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Guidelines for *New Contree* Book Reviewers

The *New Contree* Journal publishes reviews of significant books that are relevant to historians. Book reviews are written on invitation from the office of the review editor, but unsolicited reviews may also be considered. *New Contree* has an interdisciplinary outlook and welcomes suggestions of historically significant works written by scholars in other disciplines. The review should be submitted to the review editor within two months of receipt of the book. If this deadline cannot be met, a mutually agreeable alternative date can be negotiated. If it becomes impossible to review the book, it should be returned to the review editor. All reviews will be submitted to the members of the editorial board before acceptance for publication.

Content

The review should summarize what is important in the book, and critique its substance. The reviewer should assess the extent to which the author achieves the stated aim of the book. It is important that the reviewer should engage the material instead of simply reporting the book's contents. For this reason, the reviewer should try to avoid summations of book chapters or the separate contributions in an edited collection. Instead, the reviewer should assess the ways in which chapters and contributions are relevant to the overall context of the book. Reviews should be written in a style that is accessible to a wide and international audience.

Format

The review should generally be between 800 and 1 200 words, and should include as little bibliographic data as possible. When necessary, use page references for quotations in the text of the review and provide complete

bibliographic details of the source. The review should begin with a heading that includes all the bibliographic data. The elements of the heading should be arranged in the order presented in the following example:

The early mission in South Africa/Die vroeë sending in Suid-Afrika, 1799-1819. By Karel Schoeman. Pretoria: Protea Book House, 2005, 272 pp., map, chronology, bibl., index. ISBN: 1-9198525-42-8.

Do not indent the first line of the first paragraph, but indent the first line of all successive paragraphs. Use double spacing for the entire review. Add your name and institutional affiliation at the end of the review. Accuracy of content, grammar, spelling, and citations rests with the reviewer, and we encourage you to check these before submission. Reviews may be transmitted electronically as a Word file attachment to an email to the review editor. If you have additional questions, please contact the Book Review Editors.

Book Reviews

*Hidden histories of GORDONIA land dispossession and resistance
in the Northern Cape, 1800-1990*

(Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2016, ISBN 978-1-86814-954-4)

Martin Legassick

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The well-known outstanding scholar and Marxist activist of radical revisionist historical thought in South Africa and on matters elsewhere globally – Martin Chatfield Legassick – sadly passed away on 1 March 2016.¹ The first research

¹ For a more comprehensive knowledge of Legassick's diverse knowledge and legacy see "Obituary, Martin Legassick (1940-2016)", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 42(3), 2016, pp. 565-567. See also Martin Legassick (interviewed by Alex Lichtenstein), "The past and present of Marxist historiography in South Africa", *Radical History Review*, 82, 2002, p. 113; Martin Legassick, "By way of introduction", *Towards socialist democracy* (Pietermaritzburg, UKZN Press, 2007), p. 7; Ciraj Rassool, "History anchored in politics: Interview with Martin Legassick", *South African Historical Journal*, 56 (2006), pp. 19-42; Ayesha Kajee, "Obituary: Martin Legassick, leftist historian and activist who was expelled from ANC", *Sunday Times*, 6 March 2016; Noor Nieftagodien, "Revolutionary socialist, scholar, teacher and mentor, review of African political economy, tributes to Martin Legassick", 2 March 2016 (available at on <http://roape.net/2016/03/02/tributes-to-martin-legassick/>).

of his life (1969)² as well as the last with which he was occupied until early 2016 relates to the current Northern Cape Province.³ The first research was done from a distance, namely from the UK, and the second and final research was conducted while he was physically breathing, exploring and experiencing the region's peoples and past after his return to South Africa from exile in 1990 after being expelled from the ANC.

In *Hidden histories of GORDONIA*, the last published contribution of his life, Legassick mostly celebrates a compilation of several past published histories in esteemed scholarly journals on the first pioneers of Gordonia (named after the British Prime Minister of the Cape Colony during 1870 to 1902, Sir Gordon Sprigg and nowadays known as the ZF Mgcawu⁴ district). Six chapters are tributes to already published works while five more chapters have been added to cover fresh angles of research on the coloured Afrikaners of *Riemvasmaak* prior to and after European colonisation, but also irrevocably accentuating the presence and impact of the Xhosa in the region, and the rapid extension of colonial boundaries after the first British occupation in 1795.

Legassick refers to his methodological approach in *Hidden histories of GORDONIA* as being related to public history and heritage, and very much influenced by his mentors to write in post-modern and in post-colonial paradigms. He also – and always in several of his publications – referred to his work as writing “unintentionally” a history that is applicable,⁵ implying that he “looks for transformation in the present on the basis of evidence from the past”. For this reason, the essays in this collection intentionally point out what is implied by an “applied” history when he discusses themes of land dispossession since colonial times and examples of resistance, inclusive of wars. In this process, Legassick does not make extreme efforts to ensure a chronological cohesion from chapter to chapter but rather, by means of a thematic approach, covers periods of events, and thus unintentionally creates decades of historical silence concerning the peoples of the region studied. In several chapter

2 See MC Legassick, *The politics of a South African frontier: The Griqua, the Sotho-Tswana and the missionaries, 1780-1840* (Switzerland, Basler Afrika Bibliographien, 2010) in which his PhD-degree awarded in 1969 focusing on the preindustrial South African frontier zone of the Transorangia with the Griqua history very prominent, is celebrated.

3 In the timeframe under discussion, the area was part of the former Cape Province and is referred to as the northern Cape. Martin Legassick had also recently published a history on the Eastern Cape, titled: *The struggle for the Eastern Cape, 1800-1854: Subjugation and the roots of South African democracy*, 2011.

4 The 2016 publication by Martin Legassick on Gordonia wrongly refers in the preface of the book to the former Gordonia district (known as Siyanda before 2013) as the present day Z.W. Mgcawu district, and named after the first black mayor of Upington after 1994, namely Zwelentlanga Fatman Mgcawu.

5 See *Hidden histories of GORDONIA*..., pp. XVIII-XIX.

discussions, the documents that the author consulted are quoted verbatim and he virtually only ensures that the quoted phrases flow smoothly by adding informative and insightful comments through efficiency of articulation.

To explore the “evidence from the past” with which Legassick wants to reflect the present, he starts with a first chapter titled: “The prehistory of Gordonia” that covers a pre-1880 background to the colonial occupation of Gordonia, while simultaneously extensively exploring the Baster and white movements from the Western Cape to this region. A lengthy Chapter Two continues with discussing the Baster settlement in Gordonia and its decline from about 1880 to 1923, and mainly covers patterns in a land occupation and alienation in the region. In Chapter Three, an example of land occupation and alienation is viewed, with a detailed discussion of the controversies concerning Abraham September’s farm Ouap and titled: “The will of Abraham and Elizabeth September: A struggle for land in Gordonia, 1898-2014”. The chapter also covers the year 2015 in which Legassick could not help but to remark that the history of 100 years ago was indeed relevant for the present day.⁶ The pioneering role that September played in propagating the idea of irrigation from the Orange River in ca 1888 has only recently been honoured by local management in the very region.⁷

Two short chapters that complement each other follow. Chapter Four on: “From prisoners to exhibits: representations of Bushmen of the northern Cape, 1880-1900” reminds readers of the Bushmen as the erstwhile dominant inhabitants of the area together with the Korana. Again, in this essay, the author uncovers controversies illustrating the inhumane treatment of the original inhabitants of the northern Cape by a magistrate in the 1880s. Closely viewed, his actions reveal that he was an extreme racist of his time. However, what initially appeared to be a sad era for the “Bushman” in 1999 turned into success when they were granted extensive territorial ownership.⁸ In Chapter Five, “South African human remains and the politics of repatriation: Reconsidering the legacy of Rudolf Pöch”, research on illegal research and trade in Bushmen shortly after the turn of the 20th century to especially Vienna is revealed, as is the success story of restoration of dignity in the reburial of the macerated remains of Klaas and Trooi Pienaar. Legassick and his fellow contributor to this chapter, Prof. Ciraj Rassool, rightly leave

6 See *Hidden histories of GORDONIA...*, p. 112.

7 See *Hidden histories of GORDONIA...*, p. 114.

8 See *Hidden histories of GORDONIA...*, p. 141.

the reader with debatable questions such as whether not more remains could be repatriated if more effort was made to trace them to places like Austrian institutions? Also, whether the practice of Archaeology is ethically sound?⁹

