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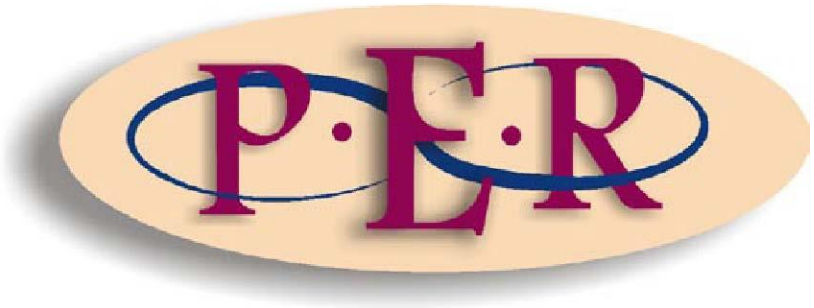

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APARTHEID'S ALCATRAZ: THE BARBERTON PRISON COMPLEX DURING THE EARLY 1980s - PART ONE

SA Peté*

1 Introduction

uring the course of the well-known Hart-Fuller debate which took place in the aftermath of World War II, one of the participants in the debate made an interesting appeal. In his analysis of the perversions of the Nazi "legal system", legal philosopher Lon Fuller spoke of the need "to move a little closer within smelling distance of the witches' caldron..."[1] This appeal to emotion was not meant to distract from the academic rigour of his argument, but rather to sharpen the understanding of his readers as to the true nature of the social institution he was examining.

The social institution examined in this article is not a legal system but a penal system - ie the penal system of apartheid South Africa. The period examined is the early 1980s - in many ways the height of the apartheid period. The particular focus of this article is on the Barberton Prison Complex which, at the time, was known as the place to which the most dangerous and violent prisoners in the South African penal system were sent to serve their sentences. The importance of Barberton is that, in many respects, it represents the worst of what the South African penal system had to offer at the height of the apartheid era. Through a series of widely publicised, shocking and violent incidents which occurred within the Barberton Prison Complex in the early 1980s, the term "Barberton" came to epitomise brutality, racism, cruelty, and endemic violence - qualities which, to a greater or lesser extent, were to be found within all apartheid prisons. A proper understanding of the nature of the apartheid penal system depends, in part, on an appreciation of what it meant to be confined within what this article terms "Apartheid's Alcatraz".

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1 Fuller 1958 *Harv L Rev* 650.

By choosing to examine the Barberton Prison Complex, the focus of this article is on the treatment of "normal" as opposed to "political" prisoners during the period in question. One reason for this is that South Africa already has a rich prison literature dealing with what it was like to be a political detainee or a political prisoner during the apartheid era.[2] Much has been written, for example, on the notorious Robben Island Prison and its inmates.[3] By focusing on Barberton, the "voices" of ordinary prisoners – often sidelined and silenced – can be brought to the fore. In order to get "within smelling distance of the witches' caldron" that was Barberton in the first half of the 1980s, this article will examine the prison complex through the lens of public discourse – as reflected in a wide range of South African newspapers at the time. By analysing a large number of reports dealing with events at Barberton during the period in question, in both English and Afrikaans language newspapers, as well as in both politically conservative and politically liberal newspapers, this article attempts to capture both the "smell" and the "feel" of what it was like to be imprisoned in one of apartheid's toughest prison complexes. Furthermore, this article seeks to show that – despite legislative measures restricting the publication of information on conditions inside apartheid prisons – the press was able to provide a steady stream of information to the South African public on the shocking events which occurred at Barberton during the period in question.[4] With Barberton so much in the public eye during the early 1980s, no thinking South African could legitimately claim to be unaware of the brutality which existed within the apartheid penal system at this time. Although the widely publicised events at Barberton discussed in this article did not concern political prisoners, this article will show that considerable ideological pressure was brought to bear on the apartheid authorities due to adverse publicity around the Barberton Prison

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2 See, for example, Blumberg *White Madam*; First *117 Days*; Jacobson *Solitary in Johannesburg*; Lewin *Bandiet*; Kantor *Healthy Grave*; Pheto *And Night Fell*; Sachs *Jail Diary*; Breytenbach *True Confessions*; Mandela *Long Walk to Freedomb– Vol 1*; Mandela *Long Walk to Freedom – Vol 2*; Kathrada and Vassen *Letters from Robben Island*; Maharaj *Reflections in Prison*; Naidoo and Sachs *Island in Chains.*

3 See previous footnote.

4 The legislation referred to was s 44(1)(f) of the *Prisons Act* 8 of 1959. The effects of this section on penal discourse at the time are discussed in detail in Peté "Holding Up a Mirror".

Complex. This may well have widened the cracks which were beginning to show in the edifice of the apartheid system at this time.

This article is divided into two parts. Part One deals with a day of violence at the Barberton prison farm on 29 December 1982, as well as the ramifications of the violence: the deaths of three prisoners and injuries to others; the criminal trial which followed, which came to be known as the Barberton "heat exhaustion trial"; and also the direct ramifications of that infamous trial. Part Two examines several violent incidents which occurred within the Barberton Prison Complex during the course of 1983 – leading to a further nine inmate deaths. The response of the authorities to the orgy of violence at Barberton is discussed, including the setting up of a committee of enquiry. The findings of this committee are extensively analysed through the lens of public discourse, as reflected in a wide range of newspaper articles published at this time. The wider relevance of the events at Barberton in the early to mid-1980s, as well as the state of public discourse surrounding these events, is then assessed.

2 Barberton explodes in the public media following deaths of prisoners

On 30 December, 1982, the Commissioner of Prisons announced that three "black male prisoners" had died the previous day at the Barberton prison farm – possibly from heat exhaustion.[5] This marked the beginning of a public debate which was to explode in the media and rumble on over many months. The debate was to shock South Africans to the core, as the barbaric nature of the penal regime in place at Barberton became increasingly apparent. In May 1983 it was reported that eight warders, four "whites" and four "blacks", would stand trial on three counts of murder and 34 counts of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm.[6] What came to be termed the Barberton "heat exhaustion" trial started three months later, towards the end of August 1983 – leading to a storm of publicity in the media. For the next two months or so South Africans were to be treated to a string of shocking revelations about the treatment meted out to prisoners at the Barberton prison farm, as the

5 Sapa *Oggendblad* (30 December 1982) 1.
6 De Bruin *Beeld* (27 May 1983) 1. See, also, Sapa *The Citizen* (28 May 1983) 13.

evidence of witness after witness was splashed across the pages of all the main South African newspapers.

