriam Makeba – Murtala
- ~ Chris Hani on land ~
- 4. Fallists with Athabile Nonxuba as singist – eMakhaya
- 5. Jabula – Thunder into Our Hearts⁶²

59 'Cherry' is a song written by Basil Coetzee that features on the album *Plum and Cherry* (As-Shams, 1979). In the IDAF vinyl collection there are four records Coetzee performs on. Two of these are as bandleader, *Plum and Cherry* and *Sabenza* (Mountain Records, 1987). Additionally there is *Black Teardrops* (As-Shams, 1981), the second album from the group Movement In The City and a compilation album from the 1987 Culture In Another South Africa (CASA) festival in Amsterdam, *Rhythms of Freedom* (VARAgram, 1989). Although writing about music is always secondary to the act of listening, we previously wrote a 1,000 words of micro-analysis (or close listening) of the song. This is available on request.

60 ABCDJLG, 'Johnny Mbizo Dyani - Afrikan Anthem / Afrikan Blues / Ithi-Qq', 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_aGb53dNaTk (accessed 16 June 2020).

61 Keith Tippett, Julie Tippett, Louis Moholo- Moholo & Canto General, 'Viva La Black Live At Ruvo', 2021, <https://keithtippettogun.bandcamp.com/album/viva-la-black-live-at-ruvo> (accessed 1 May 2023).

62 Jabula were formed in the UK by the Malombo drummer Sebothane Julian Bahula with guitarist Madumetja Lucky Ranku (the two had played together in South Africa with Abbey Cindi in the group Malombo Jazz Makers), along with bassist Mogotsi Ernest Motlhe, Dudu Pukwana and other musicians from the 1970s London scene. In the Mayibuye Archives there's a copy of Jabula's self-titled first album which features a young Vicky Busiswe (Busi!) Mhlongo and has an amazing cover designed by Dumile Feni. The song 'Thunder into Our Hearts' is from Jabula's second album (Caroline Records, 1976). Mongezi (Mongs) Feza was due to play on that record but sadly passed before they went to the studio. The closing part of the liner notes written by Bahula read: "Thunder into our Hearts" is dedicated to our brother Mongs, who went away as suddenly as a clap of thunder, striking us like lightning from the sky, deepening thunder into our hearts. Mongs worked with us, rehearsed for this album but he couldn't make the beautiful happening with his horn. [...] Do not forget us Mongs, for our love is still carrying you. We know your deepest desire was to go back home, your soul yearned for the long lost homeland which fate denied you in life. May your spirit find you there.'

6. Blue Notes – Ithi Gqi-Nkosi Sikelele L’Afrika⁶³
7. Mayibuye – Somlandela/A Poem of Vengeance
8. Johnny Dyani – Pretoria Three
9. Liberation Southafrica – Anthem for the New Nation
10. Fallists with Koketso Poho as singist – ‘Decolonised version’ of Nkosi Sikelela i-Afrika

~ Basil Coetzee call at CASA ~

11. Basil ‘Manenberg’ Coetzee and Lionel Pillay – Cherry [excerpt].

A point you made in a phonecall regarding nuances on land and other disagreements between individuals and political groups/movements/parties is another matter to discuss further. Also, for sure, the name (or roll) calling of the leaders, such as in the SWAPO Singers song ‘Afrika’ can reduce contestations between, for example Robert Sobukwe and Nelson Mandela, or rather the political ideas they were giving voice to. But this was also part of the reasoning for threading those songs or soundclips together, so we hear of the senior figures from the PAC and ANC (as well as ‘lead- ers’ from all over the continent), we hear from Chris Hani, then we tune in to the grassroots and listen to people identifying as PAC supporters singing about land. In theory, together the songs highlight the need for redistribution of land in southern Africa. The songs/music rouse us to further this conversation and consider differing approaches in how to take action.

The last link I would like to make before pausing is about Johnny Dyani and the song ‘Pretoria Three’. It is placed between ‘Somlandela’ and the new anthem from the Liberation Orchestra (a group headed by Abdullah Ibrahim and Sathima Bea Benjamin). Dyani played a lot with Abdullah Ibrahim and had a closeness to Sathima Benjamin so it made sense to me to try to place them beside each other. Musically, I really like how the closing bass solo and opening chorus blend together. An assumption is that Dyani’s addressing the song to Ncimbithi Lubisi, Tsepô Mashigo and Naphthali Manana, the MK cadres tagged as the ‘Pretoria Three’ who were charged with ‘treason’ and sentenced to death by the apartheid state, or as it said in an issue of *Dawn*, ‘to hang in the dark dungeons of the Union Buildings fascists’.⁶⁴ But I wanted to hint at a connection between that state killing and the killing of Vuyisile Mini (and all people murdered for daring to fight for the liberation of South Africa). Dyani is an awesome example of someone whose songs are seriously deep archives.

63 By the time the Blue Notes arrived in London, they were a quintet: Johnny Dyani (bass), Louis Moholo (drums), Dudu Pukwana (sax), Mongezi Feza (trumpet) and Chris McGregor (piano). ‘Ithi Gqi-Nkosi Sikelele L’Afrika’ is also a dedication for Johnny Dyani (who passed away suddenly in 1986). It is from the record *Blue Notes for Johnny* (Ogun, 1987), an album with a gorgeous George Hallett photo on the cover of Peter Clarke’s hands and a bell. The Blues Notes also recorded an album after Mongezi passed, *Blues Notes for Mongezi*. Ogun Records was set up by bassist Harry Miller and his partner Hazel. Neither of these dedication recordings are in the IDAF but there are other Ogun releases at Mayibuye, the Harry Miller albums *In Conference* (1978) and *Children at Play* (1974). Louis Moholo drums on both of those and two more that are in the collection from the FMP label: *No Gossip* (1982) with pianist Keith Tippett) and *Opened but Hardly Touched* (1981) with Miller on bass and saxophonist Fred Brotzmann. Those albums are examples of what gets labelled as free jazz; they are improvisational music, avant-garde if we want to use that term. Some ferocious playing!