The role of the coloured Afrikaans speakers from 1796 to 1898 at Riemvasmaak, close to the Namibian border, is described in Chapter Six. The example of the anticolonial revolt owing to Afrikaans speakers' natural resistance to colonialism receives attention and continues in Chapter Eight with an in-depth description of the Marengo Rebellion of 1903 to 1907. The rebellion was the natural and predictable consequence of the artificial enforcement upon people of space and borders at the time.¹⁰

Chapter Seven deals with diverse accounts of the "Battle of the Narogas"¹¹ that occurred slightly earlier than that of the Marengo rebellion, namely during the South African War of 1899-1902, and which is presented as a refreshed account of one of those obscure battles covered only by limited or twisted reporting. According to Legassick (and he refers to the recording of this chapter as a very emotional experience),¹² this is "surely mainly because it is an account of the defeat of a white Boer force by armed brown (sic) people" at a time of complex power relations.¹³ In a "so by the way style" Legassick remarked that the aforementioned three chapters still had to acquire the "applied effects" towards which he was aiming with the research he had undertaken.¹⁴

The "applied effects" are more clearly defined by Legassick in Chapters Nine and Ten. In Chapter Nine, while dealing with "The racial division of Gordonia, 1921-1930", he expresses his belief that his research assisted land claimants after 1998 in Gordonia who had been dispossessed in the years under discussion. The Baster petition to parliament to demand the restitution of their land in Gordonia forms the essence of the discussion. However, a shortcoming of this chapter is that Legassick, without ado, skips the years of South Africa becoming a Union, the years of the Great War and simply continues with "another" prominent time to be linked to land dispossession. Proper contextualising the developments since 1907 (it could have been touched on only briefly) would have been more reader-friendly and not mere jumping from the one to the other exposure of "hidden histories" of Gordonia.

9 See *Hidden histories of GORDONIA...*, p. 156.

10 Compare with Legassick's view in *Hidden histories of GORDONIA...*, p. 252.

11 Also known as N'Rougas.

12 See *Hidden histories of GORDONIA...*, p. XXI.

13 See *Hidden histories of GORDONIA...*, pp. 197, 218.

14 Compare *Hidden histories of GORDONIA...*, p. XX.

Chapter Ten is regarded by Legassick as a complementary chapter, one also linked to racial segregation, and aimed at tracing and recording the eight decade long histories of two locations (named Blikkies and Keidebees), which was conducted for the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights. The years 1894 to 1974 are covered, but the discussion only gains momentum and reaches some depth from after 1945 and up to 1967, with a brief reference to 1974 when a group area was proclaimed.¹⁵

Whether Chapter Eleven as the last chapter manages to efficiently wrap up the exposure of several moments in the history of Gordonia can be designated as “hidden”, and highly contestable. It involves the autobiography of a former politically active black resident of Upington from the southern part of the Gordonia district. This man, Alfred Gubula, assisted Legassick during several research interviews. Alfred’s autobiography is not introduced as a “hidden history” nor is he even particularly introduced as a descendant of the coloured people associated with Gordonia. The memories of Gubula on his life and world view, are quoted verbatim, then extensively defended and generally analysed by Legassick. Though it may be possible to “read into” this text an understanding of an individual’s life and hardship under former apartheid (and perhaps some value of writing about a struggle for liberation in the course of South African history in general terms) it does not complement the rest of the chapters in which an explicit discourse on land dispossession and revolt received major emphasis.

A better conclusion would have involved a critical reflection on at least the first ten chapters. Even the revelation of explicit challenges and shortcomings as ideas for future research would have proved worthwhile to address specific gaps and silences regarding the Northern Cape history. Early in the preface, Legassick generally does so by acknowledging that much yet remains to be done in recovering the history of Gordonia and the Northern Cape in general. Examples that he points out mainly involve the political histories of the area still to be uncovered.¹⁶ Other historical developments that should also not be ignored include the economic impact of the diverse cultures in, for example, Gordonia, namely the sociocultural life and legacy; the influence of colonialism on language and religion and so forth.

If the expectation of the reader is to engage in a rich and contextualised history of human movement in the Gordonia district within some conscious

¹⁵ See *Hidden histories of GORDONIA...*, p. 334.

¹⁶ See *Hidden histories of GORDONIA...*, pp. XXI-XXII.

chronological framework, there will be disappointment. The value of *Hidden histories of GORDONIA* must rather be pursued in what Legassick could unlock and reinterpret from the local, oral and archival sources on relics of hidden histories of pioneers of the region. The reality that the imposing of formal colonial boundaries has cultivated the development of racial classification is evident in the histories discussed by Legassick.

Other requirements to enable readers to understand a region's development are diverse informed source references, maps, documents and photographic/visual material of the area and its peoples. In this regard, *Hidden histories of GORDONIA* does not at all disappoint. It's only the 1882 map (early in the book) that unfortunately is not extremely user-friendly in hindsight. Also, a few errors involving incorrect references to centuries (e.g. in text on page 18, footnote 109) and prominent people's initials (like reference to ZW Mgcawu district instead of ZF Mgcawu) do disturb, but understandably form part of the mishaps in the editing and publishing of books. Another shortcoming is the overabundance of lengthy quoted texts without the necessary comment on or response to them.¹⁷ Some gaps regarding sources are quite obvious. Thus, for example, PHR Snyman,¹⁸ a renowned researcher and author of books on several districts in the northern Cape, is "absent". No reference is made by Legassick to this prolific writer and his major contributions to the recording of the inhabitants and their histories in that region. The same goes for the valued contribution by GJJ Oosthuizen concerning the Rehoboth Basters, which is not even mentioned in the list of contributors when reference is made to some researchers in, for example, Chapter Six, footnote three. By considering all contributions as far as it is humanly possible, allowance must be made for an inclusive (and, by all means critical) historiography related to views regarding the occupation, possession and dispossession of land in this region.

Despite the perceived shortcomings in *Hidden Histories of GORDONIA*, this much valued and timely contribution of Martin Legassick in the post-academic days of his career exposes a giant in thought and a meticulous researcher and recorder of historical detail regarding the themes that occupied his mind. The exposure of several previously hidden histories of Gordonia not only reveals inhumane acts of the past, but also reminds the reader of its

17 See, for example, *Hidden histories of GORDONIA...*, p. 274 quote at the top and then a next section simply continues.

18 Compare PHR Snyman, "Kuruman, 1800-1990" (DLitt et Phil, UNISA, 1992); PHR Snyman, *Kuruman: Vervloëpad na Afrika* (Pretoria, RGN, 1992); PHR Snyman, *Postmasburg: 'n Geskiedkundige oorsig tot 1982* (Pretoria, RGN, 1983); PHR Snyman, *Daniëlskuil: Van Griekwa-buitepos tot diensentrum* (Pretoria, RGN, 1988), p. 186.

value as basis for current decision making on the correction of past injustices, thus to restore the dignity and well-being of descendants of a past generation. This is what the application of the research for which Legassick reached out involves. *Hidden histories of GORDONIA* is a gem of a contribution worth reading, and being regarded as part of the valued historiographical repertoire of the history of the Northern Cape.

Climate change and the course of Global History

(Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, 631 pp., bibl., index,
ISBN: 978-0-521-69218-2)

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John Brooke's work on climate change can be situated in a burgeoning field of study termed "Big History". It is a very ambitious yet intriguing attempt to contextualize the course of human history within larger structures, ranging from the creation of the universe itself to the geology of the earth and, of course, climate.

Brooke prioritizes climate as a key factor in human history. Through the use of interdisciplinary means ranging from archaeology to advances in genetics, the full scope of human history can be traced and much of it can be briefly summarized as the interaction between culture and climate. At the outset, this interaction would have been dominated by climate, leaving humankind at the mercy of uncontrollable forces that created the conditions of "stress" forcing change in society. Brooke therefore argues against the Malthusian view of overpopulation outstripping available resources – crisis is instead caused by exogenous factors that are beyond human control.

Climate change and the course of Global History is divided into four parts – each dealing with a significant aspect of the progression of human history. In the first part, "Evolution and Earth Systems", Brooke emphasizes human evolution as proceeding both gradually and through catastrophe. In a manner that mirrors the uniformitarianism and catastrophism of geology, human evolution proceeded in "fits and starts" (p. 29) and it is, in fact, the moments of crises that drove evolution. Geological forces such as glaciation, volca-

nic eruptions or meteor impacts and climate change caused by minute shifts in the earth's orbit or varying solar activity contributed to mass extinction events. Those most genetically adapted to survive these adverse conditions did so – and thrived, becoming the mammalian ancestors of modern humans. As hominids evolved, however, survival eventually became less due to genetics than to culture where the use of language and tools were key to surviving adverse environmental conditions.