The basic story which emerged during the trial may be described in fairly simple terms. On 28 December, 1982 48 convicts were transferred from the Durban Point Prison to the Barberton Prison Farm. Barberton had a reputation as a place where recalcitrant or troublesome prisoners were sent in order to be disciplined. It was alleged that, while still in Durban, prisoner Barry Bloem had sworn at one of the Durban warders, a certain Lieutenant Fourie, and also insulted the Lieutenant's wife. This incident may have acted as a trigger for the events which followed. The prisoners were shackled together in pairs and were transported in a truck which left Durban during the early hours of the morning. It was alleged that they received no food or water during the trip and that some prisoners had urinated through the windows of the truck during the journey. Upon their arrival at Barberton, it was alleged that the prisoners were punched and booted by warders. On 29 December, 1982 certain of the prisoners were sent to perform hard labour near a dam in the prison grounds. It was an extremely hot day, with temperatures of around 35 degrees Celsius. The prisoners were forced to push wheelbarrows loaded with gravel. While the work was being performed, prisoners were beaten with rubber truncheons by warders. A number of prisoners passed out as a result of this treatment, and three prisoners died. The prisoners who died were Ernest Makhatini, Mayo Khumalo and Mhlakaza Xaba.[7]

The trial was covered in detail by the press, with the evidence of witness after witness being summarised and commented upon in a variety of newspapers. Although the large number of such reports precludes a complete summary of the details which emerged into public view, it is possible, nevertheless, to provide highlights of the story told by the prisoners and the response of the warders. Clearly, the evidence of witnesses with an "axe to grind" must be treated with caution and the tendency of newspapers to sensationalise events must also be borne in mind. Despite this note of caution, however, it is submitted that the importance of this story lies in the fact that

7 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (27 August 1983) 3; Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (2 September 1983) 3; Blow *City Press* (4 September 1983) 2.

the voice of ordinary prisoners was, for once, heard loudly and clearly. The story provides first-hand testimony of what it was like to be imprisoned in "Apartheid's Alcatraz" at the height of the apartheid era, and vividly captures the "smell" and "feel" of the place. The fact that the veil of secrecy behind which prisons usually operated during the apartheid era was lifted in this dramatic way was also important.

The trial in the Nelspruit Circuit Court got off to a dramatic start when the first witness for the prosecution – the same Barry Bloem mentioned above – refused to give evidence, complaining about maltreatment and intimidation by warders at the Barberton Prison Farm. Bloem alleged that warders at the prison farm had threatened that they would "get" the inmates who testified against the eight warders on trial. The trial judge, Mr Justice Vermooten, ordered that the complainants should not be returned to a prison in Barberton.[8] The trial was subsequently moved to Witbank for the protection of the witnesses.[9]

The trial was to continue in further dramatic fashion. On 26 August 1983, under the headline "Court told of death beatings by warders", *The Citizen* reported on the evidence of prisoners Andries Mtembu and Barry Bloem, *inter alia* as follows:

> Mtembu told the court how Mklakaza Xaba, one of the dead, had cried out, 'help me I'm dying'. According to the witness Xaba had behaved like a drunk person and staggered about before one of the accused, Mr Burger van Dyk, caught up with him and hit him with a rubber truncheon on the neck. Mtembu described how Xaba had fallen to the ground. He said Mr Van Dyk had continued beating him with the truncheon ... Bloem told the court that December 29, the day on which the alleged murders and assaults had taken place, had been an extremely hot day. "I was continuously assaulted by the accused, Mr Gert Louis Joubert Smit, who had been in charge of the other warders that day", Bloem testified. He also said he had lost consciousness several times that morning due to the assaults, before he had been allowed to drink water. "Mr Smit assaulted me so severely I thought I would die and I asked him if he would allow me to say my last prayer. He said that I could pray, but that I had to do it very quickly," Bloem said. He added he had been in a kneeling position after the prayer when Mr Smit had assaulted him again.[10]

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8 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (20 August 1983) 1. See, also, Beltramo *Sunday Tribune* (21 August 1983) 22.

9 Blow *City Press* (28 August 1983) 3.

10 Bothma *The Citizen* (26 August 1983) 3.

On 27 August 1983, under the headline "Convict tells of persistent beatings by warders", *The Citizen* summarised the evidence of witness Cecil Moreland, also a prisoner, *inter alia*, as follows:

> Moreland said he was taken to the dam on the prison farm where the others had been working. "Before I could start working a White warder started assaulting me from behind with a rubber truncheon" Moreland told the court. He said the wheel barrow he had been ordered to push had been too heavy and he had tipped it over to lighten the load. "That was when Warrant Officer Smit and two other White warders started assaulting me until I lost my senses. Even when I stopped moving they kept on beating me" Moreland said. Moreland testified he had realised he was being dragged towards the dam and later discovered he was lying next to other semi-conscious prisoners. "A medical official, Warrant Officer Jordaan, told me to get up. When I told him that I could not, and that I needed water, he told me to get up and fetch the water myself" Moreland told the court.[11]

On 28 August 1983, under the headline "Convicts' 48 hours of horror", a report in the *City Press* spoke of a "horrifying tale of alleged brutality in one of the country's few maximum security prisons" and of prisoners being "treated so inhumanely that within 48 hours three were dead and 34 were hospitalized".[12] An insight into the racial dynamics between black and white prison warders at the Barberton Prison Farm can be glimpsed from evidence given three days later – on 31 August 1983 – by a black prison-dog handler, a certain Mr John Zulu. Explaining why he did not respond to pleas from one of the inmates who subsequently died, he is reported to have said: "I could see the prisoner, Ernest Makhatini couldn't take it anymore, but what could I do, I am a black man and the white warder had already made a decision [to ignore the prisoner's complaints]."[13] According to the same report in the *Rand Daily Mail*: "The court also heard that Mr Zulu was instructed by his superior to keep his Alsatian dog in the shade of a tree, so that the animal would not get sick or die from the excessive heat, while injured prisoners were left lying in the blazing sun after being beaten, some of them unconscious.[14] The judge hearing the trial was understandably shocked by this evidence and was reported to have asked: "If a dog can't stand it, how are human beings supposed to stand it?"[15]

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11 Bothma *The Citizen* (27 August 1983) 2.
12 Blow *City Press* (28 August 1983) 3.
13 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (1 September 1983) 2.
14 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (1 September 1983) 2.
15 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (1 September 1983) 2.