64 Editorial, ‘Stop Apartheid Murder!’, *Sechaba* (February 1981), 1; R. Maile, ‘The Pretoria Three in Mahlangu’s Footsteps’, *Dawn* (April 1981), 3-4.

LKD: I like your breakdown of the mix, more so the link you are making through Dyani's song between the deaths of the 'Pretoria Three' and the death of Vuyisile Mini is brilliant, but let me start with other aspects of that mix. My attention is grabbed by the opening #RMF chants, and the contrast between it and the following song is worth mentioning; in fact, a similar contrast arises with the soundbite of Chris Hani followed by Fallists singing. As we know, #RMF's intention was to challenge institutional racism at the University of Cape Town specifically, and this quickly spread into other institutions across the country, especially 'former white' universities. Institutions such as University of Stellenbosch and University of Pretoria, were challenged by students to transform their language policies from Afrikaans to English as a medium of learning as the majority of the black students who were registered at these institutions did not understand Afrikaans. Although, in an interview with Dr Neo Lekgotla, Tim Modise seems to suggest that this does not necessarily do any justice as the latter is also a colonising and an oppressive language; to which the scholar responds that it is a start of what could come.⁶⁵ However, Dr Lekgotla is quick to highlight that there is a governmental issue, insofar as there is no political will to develop and institutionalise indigenous South African languages so that Africans could begin to do the work of thinking and writing in their own languages.

My point is, 'Sobashiya Abazali' seems to be a song by young people who are committing to fighting for the liberation (inkululeko) of their country, hence they are prepared to leave their parents (abazali) and siblings (bafo bethu) to go to other countries where they will prepare and ready themselves for the gigantic task they have yoked – the liberation struggle.⁶⁶ The song must have been composed in the late 70s or early 80s period when young people responded to the call of the arm struggle and embarked on their generational mission. If those young people fought for freedom, and the dispensation we live in is believed to be that freedom, then we should not have had a #RMF, #FMF and #OpenStellenbosch challenging discrimination, exclusion and the systematic oppression of blacks at institutions of higher learning. These post-apartheid struggles are a testimony of the fact that in 1994 liberation did not dawn for black people, and that we continue to be vagabonds and non-beings in a country that is supposedly ours – therefore, miss me with all that rainbow nation nonsense. If anything, post-apartheid South Africa is a crazy demonstration, or a democrazy, as Fela Kuti puts it in his song 'Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense'.⁶⁷

The clip of Hani followed by the PAC song 'eMakhaya', sung here by UWC/UCT PASMA members and UWC workers, points out an ideological break between the ANC/SACP, that Hani was a member of, and the PAC. Though Hani's outlining of land redistribution sounds relatively progressive and the best way to go about it, I can't help but cringe when he goes the extent of calming the anxiety of whites, at the time, that not all the land will be taken and that they are still entitled to stolen and

65 Soweto TV, 'Tonight with Tim Modise | Dr Neo Lekgotla laga Ramoupi', 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7WhSxT4tElo> (accessed on 16 June 2020).

66 Note that bafo bethu seems to suggest our brothers when translated directly to English.

67 F. Kuti, 'Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense (1980)', 2011, <https://felakuti.bandcamp.com/album/teacher-don-t-teach-me-nonsense-1980> (accessed 25 June 2020).

manipulated land ownership. I like how 'eMakhaya' comes in here then and snatches the conversation on Land away from the capture of the Freedom Charter, and passes- ness of the ANC/SACP on the issue.

While Hani contests that there must be a redress to the violent dispossession of land from blacks by whites, PAC demands that there be a counter radical response to this dispossession and structure that perpetuates blackness; as the song echoes, there shall be a firing of the gun (kuzo khala isibham) when we take back the land eMak- haya/at home.⁶⁸ For me, this is an important rapture in the mix for it crystallises the ideological frontlines of the Liberation Struggle in South Africa, and in many ways supports Fanon when he suggests that to undo what the oppressors have done to the oppressed, the latter should do the same to the former, and that is through means of violence.

If I am honest with you, I am less concerned with the critique that Fanon is misread and taken out of context here; instead to me, this critique functions as a po- licing of the anger and frustration of black people against their systematic oppression. I think you were concerned earlier, of how we read songs (or make use of them)

for a non-violent/peaceful future. I want to counter that question with a question: how do we begin to even think of non-violence, when we have a structure in place that constantly yields and perpetuates violence? The biggest issue we have in this country, perhaps the world over, is that black people's anger and actions have always been policed, and the privilege of white people has always been protected – by de- fault, it is always at the expense of blacks, and this is how cruel history has been on black people. What happens then when the emotional and structural wellbeing (exis- tence) of blacks is not regarded here?

It is the lack of concrete answers to these pressing questions, that the song, then, suggests there be a firing of the gun when we take the land back at home; which I in- terpret as saying that this anti-black structure must be dismantled/destroyed so that a new structure be built, and not assimilate into a system that does not recognise one as a human being. This tension is important to highlight Ben, as it is one that continues to ensue in the country with insignificant efforts to end antiblackness, and the much avoided land question is part of this problem.

68 Also note that in this context khala refers to the audibility of sound, and a direct translation of sound in isiXhosa is isandi.