Part II “Domestication, Agriculture and the Rise of the State” follows upon the seminal work of Jared Diamond, focusing in particular on the rise of agriculture and growth of settled communities in the “Old World”. The domestication of animals also had the effect of exposing these groups to diseases as well as building immunity – which would have severe repercussions centuries later, once they came into contact with “New World” societies. The development of early civilisation can be attributed to the more amenable climate at the end of the last Ice Age. The growth of agriculture brought with it larger settlements and social stratification. This can, in no small part, also be attributed to adverse climatic conditions and Brooke shows that small, ecologically vulnerable populations tended to embrace a more centralized, authoritarian rule that offered protection from the vagaries of environment, “Nature strikes in terrible calamity; humanity strikes back to transform natural bounty into the material structures of great walled cities” (p. 212).

A major part of the focus of Part III “Ancient and Medieval Agrarian Societies” is empire. With his detailed consideration of the Roman Empire, Brooke suggests that it was a victim of its own success. In a pattern that can be traced throughout human history, stability, the growth of technology and improvements in food production are conducive to population increase. The effects of population pressure, in conjunction with the communication networks so essential for the maintenance of imperial power – but also responsible for the spread of disease – created the conditions that would ultimately lead to the fall of Rome. The Little Ice Age during the medieval period was yet another crisis – a colder climate brought about by volcanic eruption and a shift in the earth's position in relation to the sun had an adverse effect on agriculture and food supply. This was compounded by the Black Death. The period of conflict was marked by the rise of new states and advances in military technology. Yet humankind rallied. Smaller populations resulted in a higher standard of living and the end of feudalism. The greater resources of these new states ushered in the voyages of exploration and discovery and paved the way for the dominance of Europe.

From the nineteenth century, however, anthropogenic factors have had a growing influence on climate and this is a key argument made in the final part of the book. Climatic changes can now be also attributed to global warming which is itself largely due to increasing greenhouse gas emissions – a by-product of industrialization. An exploding population has created concomitant demands for energy and other resources, leading to further development, deforestation and greater use of fossil fuels. Brooke suggests that much of our current political and economic concerns are a result of this, along with environmental degradation and the periodic outbreaks of epidemics such as the Ebola virus. These contemporary issues, however, are merely the continuation of a trend that has defined human history.

The tendency to make natural history the driving force behind human physiological and cultural evolution indicates a sense of predetermination against which “free will” advocates will instinctively rebel. This pre-determinism is prevalent throughout Brooke’s argument and it is something with which he engages. Admittedly it may sometimes make the reader uncomfortable however Brooke presents a wealth of evidence drawn from a variety of sources to substantiate his arguments and indicate what he sees as a high degree of correlation between environmental factors and human history. Despite the discomfort provoked, *Climate change and the course of Global History* is therefore a fascinating and compelling view of the interconnected history of humanity and the earth.

491 Days: Prison number 1323/69

(Johannesburg: Picador Africa, 2013, 251 pp., ISBN: 978-1-77010-330-6)

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491 Days is a harrowing insight into what Ahmed Kathrada in the foreword terms “the very coalface of the struggle” (xi). This book, by virtue of its nature, illuminates the difficulties faced by one of the struggle’s most prominent political widows: particularly in terms of being earmarked by security forces; ostracised by comrades in fear of retribution by association; and dealing with the anguish of children becoming political orphans. *491 Days* details the disturbing period which Winnie Madikizela-Mandela spent in detention

from 1969 to 1970. She was arrested at her Soweto home in the early hours of the morning in front of her young daughters under the Terrorism Act for promoting the aims of the African National Congress. The apartheid government used a legal quagmire to detain Madikizela-Mandela for a total of 491 days. On the recommendations of her legal advisor at that time, David Saggot, Madikizela-Mandela surreptitiously recorded her experiences, *inter alia* in solitary confinement. Her notes were returned to her by Saggot's widow in 2011, which saw *491 Days* come to fruition.

In the midst of an armed struggle against the National Party's apartheid system, the book details her personal, physical and psychological struggle within the confines of the penitentiary system. Some of the issues which the young Madikizela-Mandela enunciates include the uncertainty of the future, her failing health, as well as chronicling the tangible agony and deteriorating state of mind of someone in solitary confinement for an indefinite period.

491 Days is divided into two respective parts: Madikizela-Mandela's aforementioned clandestine journal, as well as correspondence by individuals affected by her imprisonment during this time. Part one is certainly the more structured part of the publication, following a relatively logical flow of a conventional journal. The chapters detail Madikizela-Mandela's accounts from her arrest to her second trial. Part two is void of chapters and includes a roughly linear collection of letters from that time, most undelivered due to political interference. This includes correspondence by Madikizela-Mandela, her husband at the time, Nelson Mandela, and their legal representatives, interspersed with some archival documents. The letters provide a relatively holistic impression of both Madikizela-Mandela and her family's attempt to deal with the difficulties associated with her imprisonment.

The strength of this book lies in the fact that both parts serve as primary sources for historians and reveal her first-hand account of imprisonment under the apartheid regime. More so, the greatest contribution of the book is that it gives a voice to the individuals who served as foot soldiers in fighting against an oppressive regime while the larger part of their leadership was imprisoned on Robben Island. Often, in celebrating the gargantuan moral and political victories of individuals such as Nelson Mandela, the contribution of others are overshadowed and relegated to the sidelines. *491 Days*, however, successfully provides immediate insight into the bowels of the apartheid government's prison system and highlights the ruthlessness of security police with potentially fatal consequences, both inside and outside of prison.

Another one of this book's strengths is that it was not written retrospectively, as is often the case with autobiographies, where memories have often been softened with age. *491 Days*, written during a period of great personal struggle for one woman, provides an unprecedented immediate insight into the mind of the oppressed at the mercy of the oppressor.

It is for this reason that it is exceedingly difficult to critique a book of this nature, as it shares a family's subjective response to great adversity. However, the format of the book is not elevated above criticism. The entries in *491 Days* are not always in strict chronological order, which can confuse the reader in instances. Furthermore, as a condition of Madikizela-Mandela's detention, she was not allowed to correspond with anyone, bar a handful of instances on special arrangement. As a result, there is a marked silence of Madikizela-Mandela's voice in the second part of the book, relating to letters written during this tumultuous time. However, the want thereof in this instance speaks volumes. As the reader acutely feels the absence of Madikizela-Mandela in reading part two of the book, so too is her absence deeply reflected in the notably anguished and anxious correspondence of Nelson Mandela. The lack of her voice brings the cruel conditions of her detention to the forefront. Remarkably, though, is that despite deep despair, the letters are indicative of the tenderness and intimacy which remained between Madikizela-Mandela and Mandela, despite both of them being imprisoned. While part one shows Madikizela-Mandela's anguish at her family structure's demise, part two shows Mandela exerting every possible effort to keep the family afloat amidst parental absence and the passing of family members.

491 Days could also have used the succinct introduction to greater efficiency to address some questions which may naturally arise with the more critical reader. One such an issue is how Madikizela-Mandela was able to keep a concealed journal while expressly being eviscerated of most human freedoms. Presumably she had an inside collaborator who supplied her with writing material with which to record her experiences. The nature of Madikizela-Mandela's imprisonment meant that she was subjected to rigorous searches before being placed in solitary confinement and was constantly under the watchful eye of prison warders. One can deduce that the prison warders would have received the knowledge that she continuously violated her prison conditions with great ire. Thus Madikizela-Mandela's allies within the prison system assisted her at a great personal risk of being discovered. Justifiably, Madikizela-Mandela would have omitted the manner in which she was able to keep the

journal at the time, in fear of incriminating her accomplices. However, *491 Days*' introduction could have shed more light on this aspect of the journal's origins. An acknowledgement to the individual/s and their efforts would have added a thought-provoking historical insight into collaborators within the prison system and ultimately given more depth to the origin, and perhaps limitations, of this source.

The aim of the book is detailed in its epilogue: that it should serve as a reminder to future generations of past horrors. Thus, equipped with this knowledge, future generations should ensure that South Africa does not ever regenerate to such levels again. *491 Days* succeeds in this, more effectively than retrospective publications. Madikizela-Mandela did future generations a great service by keeping a diary of her experiences while imprisoned. Her accounts relating to psychological manipulation, oppression and brutality by police, mistrust of the enemy and certain allies alike, the break-down of the nuclear family and personal difficulties create a great awareness with the reader in relation to incomprehensible personal strife in a draconian political milieu.