On 1 September 1983, Warrant-Officer Pieter Jordaan, a medical officer at the Barberton Prison Farm, gave evidence which seemed to indicate that the shocking incidents which took place on 29 December 1982 had been orchestrated by the acting head of the Barberton Prison Farm at the time, a certain Lieutenant J Niemand. According to a report in the *Rand Daily Mail*, Jordaan told the court that on the morning of 29 December "he had heard at the prison that they were looking for staff members 'who could swing batons' and that Lieutenant Niemand had instructed them to 'make the convicts warm'".[16] His further evidence, according to the report, included the following:

> "I saw before me [at the dam] convicts being beaten up several times with rubber batons by warders when they did not run fast enough with their wheelbarrows," he said. Several prisoners had collapsed and were lying down at a "sort of field hospital" he had put up. Asked by Mr Justice Vermooten why the injured, some unconscious, were lying in the blazing sun on a very hot day while a guard dog was kept in the shade of a tree, W/O Jordaan replied that all he had done, "was doing my best for these people". He said he had wiped their faces with a wet cloth and had given them water to drink. He did not complain to W/O Smit to stop the beatings, as "Smit is my senior and I believed he was acting under instructions."[17]

Complainant Adam Gys, one of the prisoners, and allegedly beaten by warders at the dam, told the court that at one stage he had pleaded for mercy and asked for a drink of water. According to Gys, Warrant Officer Smit replied: "This is Barberton. Prisoners don't drink water. The sun drinks water."[18]

Gys also alleged that the acting head of the Barberton Prison Farm, Lieutenant JH Niemand, had arrived at the dam while the beatings were taking place – bringing with him three more prisoners. According to Gys, Lieutenant Niemand told Warrant Officer Smit that the three prisoners "must be hit dead".[19] The trial was clearly a tense affair, with raised emotions on all sides. On 3 September, 1983 the *Rand Daily Mail* reported that Lieutenant Niemand had chased a *City Press* journalist, Desmond Blow, down the

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16 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (2 September 1983) 3. See, also, Spesiale Verteenwoordiger *Beeld* (2 September 1983) 6; Blow *City Press* (4 September 1983) 2; Staff Reporter *Sunday Express* (4 September 1983) 13.

17 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (2 September 1983) 3. See, also, Spesiale Verteenwoordiger *Beeld* (2 September 1983) 6; Bothma *The Citizen* (2 September 1983) 3.

18 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (2 September 1983) 3.

19 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (2 September 1983) 3. See, also, Spesiale Verteenwoordiger *Beeld* (2 September 1983) 6.

street in front of the Witbank Magistrates' Courts when the journalist attempted to take a photograph of him. It also reported that:

> … earlier in the week, relatives of the complainants in the case allegedly shouted abuse to the eight accused when they left the courts during the adjournment.[20]

The nervous strain under which all those involved in the trial were operating is apparent from a report which appeared in the *Cape Times* on 2 September 1983. According to the report, the officer commanding the Barberton Prison Complex at this time, Brigadier EJ Victor, had been admitted to hospital and was "reported to be suffering from a nervous collapse".[21]

On 6 September, 1983 George Geldenhuys, another of the prisoners allegedly beaten by warders at the dam, gave evidence. *Die Volksblad* reported on his testimony under the disturbing headline "Sick prisoner was apparently beaten until he began 'bleating'".[22] Geldenhuys told the court, *inter alia*, about a brutal assault by two of the white warders, Christiaan Horn and Jacques Stoltz, both of whom had red hair, on Ernest Makhatini – one of the prisoners who died at the scene. *Die Volksblad* summarised this part of Geldenhuys's evidence as follows:

> According to Geldenhuys, the "old man" Ernest Makhatini, one of the deceased, could no longer push the wheel barrow up the incline. He put it down to rest. 'The redheads ordered him to walk with the wheelbarrow. He couldn't make it. He was a sick old man who had been receiving medical treatment. Both redheads hit him. He lay on his back. He was crying. He was screaming like a bleating goat, he said in evidence. According to Geldenhuys, Makhatini was then laid next to three other prisoners, including Bloem.[23]

Another of the prisoners to give evidence on 6 September 1983 was Gen Griffen, who ended up in hospital as a result of being assaulted at the dam. He claimed that, while

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20 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (3 September 1983) 1.

21 Anon *Cape Times* (2 September 1983) page unknown.

22 "Sieke glo geslaan tot hy 'bler'". See Eie Beriggewer *Die Volksblad* (7 September 1983) 3.

23 "Volgens Geldenhuys kon die 'ou man' Ernest Makhatini, een van die oorledenes, later nie meer die kruiwa teen die opdraand uitstoot nie. Hy het dit neergesit om te rus. 'Die rooikoppe het hom beveel om te loop met die kruiwa. Hy kon dit nie maak nie. Hy was 'n siek ou man en het mediese behandeling ontvang. Altwee rooikoppe het hom geslaan. Hy het op sy rug gele. Hy het gehuil. Hy het geskreeu soos 'n bok wat blêr' het hy getuig. Volgens Geldenhuys is Makhatini toe by drie ander gevangenes, onder meer Bloem wat daar gele het, neergelê." See Eie Beriggewer *Die Volksblad* (7 September 1983) 3.

he was still in hospital, one of the accused, Warrant Officer Gert Smit, had threatened him, stating: "I am still going to get you, I am not finished with you yet."[24] Griffen also claimed that – on arrival at Barberton from Durban – the arriving prisoners were addressed by the acting head of the Barberton Prison Farm, Lieutenant Niemand, as follows: "You think you are clever. You swear at officials."[25] Griffen further told the court that he and two other "coloured" prisoners, Barry Bloem and George Geldenhuys, were taken to the dam by Lieutenant Niemand and that he heard Niemand telling Warrant Officer Stoltz that they must be beaten to death.[26]

Further allegations of brutal and sadistic treatment were made on 7 September 1983, when another of the complainants, Tony Walker, gave evidence. Walker, who allegedly suffered from asthma (although he later admitted under cross-examination that tests conducted before he had been transferred to Barberton had indicated that he was not an asthma sufferer), claimed that he was assaulted by certain of the warders and experienced difficulty in breathing. He alleged that when he informed Warrant Officer Smit of this, he was told that "in Barberton there are no sick people".[27] According to *The Citizen* there had been medical evidence earlier in the trial which "stated that Walker had received more than 25 blows with a rubber truncheon".[28] *The Citizen* summarised the evidence given by Walker, *inter alia*, as follows:

> Walker said he, himself, had been beaten until he was unconscious. I later regained my consciousness, but I was too frightened to open my eyes in fear of getting assaulted again. He testified that the medical official on the scene of the alleged murder and assaults, had felt his pulse after a while and just stated: "This one is still alive."[29]

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24 "Ek sal jou weer kry, ek is nog nie klaar met jou nie." See Eie Beriggewer *Die Volksblad* (7 September 1983) 3. See, also, Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (7 September 1983) 3.

25 "Julle dink julle is slim. Julle vloek beamptes." See Eie Beriggewer *Die Volksblad* (7 September 1983) 3. See, also, Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (7 September 1983) 3.

26 Bothma *The Citizen* (7 September 1983) 9. See, also, Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (7 September 1983) 3; Anon *Sunday Express* (11 September 1983) 12.

27 Bothma *The Citizen* (8 September 1983) 3. See, also, Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (8 September 1983) 2; Anon *Sunday Express* (11 September 1983) 12.

28 Bothma *The Citizen* (8 September 1983) 3.

29 Bothma *The Citizen* (8 September 1983) 3. See, also, Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (8 September 1983) 2.

Further indications of brutality emerged during evidence given the following day. Among those to take the witness stand was a certain Joseph Rademeyer, whose evidence *The Rand Daily Mail* summarised, *inter alia,* as follows:

> Mr Rademeyer said that at one stage dog-handler John Zulu had advised him to lie down "otherwise they will hit you dead". While he was lying there, he saw Xaba getting up, "as if he was groggy" and then being hit with a baton on the neck by Mr Van Dyk. "Xaba howled and screamed and then collapsed," he said.[30]

On 9 September 1983 there was further dramatic evidence from prisoners – including from a certain Johannes Zuma who had been crippled in a motor vehicle accident before he was imprisoned. Zuma gave evidence of how he had been assaulted by warders at the dam, prompting *The Citizen* to run its story on the day's evidence under the headline "Convicts tell of assault on crippled prisoner".[31] Another witness, prisoner Abel Norkey, told the court how Nklakaza Xaba, one of the prisoners who later died, had been assaulted by warder Burger van Dyk:

> I heard a voice saying "shoot him" but instead the warder hit Xaba behind his neck with a rubber truncheon until he dropped. He (the warder) then assaulted him further - even on his private parts.[32]

The day's proceedings ended early in dramatic fashion as one of the accused warders, Warrant Officer Gert Smit, complained of chest pains and had to be rushed to a doctor.[33] The trial took a further dramatic turn on 12 September 1983 when one of the witnesses, prisoner Patrick Schieman, claimed that he had been threatened by a warder in the Witbank Prison. Schieman alleged that when the warder had caught him (Schieman) eating in his cell, he (the warder) had said: "You must not think you are a gentleman. These things of Barberton are not yet finished - we'll see who laughs last."[34] In his evidence Schieman told the court that he had seen fellow prisoner Gen Griffin receive a beating which still frightened him.[35]

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30 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (9 September 1983) 2.
31 Bothma *The Citizen* (10 September 1983) 5.
32 Bothma *The Citizen* (10 September 1983) 5.
33 Anon *Sunday Express* (11 September 1983) 12.
34 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (13 September 1983) 2. See, also, Bothma *The Citizen* (13 September 1983) 8.
35 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (13 September 1983) 2.

The following day prisoner Nicolas Mutawa told the court that he could not identify any of the accused, and was described by the judge as a "man with the heart of a mouse, who is too scared to implicate any of the accused".[36] One of the witnesses who did give evidence against the accused that day was prisoner David Johnson, who stated that the assault on him had been "far worse than any hiding he had ever received at school".[37] Another witness, Robert Khumalo, told the court that he had been knocked unconscious while being assaulted by Warrant Officer Smit, and had regained consciousness only later that day in the prison hospital.[38] Witness Jerome Hlope complained about the manner in which the identification parade had been conducted during the investigation of the case. The *Rand Daily Mail* summarised this part of Hlope's evidence, as follows:

> Jerome Hlope said certain warders on the parade drew their caps over their eyes, looked down at the ground and tried to confuse the prisoners by swearing at them and joking about their identity. He said the warders pointed to themselves and urged the complainants to pick them out, saying: 'It was me who hit you, wasn't it? Point me out, come on - choose me, charge me.'[39]

The next day, yet further disturbing evidence was given by a number of state witnesses. Under the dramatic headline "Court told of 'human dump' in blazing sun", the *Rand Daily Mail* summarised the evidence of prisoner Boyce Levy as follows:

> In his evidence, Levy stated that he and other convicts had been "brutalised" by the white warders. He described how warders Horn and Stoltz "pounded" on fellow prisoner Barry Bloem and how W/O Smit had "worked him over". Levy said he saw several convicts being "worked over" by warders with the help of their rubber sticks. Those who collapsed were taken to a place which looked like "a human dump" he said. Levy then saw Xaba getting up from the "dump", walking like as if dizzy and then being hit by warder Van Dyk, who "dropped him" with one baton blow between his shoulderblades. "Xaba screamed and after that he never spoke again. He had dropped dead," Levy said.[40]

On 15 September 1983, further evidence emerged as to possible irregularities in the identity parade conducted as part of the police investigation of the case. Prisoner Tom

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36 Bothma *The Citizen* (14 September 1983) 3. See, also, Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (14 September 1983) 3.

37 Bothma *The Citizen* (14 September 1983) 3.

38 Bothma *The Citizen* (14 September 1983) 3.

39 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (14 September 1983) 3.

40 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (15 September 1983) 2. See, also, Bothma *The Citizen* (15 September 1983) 9.