Madikizela-Mandela's contemporary contested legacy aside, *491 Days* tells the story of a political coming of age. It details the evolution of Madikizela-Mandela from being perceived as the nameless "Mandela's wife" (p. 237), to a woman of great resilience and fortitude who emerged stronger, both personally and politically, from being detained. *491 Days* will serve as a reminder to future generations of how the past atrocities of apartheid affected the individual – on the condition that they are willing to look.

Verwoerd: Só onthou ons hom (hersiene uitgawe)

(Protea Boekhuis, Pretoria, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-4853-0609-2)

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Die bundel, *Só onthou ons hom* het vir die eerste keer in 2001 by geleentheid van die 100ste herdenking van dr Hendrik French Verwoerd se geboortedag, 8 September 1901 verskyn (p. 11). Die 28 hoofstukke bestaan hoofsaaklik

uit persoonlike herinneringe van sy kinders, kollegas en tydgenote as joernalis en as Eerste Minister van die destydse Unie van Suid-Afrika en die Republiek van Suid-Afrika (p. 19). Hierdie bygewerkte weergawe bevat nuwe bydraes deur Elise Verwoerd, (skoondogter), Albert Hertzog en dr Cas Bakkes.

Die samesteller stel dit duidelik dat die boek die herinneringe rondom Verwoerd saamvat en vir die nageslag bewaar moet word. Hierdie bydraes is deur die samesteller geredigeer en in boekvorm gebind. Teen diè agtergrond dien die boek eerder as 'n biografiese werk as 'n geskiedkundige naslaanwerk. As die boek teen hierdie agtergrond gelees word, verskaf dit interessante leesstof oor sy gesinslewe, joernalis en as politikus. Vanweë die persoonlike band wat die samesteller met Verwoerd gehad het, kan die objektiwiteit en neutraliteit van verskeie van die bydraes bevraagteken word (p. 11).

Die vele fasette van Verwoerd as mens, word deur die onderskeie bydraes vanuit verskillende hoeke belig en hy word aan die leser bekendgestel as vriend, gesinsman, volksman en leier. Alhoewel minder aandag gegee word aan sy politieke sienings en aspirasies word eienskappe soos sy beginselvastheid, vreesloosheid, eerlikheid en integriteit deurgaans beklemtoon.

Die inleidende hoofstuk, bevat 'n biografiese skets deur die historikus, HO Terblanche. Hier word 'n faset van Verwoerd uitgelig wat nie in bestaande biografieë met dieselfde detail gedek word nie. Die klem val ondermeer op sy afkeur aan Britse imperialisme (p. 15) en sy tydperk as koerantredakteur van *Die Transvaler*. Dan volg daar 'n oorsig van sy politieke loopbaan as Minister van Naturellesake en Eerste Minister. Ook was hy 'n kampvegter vir die Afrikaner, sy taal en kultuur. Moedertaalonderrig en die stigting van Afrikaanse skole was vir hom 'n prioriteit (p. 15). Selfs op sportgebied het Verwoerd geglo dat Blankes en kleurlinge langs „parallele strome“ moes ontwikkel, maar geen veelrassige span sou nasionaal en internasionaal toegelaat word nie (p. 23).

Deel 1 bestaan uit bydraes van sy familielede. Hierdie onderhoude is in drie verdeel: eerstens die indrukke van sy familie te wete sy suster, Lucie Cloete, vir wie hy 'n steunpilaar en geliefde broer was (p. 40). Tweedens sy eggenote wat onthou dat landsake en godsdiens nooit prominente onderwerpe van bespreking in gesinsverband was nie. Laastens volg insette van hulle sewe kinders, skoondogter, Elize en skoonseun, Carel Boshoff. Hulle skoondogter, gee veral aandag aan gebeure rondom die onttrekking uit die Statebond (p. 112) en die aanloop tot Republiekwording (p. 113). In hoofstuk 5 verwys Carel Boshoff

na die belangrikheid van Afrikanernasionalisme in Verwoerd se soeke na 'n Afrikaner identiteit (p. 116).

Deel II beslaan sewe hoofstukke, wat steun op herinneringe van persone wat op verskillende wyses met Verwoerd saamgewerk het uit sy politieke en joernalistieke-loopbane. Hier is insette van oud ministers Albert Hertzog, De Wet Nel en joernaliste soos Basson, Cluver, Scholtz en Bakkes van belang. Advokaat Albert Hertzog, seun van genl JBM Hertzog, het in Verwoerd se kabinet as Minister van Pos- en Telegraafwese en Gesondheid gedien. In Hertzog se bydrae is dit interessant dat daar 'n groot mate van ooreenstemming tussen sy pa, JBM Hertzog en Verwoerd se sienings van die Naturellevraagstuk was. (pp. 127; 130-131). Dr Bakkes wat in die redaksie van *Die Transvaler* gedien het, onthou Verwoerd weer as 'n leier wat onvoorwaardelik mense vertrou het en wie se mensekennis in sy oordeel oor persone se vermoëns hom soms duur te staan gekom het (pp. 153; 156-157). Tog het die meerderheid joernaliste besef Verwoerd was eerstens 'n politikus in sy oogmerke en besluite en tweedends 'n joernalis.

Deel III bestaan uit tien hoofstukke en bevat insette van ministers, regslui en staatsamptenare. By tye kry die leser die gevoel dat 'n oordrewe positiewe beeld van Verwoerd uitgedra word. Hierdie voorlaaste hoofstuk word afgesluit met die woorde: "hy is weggeruk voordat hy sy lewenstaak, soos hy dit gesien het, kon voltooi. Sy standbeelde kan verwyder word en sy politieke strukture afgetakel word, maar sy naam sal in die geskiedenis opgeteken bly" (p. 253).

Die laaste deel bestaan uit ses hoofstukke met bydraes van vriende en kennisse wat op 'n meer persoonlike vlak met hom kontak gehad het soos Willie Dyason en Annetjie Boshoff. Hier val die klem hoofsaaklik op kwessies soos integriteit, respek vir andere en met toekomsvisie vir die land (p. 264). Sy wellewendheid en bedagsaamheid in sy omgang met die publiek en personeel word veral in die laaste deel uitgelig.

Dit is opvallend dat geen van die bydraes sy politieke en maatskaplike nalatenskap in detail bespreek nie. Al die gebeurtenisse versterk 'n algemene beeld wat reeds van Verwoerd bestaan, naamlik dat hy as 'n intellektuele reus, vlug van begrip was met die nodige insig in praktiese politiek. Sy werksvermoë, deeglikheid en effektiewe finansiële bestuur word ook bespreek. Van al die politieke leiers was Verwoerd waarskynlik die enigste wat op dieselfde intellektuele peil as 'n Jan Smuts of 'n Jannie Hofmeyr was, alhoewel hy 'n baie andersoortige persoonlikheid gehad het (p. 199).

Verwoerd se idealistiese doelstelling van selfbeskikking vir elke bevolkingsgroep is as *oplossing* vir die land se nie-blanke kwessies en in besonder vir die blanke gesien. Hy het in hierdie rigting gedink, want Carel Boshoff verwys na Verwoerd se verduideliking van die vier gemeenskapsgroepe vir wie daar 'n sinvolle toekoms uitgewerk moes word (pp. 120-121). Ook het hy teenoor sy seun Daniël, die saambestaan van die onderskeie volke, elkeen onafhanklik in sy eie gebied, as aanvaarbaar in 'n toekomstige bedeling gesien. Hy het ook die moontlikheid van kleurlinge se politieke toekoms saam met die van die blanke ingesien (p. 249). Kwessies soos die toekoms van Bantoe-onderwys, die noodsaaklikheid van universiteitsopleiding vir swartes en die moontlikheid van 'n swart regering is ook telkens bespreek (pp. 80-81; 120-122). Afgesien hiervan het Verwoerd en ander prominente Afrikaners soos dr Anton Rupert oor die konsep van Bantoe-tuislande verskil. Rupert wou tuislande ekonomies ontwikkel met blanke kapitaal in vennootskap met die swart bevolking. Hierdie konsep is deur Verwoerd verwerp (pp. 246-247; 272) en het hy enige pogings wat tot politieke of sosiale integrasie kon lei, in die kiem gesmoor (p. 251). As gevolg van sy vroeë, ontydige afsterwe bly die vraag of Verwoerd later beleidsveranderinge tov politieke integrasie sou toelaat (p. 253).