Booysen confirmed the evidence of previous witnesses who had alleged that, during the identification parade, warders who were part of the parade had dropped their caps on their noses. He also told the court that when he had started pointing out the warders who had taken part in the assaults, Warrant Officer Smit had said "yes, choose me" and had referred to his (Booysen's) mother, using foul language. According to the *Rand Daily Mail*, Booysen told the court that he had been afraid, and explained as follows:

> You must understand me, I am just a black person and there in front of me were whites in uniform making remarks in bad language. I became scared.[41]

Judge Vermooten expressed his displeasure that the identity parade may have been conducted in an irregular manner – stating as follows:

> I want to know why it was only held four months after the events, what all that swearing was about, why suspects were allowed to drop their caps over their eyes, and why witnesses were intimidated.[42]

When questioned by Judge Vermooten, the policeman who had been in charge of conducting the identity parade – a certain Warrant Officer Botha – told the judge that the warders had behaved in an undisciplined manner during the parade and that he had had to warn them several times.[43]

The state closed its case on 20 September 1983, by which stage no fewer than 33 prisoner complainants had given evidence.[44] In comparison, the defence case was to be short and sweet. After the state closed its case, the defence called the head of training in the Prisons Service, who stated that the accused warders had not received any training in relation to heatstroke or heat exhaustion. The defence also called the head of health services in the Prisons Service to testify that regulations relating to the treatment necessary for victims of heatstroke had been circulated within the Prisons

41 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (16 September 1983) 2.
42 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (16 September 1983) 2.
43 Staff Reporter *Sunday Express* (18 September 1983) 10.
44 Bothma *The Citizen* (16 September 1983) 3; Bothma *The Citizen* (21 September 1983) 4.

Service only after the deaths at the Barberton Prison Farm. The defence case for six of the accused was then closed, without any of the warders giving evidence.[45]

Judgment in the case was handed down on 27 September 1983. The court found that the main cause of death of the three prisoners who had died at the Barberton Prison Farm on 29 December 1982 was heat exhaustion. The court also found that the warders did not intend to murder the three inmates who had died. None of the accused warders were found guilty of either murder or culpable homicide. Two of the warders, Lefasa Makhola and Fanyana Mahumane, were found not guilty on all counts, and were discharged. The other two black warders – William Kobyane and Jonas Madonsela – were found guilty on several counts (seven and two counts respectively) of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm. The four white warders – Gert Smit, Christiaan Horn, Jacques Stoltz and Burger van Dyk – were also found guilty on several counts (19, 18, 18 and 6 respectively) of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, as well on several counts (9, 9, 9 and 3 respectively) of assault common.[46] Kobyane and Madonsela were sentenced to three and a half years and one year's imprisonment respectively. Smit, Horn, Stoltz and Van Dyk were sentenced to eight, five, three and two years' imprisonment respectively.[47]

In his judgment Judge Vermooten characterised 29 December 1982 as a sad day for the Barberton Prison Farm and found that a large-scale attack on prisoners by warders had taken place. He stated that the area around the prison dam had been turned into a battlefield and that when everything was over there were three bodies and a large number of injured prisoners. He criticised the failure of the warders to give evidence in their defence at the trial and pointed out that the state's case stood uncontested. According to the judge, the case of the prisoner complainants "cried out to heaven"[48] for an answer – which was not forthcoming. The judge concluded that the motive for the attack on the prisoners had its origins in Durban when a staff member at the Point

45 Bothma *The Citizen* (21 September 1983) 4; Spesiale Verteenwoordiger *Beeld* (21 September 1983) 5.

46 Spesiale Verteenwoordiger *Beeld* (28 September 1983) 2.

47 Burger Kantoor *Die Burger* (29 September 1983) 1.

48 The words used were: "skreeu ten hemele". See Spesiale Verteenwoordiger *Beeld* (28 September 1983) 2.

Prison, Lieutenant Fourie, was insulted by prisoners. A group of 47 prisoners were transported from Durban to Barberton in appalling conditions, and without water. At the Barberton Prison Farm they were forced to run naked down a passage while being slapped and kicked. According to the judge, the dispatch of the convict work-party to the prison dam was nothing but a punitive expedition. The prisoners were sent to the dam without first being examined by a prison doctor to make sure that they were capable of performing hard physical labour. The temperature at the dam on the day in question was 35 degrees Celsius[49] Judge Vermooten expressed his disgust at the actions of the six guilty warders – in no uncertain terms. According to a report in *The Star*, the judge accused the warders of dragging the name of the Prison Service through the mud and, in words clearly reflecting both irony and disgust, he addressed the guilty warders as follows:

> You are heroes of the truncheon who assaulted unarmed and defenceless prisoners on a large scale while protected by two police dogs and two armed guards.[50]

Describing the cowardly nature of the attacks on the prisoners, the judge stated that:

> Most of the prisoners were pushing loaded wheelbarrows up an incline when assaulted and did not even have their hands free to defend themselves.[51]

The *Rand Daily Mail* reported the reactions of the warders to their sentences, as follows:

> Barberton Prison Farm warders broke down and cried uncontrollably yesterday as they were led down to the cells below the Witbank Circuit Court after being sentenced to prison terms, ranging between one and eight years, by Mr Justice D.O. Vermooten for their part in "an orgy of assaults" on prisoners in December last year.[52]

Following the judgment the press had a field day commenting in shocked tones on the pronouncements of the judge. *Die Volksblad*, for example, stated that the comment of Judge Vermooten that the accused had "behaved like wild animals"[53] summed up the revulsion felt by ordinary civilised people at the misbehaviour of those

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49 Spesiale Verteenwoordiger *Beeld* (28 September 1983) 2.
50 Openshaw and Macleod *The Star* (29 September 1983*)* 3.
51 Openshaw and Macleod *The Star* (29 September 1983*)* 3.
52 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (29 September 1983) 1.
53 The words the judge used were: "soos wilde diere te kere gegaan het". See Redakteur *Die Volksblad* (29 September 1983) 18.

involved.[54] Reflecting perhaps the "laager mentality" prevalent within white society at the time, the newspaper stated that the events at Barberton provided those who always stood ready to undermine the image of the South African Prison Service in the eyes of the world with a stick with which to beat the country. *Die Volksblad* warned its readers that they should not think that the Barberton incident would not be used (and misused) against South Africa.[55]

3 The snowball effect – criminal charges against Niemand and civil claims filed

Despite the conclusion of the so-called "heat exhaustion trial", public interest in the Barberton Prison Complex was to remain high.[56] Two direct consequences of the trial which were to receive much publicity in the press were the charging and criminal trial of Lieutenant JH Niemand – the acting head of the Barberton Maximum Security Prison during the "heat exhaustion" incident – and the filing of civil claims by the prisoners who had been assaulted during the incident.

On 7 January, 1984 it was reported that Lieutenant Niemand was to appear in court on charges of assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, incitement, and interfering with the course of justice.[57] The *Rand Daily Mail* tacitly indicated its support for the bringing of charges against Lieutenant Niemand *inter alia* by quoting the following words of Judge Vermooten at the end of the heat exhaustion trial: "I can't stress enough that the accused and Lieut Niemand took the law into their own hands."[58] According to the *Rand Daily Mail*, Judge Vermooten had "likened the assaults to old-style American lynching".[59] In an editorial headlined "It's right to press the Barberton case", the *Eastern Province Herald* also supported the charges against Niemand. The *Herald* stated that it was important to prosecute Niemand, since the

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54 The precise words used by the newspaper were: "som die weersin op wat gewone beskaafde mense oor die betrokkenes se wandrag voel". See Redakteur *Die Volksblad* (29 September 1983) 18.

55 Redakteur *Die Volksblad* (29 September 1983) 18.

56 There were six prisons situated in and around Barberton at this time. See Political Staff *Cape Times* (1 September 1983) 4.

57 Bothma *The Citizen* (7 January 1984) 10.

58 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (11 January 1984) 1.

59 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (11 January 1984) 1.

"crippling restrictions on Press reporting" of what went on in prisons meant that the system was "wide open to abuse".[60] On 22 January, 1984 under the headline "Warders to testify against boss", *City Press* pointed out that the six warders who had been jailed following the "heat exhaustion trial" would be key witnesses in the case against Lieutenant Niemand.[61]

The criminal trial of Lieutenant Niemand took place in the Witbank Regional Court during February 1984. He pleaded not guilty to all charges. The widespread newspaper reporting of all the lurid details of the trial forced South Africans to relive the events of the infamous Barberton "heat exhaustion trial" all over again. For example, on 15 February, 1984 *The Citizen* reported, *inter alia*, that one of the former warders who had been imprisoned after being found guilty at the conclusion of the "heat exhaustion trial", William Kobyane, had given evidence that Niemand had shouted out orders that the prisoners should be beaten. Kobyane also told the court that Niemand had ordered him (Kobyane) not to tell anyone, including the police, what had really happened at the dam. According to *The Citizen*, Kobyane told the court that: "Lt Niemand said that if the police asked us to make a statement we should bluntly refuse".[62] *Beeld* reported, *inter alia*, the evidence of a certain Warrant Officer Ewald Ferreira, who told the court that – on the day in question – Niemand had ordered the warders to take rubber truncheons with them so that they could "fuck the prisoners up" while they were working at the dam.[63] According to *Beeld* another warder, Raymond Mahwasa, told the court that Niemand had ordered the warder in charge of the working party, Warrant Officer Gert Smit, to "hit the damn convicts who stand still and don't work".[64] Under the lurid headline "'Beaten to death' order recalled by prisoner", *The Citizen* reported on the evidence of Gen Griffen, a prisoner who had been so badly assaulted

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60 Anon *Eastern Province Herald* (12 January 1984) 10. The *Herald* summarised what had happened at Barberton, as follows: "Thirty-seven men were savagely clubbed while pushing loaded wheelbarrows until three died. They had got into trouble in Durban for swearing at an officer. They were transported without food or water to Barberton, put to work in 35-degree heat the next day, and systematically beaten by baton-wielding warders while armed guards prevented any escape. The judge said it seemed the prison authorities had taken their revenge."

61 Blow *City Press* (22 January 1984) 4.

62 Bothma *The Citizen* (15 February 1984) 8.

63 The words used were: "om die gevangenis 'op te f...'" See Anon *Beeld* (15 February 1984) 2.

64 The words used were: "om 'die d... bandiete te slaan wat stilstaan en nie werk nie'". See Anon *Beeld* (15 February 1984) 2. See, also, Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (16 February 1984) 3.

at the dam that he had been obliged to spend two weeks in hospital. According to *The Citizen*, Griffen told the court that Niemand had given orders that he and two other prisoners "should be beaten to death".[65] According to *Beeld*, which also reported on Griffen's evidence, the reason given by Niemand for this order was that the three prisoners were "dagga smokers and too big for their boots".[66] The *Sunday Express* summed up the evidence against Niemand as follows:

> Former Warrant Officer Gert Smit, now serving eight years, told the court that on the morning of December 29, 1982, Lt Niemand ordered him to assemble some warders and arm them with batons. They were then to take a group of prisoners, who had arrived from Durban Point Prison the night before, to the farm dam 'to make them warm'. Former warder Jacques Stoltz told the court that Lt Niemand had visited the dam site while the assaults were in progress. He said the lieutenant had warned him not to strike the prisoners on the head or kidneys. Other witnesses all confirmed that Lt Niemand had been at the dam and had seen the assaults in progress.[67]

Once the state had closed its case, the defence made an application to acquit Niemand on all charges. This application was refused, but the magistrate did agree to acquit Niemand on the charge of attempting to defeat the ends of justice. The reason for the acquittal on this charge was that:

> Lt Niemand had merely advised Mr Horn and Mr Stoltz [two of the accused warders in the "heat exhaustion trial"] about their lawful rights not to make a statement if they so wished to, just like any attorney would have advised his clients.[68]

The defence then opened its case and Niemand gave evidence in his own defence. According to *Beeld*, Niemand told the court that, prior to the alleged assaults at the prison dam, the group of prisoners concerned had misbehaved by cursing a prison officer in Durban and urinating through the window of the prison van transporting them to Barberton. He wanted them to work so that they would be too tired to think up further mischief.[69] He denied that he had seen any assaults on the prisoners when he went to the dam. He did not look around on his way to the dam because he was

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65 Bothma *The Citizen* (16 February 1984) 2.

66 The words used were: "hulle 'mos daggarokers en menere is'" See Spesiale Verteenwoordiger *Beeld* (16 February 1984) 2.

67 Staff Reporter *Sunday Express* (19 February 1984) 13.

68 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (17 February 1984) 2.