Ten slotte kan genoem word dat die herinneringsgeskrifte drie tot ses dekades na die gebeure opgeteken is, dus moet aanvaar word dat besondere detail of vergeet of vaagweg aangespreek is. Gevolglik is hierdie herinneringsgeskrifte eensydig en anekdoties aldus die skrywer (p. 11). Tog is die boek 'n aangename leeservaring van die Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis. Verwoerd bly dus een van die belangrikste figure in die Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis en daarom kan verwag word dat daar nog heelwat oor hom geskryf sal word.

Die HF Verwoerd Navorsingstrust het meegewerk om die publikasie van die boek moontlik te maak. Hierdie bundel herinneringe kan gesien word as 'n poging om negatiewe sieninge oor hom teen te werk en om 'n beter historiese perspektief op hierdie staatsman te verkry. Die druk- en bindwerk is van hoë gehalte. Die boek bevat 320 bladsye met 'n aantal foto's, 'n nuttige bladwyser en 'n geselekteerde biografiese lys.

Askari: A story of collaboration and betrayal in the anti-apartheid struggle

(Auckland Park: Jacana Media, 2014, 307pp., ISBN: 978-1-4314-0975-4)

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This has to be the most ambitious book I have read in a long time. Rebecca Davis of the *Daily Maverick* (24 May 2016) described the book as “the most intriguing, provocative book you’ll read all year – but its account of betrayal and collaboration under Apartheid is also deeply discomfiting”. Jacob Dlamini’s *Askari: A story of collaboration and betrayal in the anti-apartheid struggle* is a testament to the need to broaden our views of apartheid history and incorporate those parts we consciously tend to shy away from. The book highlights just how far a coercive state can go to protect its system but, more importantly, what individuals will do in order to survive it.

Askari is the story of a former apartheid activist turned “traitor” in the mid-1980s. The term Askari means “police” in Swahili, but “traitor” according to the notorious police agent Eugene de Kock. Glory Lefoshie Sedibe is the main protagonist in this chronicle of friend turned foe. The book challenges established notions of South Africa’s past, for which Dlamini must be applauded. In both his previous book *Native Nostalgia* and this latest installment, Dlamini points out the importance of appreciating the everyday contradictions people faced by people during the late apartheid period, regardless of their role in the struggle. Dlamini goes one step further in *Askari* by entering, not only the world of the ANC underground and the state security branch, but also the world of those considered to be most despised, the Askari.

Perhaps only Xolela Mangcu’s recent book, *Biko: A Biography*, comes closest to capturing as succinctly the soul of the person it describes. Mangcu’s analysis of Biko draws parallels to Dlamini’s work in that both bring to life the ordinary person behind the turbulence. Although nothing like Biko, because Sedibe is regarded as a ‘sell out’, a turncoat, or a counter revolutionary, his life story nonetheless highlights the complexity of living under apartheid and the difficult choices people had to make. It is the story of those who could fight only so much – whether on the side of the police, comrades or ordinary

citizens – and, when push came to shove, had to ultimately acquiesce to state pressure in order to survive.

Sedibe went into exile in 1977 and became an ANC and MK comrade. He operated mainly out of Swaziland and Mozambique until he was captured in 1986. By the time of his death in 1994 at the age of 40, he had been working for the apartheid security branch and military intelligence for nearly eight years. He had participated, by then, as a state witness against former comrades he had helped capture and had also actively perpetrated acts of violence against other activists.

Sedibe was what the state would call a “rehabilitated terrorist” and worked out of the South African Police Counterinsurgency headquarters at Vlakplaas farm situated just outside of Pretoria. Dlamini moves back and forth in time to try and explain why a former ‘terrorist’ joined the ranks of those they had previously fought against. All the while the author gives an uneasy humanity to the Askari who confronted violence, death, murder and mayhem every day.

To be sure, captured activists were tortured and forced to decide between life and death. When confronted with these two choices it was not easy to take the path of martyrdom (death), the idealized symbolic gesture associated with political activism. Dlamini subtly points out that simple survival strategies or rational choices were not only the preserve of ordinary citizens living under apartheid but also of activists, even those trained to withstand torture.

However, torture was not the only motivation and other activists turned because the incentives of a good life and financial reward were alluring. Moni, for example, states in 1986 when giving evidence for the state against his former comrades, that he got “tamed” [turned against his former comrades] when he “...thought about [his] conditions, conditions of life on earth, conditions at home” (Dlamini, 2014: 168). It must be remembered that South Africa in the mid-1980s, despite its internal political turmoil, was slowly creating a black *petite* bourgeoisie class backed by the new COSATU union. Money had become another component of the struggle in this decade and should also be considered when explaining the many ways in which it was possible for activists to be tempted by state machinery. I would further argue that material satisfaction had become an actual way of activism for many ordinary South Africans in addition to the armed struggle.

Dlamini importantly also questions if, when switching sides, Askaris actually adopted “the value system of the ‘other side’”. A suitable analogy in post-apartheid South Africa would be the example of Cyril Ramaphosa who was an active trade unionist in the mid-1980s and one of the negotiators for South Africa’s transition to democracy, who subsequently turned to the private sector in the mid-1990s, becoming a multi-millionaire. Has Ramaphosa adopted the value systems of capitalism that he opposed ideologically in the 1980s or is activism and African National Congress (ANC) politics not at odds with monetary gain? Many have questioned if South Africa’s first two decades of democracy under the ANC have sidelined the masses in its pursuit of control over the economy. In the same vein, did Sedibe give up his aspirations for a free and aspirant South Africa, even while working for the state?

Dlamini quotes Adam Michnik to explain the ending of apartheid, “We have entered freedom with the luggage of unsettled accounts about our history”. Surely apartheid did not end with elections in 1994 and there remain stories that still need to surface, and others that may never see the light of day. Sedibe’s story thus “...complicates how we think about apartheid and its legacies, and reminds us of the stories that still refuse to be told. As a nation we would do well to examine the taboos, the secrets and the disavowals at the core of our collective memories” (p. 260).

Yet, in looking back are we not unsettling our future? Dlamini has shown that we can look into apartheid to understand our past so that we can understand our present realities and future. He has shown that history offers us lessons about what we choose to remember and choose to forget. He reminds us that the South African story was not/is not simply a black and white one; it is far more nuanced.

Zambia, the freedom struggle and the aftermath: The personal story of freedom fighter and leader Sylvester Mwamba Chisembele

(Devon, Axminster, 2016). Pp. 337 + xvi. ISBN 9780993409509)

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Introduction

This is an erudite biography of Sylvester Mwamba Chisembele who was born on 1st March 1930 in Mansa and died in Lusaka on 5th February 2006. His wife, Sophena Chisembele, displayed at least two unique qualities in writing this book. First, she is an unusual archive. She had recorded useful information in her diary over a long time. That archive was complemented by her astute liberal values and superb memory. Second, Mrs. Chisembele writes and presents her thoughts clearly and in simple style. Thus, the book is easy to read, understand and is highly recommended to an ordinary reader. That is an appropriate honour to Chisembele who was aware that it is the grassroots he represented that gave him public standing and political power. In my attempt to follow her and his footsteps, I decided to review this book about the life of a renown Zambian nationalist and patriot under three themes. First, I shall comment on what the book says about Sylvester Chisembele's youth. Second, I review what the book says about Sylvester Chisembele as a democrat. Third, Chisembele represents enduring participation and active engagement through life and death. Any review is a process of selection; and at the moment, I shall speak about the book under those three themes.

Youth

The author demonstrates that a combination of Chisembele's intellectual, philosophical and moral curiosity resulted in the Catholic White Father's to deregister and remove Sylvester Chisembele from Lubushi Seminary in 1948. He was 18 years old and had joined the institution in 1942. Chisembele sought to understand why Zambians at the Seminary and in the Protectorate of Northern Rhodesia were treated as second class human beings. He found discrimination particularly puzzling and worrying in a Christian institution. On the other hand, the White Fathers found Chisembele's inquisitiveness disruptive. All outposts of colonization throughout Northern Rhodesia carried elements of discriminating Africans. During the colonial era, or before October 1964, Africans referred to the indigenous Black population. Paul Mushindo, when working on the first Bible in Chi Bemba at Lubwa, was puzzled that he was given second class status by European Christians who preached that God created all human beings, regardless of skin colour, as equals. Mushindo found strength in his belief that the sacrifice he was making for his people to know God could not be nullified by any human weakness. Chisembele was of similar moral and spiritual fibre.

Sylvester Chisembele saw his expulsion from Lubushi Seminary as an opportunity to pursue economic development and independence. His first business undertaking was to supply millet to local traders in Mansa. He further supplied the Copperbelt. He also set up fishing camps on the Nganda and Sosa beaches on the western side of Lake Bangweulu. Chisembele lived by the vision to be independent. He established a bakery and restaurant because he believed in economic diversification as a pathway to self-sustenance. Government was his major constraint during the youth of his business and in his old age. The colonial administration undermined Chisembele's business. They stopped his supplies to the Copperbelt. In his old age, the Government of the Republic of Zambia repossessed his farm in Chisamba between 2002 and 2006. In following age as a key factor in defining youth in Zambia, Chisembele was about to end his 'minority' when colonial rule ended on 24 October 1964.

Sophena Chisembele displayed exceptional understanding of information she received about Chisembele before they married. He was a politically active youth in Luapula and in Zambia since the 1950s. Chisembele played an active role in extending the African National Congress (ANC) in Luapula. He was a leading figure in establishing the Zambia African National Congress (ZANC) and its successor, the United National Independence Party (UNIP). He was an effective mobiliser at grassroots level. He listened to grassroots and supported their political empowerment. Between the late 1950s and 1964, Chisembele evolved ideas that democratic practices, traditions and institutions required accountability to grassroots organisations. The colonial administration recognised Chisembele's role in the development of the most sophisticated and advanced branch of nationalism in Luapula. In 1962, at the Magoye conference of UNIP, Chisembele led articulation of the position of Luapula on political strategy UNIP needed to adopt in order to end colonial rule. Through Chisembele, Luapula advocated rules that required ordinary membership to elect all party leaders. The party leaders also needed to be accountable to all party structures. Unfortunately for Zambia, UNIP rejected proposals from Luapula. Instead, UNIP adopted a strategy of democratic centralism. This allowed leaders to appoint leaders. Some leaders would be nominated and approved by grassroots structures. One key factor in taking this direction was fear of tribalism. Sophena Chisembele observed that democratic centralism adopted at Magoye was transformed into 'tribal balancing' which eventually created "One Man Rule" during the reign of UNIP from 1964 to 1991. By and large, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD)

followed the route of democratic centralism. Thus, in examining the foundation of Chisembele's political seed, Sophena Chisembele's goes beyond many studies in demonstrating debates and struggles inside nationalist and political parties in Zambia.

Chisembele as a democrat

Sylvester Chisembele was popular in Luapula because he was an organic leader and a democrat. In 1956 and 1957, he was part of the leadership that planted the ANC in Luapula. Chisembele's best effort produced the worst failure in Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula, president of the Northern Rhodesia African Congress (ANC). That made it easy to transfer support from ANC to ZANC and UNIP in Luapula Province. Chisembele easily became a leading champion in turning ZANC and UNIP organisations for grassroots membership. An authority on nationalism in Zambia, David Mulford, and Miles Larmer's subsequent reassessments, acknowledged Chisembele's unique contributions. Senior colonial officials, including the Chief Secretary who became the last Governor, Sir Evelyn Hone, warned leaders of UNIP in 1963 and 1964 about Chisembele and the strength of local party mobilisation in Luapula.

Post-colonial leadership embraced or inherited the attitudes of the colonial administrators towards Chisembele and Luapula politics. UNIP sidelined Chisembele and other organic leaders in Luapula in 1964, 1968 and 1973 national elections. Yet, these organic leaders continued to be elected. There was a general surprise that Chisembele was not in the first cabinet of UNIP. In course of time, UNIP leaders had courage to express their attitudes clearly and publicly. In particular, Northern Province based Bemba politicians did not contain advocacy of democratic principles in Luapula. Following the appointment of Aran Mulwe as Youth Regional Secretary in Ndola in 1969, leading Bemba politicians protested about being led by "ba Tubulu" (foolish fishermen) for a long time. Probably the most influential Bemba politician in Zambia, Simon Kapwepwe, considered Chisembele a mosquito that he could effortlessly crush if he wanted. The leadership of Chisembele and other organic leaders from Luapula were neither politically foolish nor easy to crush. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Chisembele was part of a Committee of 14. The Committee represented aspirations to develop democracy by weakening the national democracy and strengthening power of the provinces. Each Province would elect two representatives to a national council that would counter-balance power which the independence constitution had concentrated in

the presidency. Ackson Soko, Dingiswayo Banda and Nephas Tembo, who were radical activists on the Copperbelt but were branded as Easterners, were among rebels in UNIP that came to embrace what Chisembele had advocated since 1958 when ZANC was formed.

In 1983 Chisembele retired from open national politics. UNIP, especially President Kaunda made various overtures to Chisembele from the 1980s to the late 1990s. President Kaunda had played cat and mouse games with Chisembele in the 1960s and 1970s by appointing him to what many considered junior positions in the light of Chisembele's political contributions in Luapula. In 1970-71, Chisembele appeared to be a strong bridge between State House and the Litunga (a traditional Lozi leader in Western Province). Yet there was no reward for Chisembele. He was humiliated and demoted. Chisembele ventured into business such as a restaurant in Lusaka and farming in Chisamba in the late 1970s in order to strength his economic and political independence. He saw the One-Party State as lacking democratic ideals and practices. The first Vice-President (1964-1967), Rueben Kamanga, encouraged Chisembele to venture into business despite restrictions of the UNIP Leadership Code. The code was a set of principles and rules Kaunda's UNIP had set in anticipation of creating a socialist economy in Zambia. Even President Kaunda appeared willing at one time in the early 1980s to make special variations for Chisembele to own property in exchange for toying with Kaunda's political directives. President Chiluba in the 1990s courted Chisembele. No political marriage was made. Stubborn holding to democratic ideals resulted in the "State" repossessing Chisembele's farm in Chisamba.

Participation and engagement

Sylvester Chisembele was not a passive participant in the affairs of his motherland from the time he was expelled from Lubushi Seminary in 1948. He engaged in economic projects. We are not adequately informed by Sophena Chisembele about how Sylvester Chisembele raised his initial capital to start trading, bakery and a restaurant in Mansa. We do not know and we are given no guessed estimates of how much capital he had to start his businesses in Lusaka and Chisamba. There are also no indications of incomes generated. Yet, the book leaves no doubt that had colonial and post-colonial governments not stood in his way, Chisembele would have succeeded economically and politically.

Chisembele succeeds in leaving behind his clear thinking on grassroots based democracy. He led provincial politics in Luapula without threatening to break away from UNIP. Chisembele organized a movement that ensured that local leaders be elected and not vetted by Lusaka. It is this that made President Kaunda seek Chisembele continually, yet Kaunda's moves appeared calculated to break Chisembele's opposition to democratic centralism. Chisembele's democratic ideals remain on the Zambian political agenda. The Committee of 14 was, in part, a response to the failure of the 1967 UNIP conference. The Committee was also a response to pronouncements on decentralization in December 1968. President Kaunda and UNIP introduced the office of District Governor as an attempt to decentralize political power. Political decentralization remains on the national agenda. Sylvester Chisembele provided ideals and strategies of how Zambia could develop and entrench democracy.

Conclusion

The book has brought out at least three points that deserve recognition. First, the colonial and post-colonial governments suppressed progressive projects and ideas. Sylvester Chisembele suffered suppression at the hand of the colonial and post colonial governments. Chisembele initiated a variety of economic and political projects. A major factor in his failure was the hostile roles of governments from the 1950s to the early 2000s. Second, citizen participation should be promoted. Leaders in government should not weaken institutions. This was expected when Zambia ended one-party rule and became a multiparty and liberal democracy in 1991. Yet Chisembele was humiliated to the grave. Any government becomes illegitimate from the time a government institution suppresses and takes resources away from a citizen. Third, the book has brought out working inside political organisations and how power functions in Zambian institutions. In the context of these conclusions, Sophena Chisembele made an immeasurable contribution to knowledge about how injustice constrains progressive change in Zambia.

Ons Japie. Die boereoorlogdagboek van Anna Barry

**(Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 2016, 200 pp., kaart, foto's en geskrifte,
bibl. ISBN: 978-1-4853-0617-7)**

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Die heruitgawe van dié dagboek deur Protea Boekhuis is voorafgegaan deur Anna Barry (1884-1964) wat dit in 1960 onder die titel: *Ons Japie: Dagboek gehou gedurende die Driejarige Oorlog* laat publiseer het. Die 1960-publikasie dra Anna op “aan die nagedagtenis van my broer Japie Barry wat op 23 Desember 1900 op 17-jarige leeftyd as krygsgevangene in Ceylon oorlede is”. Die 2016-uitgawe is op 16 Julie by die reünie van die Barry-familie bekendgestel. Die teks van die dagboek self word met die nuwe uitgawe geboekstut deur ‘n insiggewende voor- en nawoord deur Ena Jansen, ‘n hoogleraar in Suid-Afrikaanse letterkunde in Amsterdam en ‘n kenner op die gebied van egodokumente.