69 The words used were: "sodat hulle moeg genoeg is om nie aan allerhande onheilighede te dink nie." See Spesiale Verteenwoordiger *Beeld* (17 February 1984) 4.

driving, and he did not see any assaults when he got there. He saw the three prisoners (who later died) lying to one side. When he asked the warder in charge about their condition, he was told that they were tired and had fainted.[70] According to *The Citizen*, Niemand contended that "he had seen no assaults at the Pretorius dam that day and had not even seen that the warders had rubber truncheons in their hands".[71] The *Rand Daily Mail* did not seem to find Niemand's explanations particularly credible. Under the scathingly ironic headline "It was therapy, says Barberton accused", the newspaper summarised Niemand's contention that the prisoners were not sent to the dam as punishment as follows:

> The 37 Barberton prisoners beaten up with rubber batons by warders at the prison farm dam on December 29 1982 were not sent there for punishment, but to "assist them to get rid of their frustrations".[72]

The defence closed its case on 17 February 1984, and the case was adjourned to 2 April 1984.[73]

The verdict in Niemand's criminal trial was not extensively covered in the English language press, and proved to be something of an anti-climax. On 4 April 1984, a tiny report on the front page of the *Rand Daily Mail* revealed that Niemand had been found guilty on charges of common assault and had been fined R900 or 360 days imprisonment, plus a further two year's imprisonment suspended for four years.[74] In its coverage of the verdict, the Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld* chose to focus on the comment of the magistrate – that Niemand had misused his position and had elicited unfair criticism of the country from abroad.[75] That the magistrate chose to comment so prominently about the external criticism to which South Africa had been subjected as a result of the case, instead of focusing only on the reprehensible nature of what Niemand had done, speaks volumes. It may be argued, perhaps, that those in

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70 The words used were: "Hy het vir my gesê hulle is moeg en flou". See Spesiale Verteenwoordiger *Beeld* (17 February 1984) 4.

71 Bothma *The Citizen* (18 February 1984) 8.

72 Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (17 February 1984) 2. See, also, Vanvolsem *Rand Daily Mail* (18 February 1984) 2.

73 Badenhorst *Beeld* (18 February 1984) 3.

74 Mail Reporter *Rand Daily Mail* (4 April 1984) 1.

75 The words used were: "onregverdige kritiek vir die land in die buiteland uitgelok". See Sapa *Beeld* (5 April 1984) 2.

authority within apartheid South Africa at this time, including this particular magistrate, were feeling misunderstood and isolated from world opinion – and hence the concern at how this offence was perceived from abroad.[76]

One person who was less concerned about the extent to which South Africa's image had been harmed by the case and more about the consequences for the future operation of the South African penal system was Helen Suzman – the opposition speaker on law and order in parliament. Suzman called for Niemand to be dismissed from the prisons service in order to act as a deterrent to other members of the service. Suzman said that it was "extraordinary" that Niemand was still in the prisons service and that it would not be good for discipline if he was retained in the service.[77]

In addition to the political ramifications, there were also personal ramifications connected to Niemand's trial and conviction. Shortly after Niemand had been sentenced, *City Press* reported that both "heat exhaustion" cases – leading to the criminal trial of the six warders and then of Niemand – had polarised the small community of Barberton. The newspaper interviewed Detective Warrant Officer Flip de Klerk of the South African Police, who had been responsible for investigating both the cases. Under the headline "Barberton cop tells of his heat trial hell", the newspaper reported that de Klerk had been "shunned by many people in Barberton, where he's lived all his life - and where a large part of the population is connected to the town's five prisons."[78] According to the report, de Klerk had gone through an ordeal in

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76 Note that the criminal trial of Lieutenant Niemand was not the last criminal trial of prison staff arising out of violence at the Barberton Prison Complex. For example, in June 1984 the Minister of Justice revealed in parliament that 11 Barberton prison warders, including an officer, would be criminally prosecuted for the alleged assaults which took place in December 1982 on a group of prisoners who had arrived from Point Prison, Durban. The assaults formed part of a brutal initiation ceremony which was a long-standing tradition at the Barberton Prison. The Minister was, of course, referring to the events which had directly preceded the shocking occurrences which had formed the subject matter of the notorious "heat exhaustion" trial. The initiation ceremony involved new prisoners being made to strip naked and run past a number of warders, who beat them with batons and pieces of hose pipe – as a result of which a prisoner could receive as many as 30 blows. The members to be charged were: Ex Sergeant M van der Westhuizen, Lieutenant JW Niemand, Warrant Officers F Welmans, GP Underhay, E Ferreira, MM Neveling and P Jordaan, Sergeant JJ van den Berg, and Warders AH Duque, JC Janse van Rensburg and JA Bruwer. See Political Staff *Cape Times* (9 June 1984) 4. See, also, Anon *Die Transvaler* (11 June 1984) 3.

77 Tribune Reporter *Sunday Tribune* (8 April 1984) 12.

78 Blow *City Press* (8 April 1984) 3.

conducting his investigations during which "he received up to six anonymous telephone calls a night."[79] It would seem that pressure from those connected to the accused warders must have been intense. De Klerk told the newspaper that it had been a difficult time for him and his family, but that justice had been done. *City Press* quoted de Klerk as stating:

> I know some of the accused socially, but I had my duty as a policeman and was always supported by my wife. I have no regrets. A policeman must always act without fear or favour.[80]

Apart from the criminal trial of Niemand and its ramifications, another direct consequence of the original "heat exhaustion" trial – which kept the Barberton Prison Complex at the forefront of public debate during the mid-1980s – was the launching of civil claims by the prisoners who had been assaulted. On 23 October, 1983 it was reported that civil claims were to be filed against the Minister of Justice. In terms of the law at the time, these prisoners had only 12 months within which to launch their civil claims.[81] On 20 November, 1983 it was reported that letters of demand claiming civil damages had been issued by 30 of the prisoners who had been assaulted at the Barberton Prison Farm. Letters of demand were served on: the Minister of Justice and Prisons, Mr Kobie Coetzee; on the six prison warders who had been found guilty after the criminal trial and who were serving their sentences of imprisonment at the Witbank prison; and on seven other warders who were still working at the Barberton prison –

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79 Blow *City Press* (8 April 1984) 3.