Anna Barry (later Reitz) was die oudste dogter van Thomas en Johanna (gebore De Villiers) Barry en was met die uitbreek van die Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899-1902) 15 jaar oud. Sy besluit om dagboek te hou “... want daar is sterk gerugte van oorlog teen Engeland en as ons in ‘n oorlog gedompel word, sal daar dinge gebeur wat van groot historiese belang sal wees” (p. 42). Haar dagboek sou egter eers in 1960 verskyn. Hierdie besondere dagboek het grootliks in vergetelheid verval en die inisiatief vir ‘n heruitgawe, wat deur Ena Jansen geneem is, is prysenswaardig.

Die verhaal het vele kante waar Anna verdeeld voel in haar oorlogservaring tussen haar onverskrokke oudste en enigste broer Japie (1883-1900), wat as minderjarige reeds aansluit by die oorlog en later as krygsgevangene op Ceylon sterf aan ingewandskoors. Aan die ander kant is haar geliefde vader, Thomas, wat aanvanklik as ‘n gerespekteerde veldkornet deel van die oorlog is, maar na hy in Mei 1900 in ‘n veldslag gewond word, eventueel die eed van neutraliteit aflê en met sy vee na die neutrale Basoetoland uitwyk. Anna, asook haar ma en haar twee susters, Tiny en Hilda, bly nog ‘n ruk op die plaas Abrikooskop, ongeveer vyftien kilometer noord van Ficksburg, maar sluit hul in Oktober 1901 by Thomas aan. Hulle sou eers in Junie 1902 terugkeer na die familieplaas wat intussen deur die Engelse verniel en afgebrand is.

Ten spyte daarvan dat Anna 'n jongmeisie in haar tienerjare is, is die dagboek se verteltrant gemaklik en boeiend met lewendige beskrywings. Opmerklik is die volwassenheid van Anna in haar sonderlinge waarnemingsvermoë en weergee van omstandighede, emosies en detail. Terselfdertyd kan daar saam met Trudie Kestell, dogter van ds JD Kestell, in haar “Woord vooraf” in die dagboek gestem word dat dit “merkwaardig” is dat Anna volgehou het om die dagboek te skrywe (p. 38). Oor die feitelike waarheidsgetrouheid van haar dagboek gee Anna self die antwoord: “Die dagboek maak geen aanspraak op absolute historiese juistheid nie. Wat ek self beleef het, is outentiek ...” (p. 41).

Die dagboek word met opskrifte ingedeel. Onder die opskrif “Abrikooskop” word die langste periode van die dagboek weergegee - vanaf 26 September 1899 tot 10 September 1901. Die volgende opskrif “Ficksburg” omvat slegs twee weke, 29 September tot 13 Oktober 1901. Met die opskrif “Basoetoland” word die gesin se agt maande verblyf vanaf 16 Oktober 1901 tot 18 Junie 1902 in dié land beskryf. Die terugkeer na die familieplaas vorm die laaste deel van die dagboek, weer met die opskrif “Abrikooskop”, en sluit die tydperk 23 Junie 1902 tot 13 Januarie 1903 in. Daarna volg drie bylaes.

Buiten die dagboek van Anna Barry self wat teen 'n gryns agtergrond afgedruk is (pp. 34-175), omvat die teks van Ena Jansen 'n redakteursnota (p. 6); die voorwoord met eindnote (pp. 7-32); die nawoord met eindnote (pp. 176-194); dankwoord (pp. 195-196); asook 'n bibliografie (pp. 197-200). Terselfdertyd word 'n kaart van die Vrystaat en Basoetoland (p. 33), asook 'n reeks van sewe foto's en verskeie geskrifte in swart-en-wit in die middel van die boek verskaf.

Ena Jansen verdeel verder die dagboek van Anna Barry in 'n eerste vertelmoment met daaglikse inskripsies in die dagboek vanaf 26 September 1899 tot 13 Januarie 1903. Die tweede vertelmoment sluit Anna Barry se publikasie van *Ons Japie* in. Hierin gee Jansen haar eie redes en insigte weer vir die publikasie van die dagboek 57 jaar nadat dit geskryf is en vergelyk Jansen die veranderende kontekste tussen die jare net na die oorlog, met die landsgebeure teen 1960. In die proses verskaf hierdie dagboek as outobiografiese teks, asook Ena Jansen se voor- en nawoord, 'n dieper insig in die Vrystaatse (en dus ook Suid-Afrikaanse) samelewing rondom die skryf van die dagboek (1899-1903) en die eerste publikasie daarvan (1960).

Die publikasie van die dagboek was vir Anna die nakom van 'n belofte aan haar moeder om dit “in 'n leesbare vorm” oor te skryf “sodat ons familie dit as nagedagtenis aan my broer kon hê”. Die “oorskryf in 'n leesbare vorm” sou nodig

wees nadat Anna aanvanklik haar dagboek in 'n boek met 'n swart hardeband geskryf het, maar met verloop van tyd toe die boek volgeskryf was en haar haar ink op, het sy kruis en dwars met ink van roet en asyn op flentertjies papier geskryf, waaronder haar pa se runderpesvorm (pp. 40-41). Dit spreek vanself dat dit 'n "reuse taak" (p. 39) moes gewees het om dit oor te skryf. Teen hierdie agtergrond is dit debatteerbaar dat Anna met die 1960-publikasie "eerherstel vir die gesin" wou beding. Ten spyte van 'n veranderende, meer Afrikaner-nasionalistiese konteks gedurende die laat 1950's in Suid-Afrika, wil dit voorkom of Anna tog die dagboek in kern as 'n familiedokument beskou het.

Die dagboek van Anna Barry verskaf 'n sonderlinge blik en beeld van die Anglo-Boereoorlog: Die verloop van die oorlog; invloed en gevolge van die oorlog op 'n gesin, die familielede, die gemeenskap, 'n nasie; hoe mense oorleef het tydens die verloop van die oorlog; die invloed en gevolge van verliese; hoe nuusgebeure en inligting oorgedra en verskaf is; wroegings met bepaalde konsepte en gebeure; invloed van godsdiens op bepaalde besluite en hantering van verliese; die veranderinge binne gesinsdinamika's; en die ingewikkeldheid van 'n oorlog. Dit verskaf ook 'n intieme blik op die na-oorlogse periode en die heropbouproses.

Met die lees van Anna se dagboek word kwessies soos lojaliteit, verraad, verdeeldheid tussen landgenote, sosiale status, die rol van die vrou, taal en politieke mag opnuut bevraagteken en beredeneer deur die leser. Terselfdertyd word die leser onder die indruk gebring van die oorlog se effek met Anna se mededelings, waaronder: "Ons begin besef hoe gruwelik oorlog werklik is" (p. 48); "Die oorlogstoestand word al hoe meer ingewikkeld ... ek besef dat die vreeslike oorlog probleme bring waarmee ons voorheen nooit te doen gekry het nie" (p. 109); "O, die vloek wat die oorlog nalaat!" (p. 162); "Die oorlog het ons van soveel beroof, wat ons *nooit* sal terugkry nie" (pp. 130-131); "Die gruwelike oorlog sal nog baie wrange vrugte dra en daar sal 'n ongekende verdeling ontstaan... Die vreedsame, gelukkige samelewing van die ou Republikeinse dae ... is saam met ons onafhanklikheid verlore" (pp. 147, 163).

Wat vervolgens bydra tot die dagboek se andersheid en besonderheid is dat dit 'n vars blik verskaf op die ervarings van die Boerevroue en -kinderen buite die konsentrasiekampe tydens die oorlog aangesien Anna Barry en haar susters, asook haar ma, nooit in 'n konsentrasiekamp opgeneem was nie. Veral die tydperk waartydens die familie saam in Basutoeland is, word as 'n veilige tydperk uitgebeeld vergeleke met die oorlogsgebeure in Suid-Afrika.

Die rol van die vroue van die Barry-familie wat “alles in ons vermoë vir ons land en volk wil doen en self wil opofferings maak” (p. 45) word egter op komplekse wyse beperk tot die keuses van die mans in die gesin. Dit lei daartoe dat die vroue tydens die oorlogsjare dikwels eerder waarnemers was met ‘n beperkte rol om te vervul. Hiermee saam verkry die leser ‘n eerstehandse blik op dié vroue se lot in oorlogstyd wat verlange, ontberings, frustrasie, onmag, angs, bekommernis, eensaamheid, eentonigheid, verdriet, bedruktheid, verwardheid en verlatenheid sonder vooruitsigte sou insluit.