80 Blow *City Press* (8 April 1984) 3. The other side of the story was the stress suffered by Barberton prison warders at this time. On 13 November 1983, *Rapport* ran an article concerning the reaction of prison warders to the outcome of the Barberton "heat exhaustion" trial. According to the article, it was not always easy and pleasant to be a warder following the events at Barberton. Warders were often forced to put up with serious insults and told the reporters that they had been hit hard and deeply hurt. (The Afrikaans words uses were: "Die manne moes dikwels kwaai beledigings sluk" and "Ons is hard geslaan en seergemaak." See Anon *Rapport* (13 November 1983) 28.) A chaplain at the Brandvlei prison told the reporter of a young warder who had been seriously insulted while playing a cricket match. When the warder had requested a replacement cricket bat, he was asked by the wicket keeper why he wanted a new bat – after all was the old bat he was using was not good enough to assault prisoners with? (The Afrikaans words used were: "Sal hierdie een nie die bandiete goed genoeg kan bykom nie?" See Anon *Rapport* (13 November 1983) 28.) The reporter claimed that in all the weeks that *Rapport* was conducting its investigation, and when it could walk into any prison in South Africa unannounced, they had only come across one prisoner that claimed that he had been assaulted by a warder. He also claimed that the rule that a warder was not permitted to lift a hand against a prisoner was strongly enforced. See Anon *Rapport* (13 November 1983) 28.

81 Blow *City Press* (23 October 1983) 1. See, also, Blow *City Press* (30 October 1983) page unknown.

including Lieutenant JH Niemand, who had been the acting head of the prison when the incidents occurred, and Warrant Officer Jordaan, who had been the medical orderly who had been present when the assaults took place. The claims totaled nearly one million rand.[82] At the end of September, 1984 *City Press* reported that a total of 32 prisoners (not 30 prisoners as reported in November 1983) had in fact sued the State for the assaults which had taken place at the Barberton Prison Farm, and that the State had settled 29 of these cases out of court the previous month.[83]

4 Conclusion

To conclude Part One, it is clear from the ongoing furore in the press which surrounded the Barberton "heat exhaustion trial" and the events which followed that no South African who was even moderately au fait with public discourse at the time could be ignorant of the cruelty, racism and violence which lay at the heart of the South African penal system. Despite the restrictions imposed by section 44(1)(f) of the *Prisons Act* on reporting on conditions within South African prisons, the South African press was, by and large, successful in conveying to the public a sharp sense of the horror of the events which had taken place within "Apartheid's Alcatraz". It is also evident that the "fall out" from the Barberton "heat exhaustion trial" was traumatic for all involved, including the victims, the perpetrators, the colleagues of the perpetrators, those who investigated the matter, and all their families. The extent of the adverse publicity surrounding events at Barberton must have shocked the authorities at this particularly

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82 Blow *City Press* (20 November 1983) 1.

83 Blow *City Press* (30 September 1984) 3. It should be noted that subsequent incidents of violence within the Barberton Prison Complex also led to the institution of civil claims against the authorities. For example, on 30 September 1984 the *City Press* reported that a further 29 claimants had come forward to lodge civil claims against the state and various warders. The claims were for damages allegedly suffered as a result of assaults during September 1983 – by warders on prisoners. The claimants alleged that they had been severely assaulted at the Barberton prison in September 1983, following the stabbing of Colonel Johannes Grundling, the head of the Barberton Maximum Security Prison – an incident dealt with in part 2 of this article. The claimants contended that in some cases the assaults inflicted on them by warders were continued for a month after the attack on Colonel Grundling, and that some of them were forced to eat their food in a communal dining room in the nude. They also alleged that baton marks were still visible on the bodies of certain of the claimants a year after the assaults. In addition to the Minister of Prisons, 15 prison officials were sued in the new civil actions, including Brigadier E Viktor, then head of the Barberton complex of prisons, and a certain Lieutenant-Colonel JC Hall. *City Press* commented that it was the first time in the saga surrounding the Barberton Prison Complex that a Brigadier had been summonsed. See Blow *City Press* (30 September 1984) 3.

sensitive time, during which the first major cracks were beginning to appear within the edifice of apartheid. In a way, Barberton reflected the unstable and rotten core of the apartheid system itself. The massive jolt delivered by the press to its readers in response to events at Barberton must have shaken the confidence of many middle-class South Africans – weakening their resolve to support the *status quo*. For all these reasons it is submitted that the Barberton "heat exhaustion trial" and the events which followed played an important role in South Africa's penal history – as well as its general political history.

Part Two of this article will continue to explore pivotal events which occurred within "Apartheid's Alcatraz" in the first half of the 1980s.

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Legislation

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Harv L Rev	Harvard Law Review
Sapa	South African Press Association

APARTHEID'S ALCATRAZ: THE BARBERTON PRISON COMPLEX DURING THE EARLY 1980s - PART ONE

SA Peté*

SUMMARY

The purpose of this two-part article is to examine in detail the public discourse surrounding the Barberton Prison Complex during the early 1980s, at the height of the apartheid era. The prisons within the Barberton Prison Complex were notorious as being among the most punitive of the many prisons within apartheid South Africa. Barberton was the place to which the most dangerous and intractable prisoners were sent to serve their sentences, making it apartheid's "Alcatraz". The focus of this article is on the treatment of "normal" as opposed to "political" prisoners during the period in question, allowing the "voices" of ordinary prisoners – often sidelined and silenced – to be brought to the fore. The Barberton Prison Complex is examined through the lens of public discourse, as reflected in a wide range of South African newspapers published at the time. By analysing a large number of reports dealing with events at Barberton during the period in question, in both English and Afrikaans language newspapers, as well as in both politically conservative and politically liberal newspapers, this article attempts to capture both the "smell" and the "feel" of what it was like to be imprisoned in one of apartheid's toughest prison complexes. Furthermore, this article seeks to show that – despite legislative measures restricting the publication of information on conditions inside apartheid prisons – the press was able to provide a steady stream of information to the South African public on the shocking events which occurred at Barberton during the period in question. Part One of this article deals with the deaths of three prisoners and the injury of many others during a day of violence at the Barberton prison farm on 29 December 1982, as well as the broader political implications of the criminal trial - known as the "heat exhaustion trial" - which followed. It is contended that the events surrounding the

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infamous "heat exhaustion trial" may be seen as a kind of metaphor for the apartheid system itself, as it began to unravel during the 1980s.

KEYWORDS: Barberton Prison Complex; Barberton Prison Farm; prison violence; apartheid prisons; prison deaths; prison torture; prisoner heat exhaustion; heat exhaustion trial.