Ena Jansen se voor- en nawoord het bepaalde tekortkominge en sekere stellings/afleidings is debatteerbaar. ‘n Paar feitelike foute betreffende die datums soos weerspieël in die dagboek kom in die voor- en nawoord voor. Konsekwentheid rondom bepaalde woorde verskil soms, sien byvoorbeeld die gebruik van “hendsopper” en “hensopper”. ‘n Paar foute met die bladsynommers, asook sekere taalfoute/spelfoute kom voor in Jansen se teks en in die bibliografie.

Ten spyte van Jansen se weergee van Anna Barry se identiteitsbesef as sou gebuk gaan onder haar vader “se skaduwee as ‘n hensopper”, is daar egter deurgaans blyke in die dagboek van haar lojaliteit aan die Afrikaners se saak en identiteit as ‘n Afrikanervrou. Haar “wie-is-ek”-identiteit is tog nou verknog aan die Afrikanervolk met haar negatiewe uitlatings teenoor die Engelse: “Dit is gruwelik dat die groot en magtige Engelse nasie nou teen vrouens en kinders oorlog voer” (p. 85); “... Engeland se handelswyse [is] so barbaars soos die Middeleeue” (pp. 106, 151). Dit is verder vir Anna en haar familie “‘n skok en maak hul baie seer” toe daar na hul verwys word as Engelsgesind (p. 84).

Of Anna werklik haar vyandbeeld van die Basoeto’s “bowendien ‘volledig’ verander” het (p. 18), soos deur Jansen beweer, is debatteerbaar. Ten spyte van ou kaptein Januari wat hulle “die hoogste agting voor het” (p. 125), verwys sy tog later na kaptein Petta se onderdane wat “vol streke is” (p. 135) en haar vader se probleme in hierdie verband. Anna se latere beeld van die Basoeto’s was dus nie net positief nie.

Daar kan voorts gedebatteer word oor Jansen se weergawe dat Anna “met moeite ‘n helderol vir haar moeder bymekaar kan skraap” in die “Ter inleiding” gedeelte van die dagboek. Dit is waar dat Japie in alle opsigte as die gesin se held beskou is. Talle kere in die dagboek maak Anna melding van Japie as “dapper” (pp. 43, 53) en dat die “susters eenparig besluit [het] dat hy ons held is” (p. 44). Tog verwys sy na haar moeder op p. 117 as die een wat al die

“verantwoordelikheid dra en sy is so standvastig, moedig en vol geloof ...”. Anna beklemtoon self ook in die “Ter inleiding” hul moeder se rol in hul lewens tydens die oorlog.

Nêrens word daar regtig melding gemaak en verwys na die rol wat godsdiens in Anna se dagboek gespeel het nie, terwyl daar talle verwysings daarna is: “Moeder sê ons kan veel vir ons land en volk doen met gebede ...” (p. 50); “... moeder het ons wakker gemaak en so hartstogtelik gebid...” (p. 89); “... ons bid elke dag ...” (p. 90); “Ons ouers is vir ons ‘n ware voorbeeld ... hulle wankel nie in hul geloof nie en volhard in hulle vertroue in die goedheid van God” (p. 93). Anna se geloofsworsteling met Japie se dood en teen die einde van die oorlog met die verlies aan vryheid soos verwoord op p. 145, beklemtoon weer die prominente rol wat godsdiens in Anna se lewe en in die Barry-familie gespeel het.

Ten spyte hiervan, lê die waarde van die dagboek in die weergee van ‘n familie-verhaal wat meer as net Anna Barry en haar familie se gebeure, persepsies en emosies tydens en na die oorlog deel. Dit is ‘n uitsonderlike historiese introspektiewe egodokument oor die verhaal van ‘n oorlog wat wýd gestrek het, velerlei mense en gebeure ingesluit het en sou oorloop in ‘n nuwe, meer ingewikkelde ruimte en tydsges wat die kompleksiteit van die destydse (en die huidige) Suid-Afrikaanse konteks belig.

All the way to an Independent Namibia

(Pretoria, Protea, 2016. 511 pp. ISBN 978 1 4853 0456 2)

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Dirk Mudge’s autobiography traverses the rugged political landscape of South West African/Namibian politics from the period of South African occupation until the country’s independence in 1990 and beyond. This book reflects the long and turbulent career of a man who was regarded as a controversial key player in Namibia’s advance towards national independence. This book redraws his journey from being a member of the Namibian National Party to the

Turnhalle Conference, and then to becoming the founder of the Republican Party and the chairman of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA).

It may be doubted whether this book will change prevailing perceptions of the man, which have been oscillating between the image of a “puppet” of apartheid South Africa who prolonged Namibia’s painful independence process on the one hand and of a staunch fighter for a genuine democratic Namibia on the other. This book cannot entirely resolve these contradictory notions, partly because of the twists and turns in Namibian history but also because of Mudge’s apparent ambiguity regarding his own stance towards the complexities of race relations in a country that was in the grip of the segregationist South African state for decades. His account routinely blames SWAPO combatants as “terrorists” during the liberation struggle but, as if in an unguarded moment, the more appreciative term of “freedom fighters” seems to have slipped in at least once without any sense of irony (p. 186).

In a similar vein, Mudge does not hide his initial sympathy for the grand plan of Verwoerd’s apartheid (pp. 83-94), but then frequently asserts his growing discomfort with the everyday social humiliations that petty apartheid caused to black Namibians (pp. 169-170). His aversion to white colleagues, who refused to share as much as a cool drink with black Namibians and whose racism was dressed up in pseudo-philosophical ruminations about the perils of “secularism”, sounds sincere. Deep-seated stereotypes occasionally seem to shine through, however, such as Mudge’s claim that “segregation among people based on their population group is acceptable”, presumably as long as it can be represented as a voluntary process based on cultural differences and not on top-down racist discrimination (p. 182). He repeatedly expresses his appreciation of the South African military for protecting Namibians because, as he explains, “we lived on the battlefield and were soft targets for terrorists” (p. 20, see also pp. 227, 252). This sentiment of gratitude will not be shared by all black Namibians. Most surprising is his assertion that he heard about South African military operations in Angola only after independence (p. 360). Such comments are, however, useful reminders of the heated arguments not only between white and black Namibians but also within the white community, which became increasingly aware of their precarious situation against the background of rising internal resistance and international pressure on South Africa from the 1960s. Mudge provides many anecdotes on the contempt and even hatred that he often encountered among his white compatriots who viewed him as a traitor of the doctrine of white superiority and privilege.

The book is most convincing when the author describes his emotional ties with his country, and many readers will be prepared to pay Mudge their respect for his tenacity in standing up for his political convictions. His stubbornness also extended to his dealings with the members of the South African Government. Mudge describes his relations with Vorster as relatively cordial, but him and Pik Botha did not see eye to eye. PW Botha also receives some acidic comments for using Namibia as a testing ground for his own ill-fated experiments with constitutional models in South Africa (p. 380).

Although Mudge never expresses any sympathy for the motivations of those Namibians who looked up to SWAPO and their leader, Sam Nujoma, for releasing them out of South Africa's clutches – he maintains that he was on a SWAPO hit list – he showed himself to be pragmatic about the future of an independent Namibia. He denies what some observers at the time feared, i.e. that the DTA was planning for unilateral independence in the style of Rhodesia, but this comment, too, is not presented without some ambiguity since he indicates that some DTA members may actually have contemplated such a move (p. 318).

A tighter editing process may have improved the chances of the author to present his side of the story to the readers. The English translation from the original Afrikaans is occasionally clumsy. The book also could have benefitted from cutting down on the many detailed accounts of meetings, gatherings, conferences, and speeches. A very long chapter on the debates about the writing of the Namibian constitution provides interesting glimpses into the process, but it does not encourage the engagement with a text that is very dense and privileges exhaustive thoroughness to the disadvantage of readability.

All politicians may be expected to represent their activities as being driven by honourable intentions, which should not discharge the readers from the obligation to engage in a critical inquiry. Mudge is no exception. Whether one sees Mudge's political pragmatism as having gained momentum only with the impending end of the Cold War or whether one views his politics as being shaped by an unbending insistence on democratic principle, he undeniably played an important part in Namibia's road to democracy. Moreover, Namibia's relatively peaceful transition to a constitutional democracy in 1990 also helped to soothe anxieties among whites south of the Orange River, and it therefore encouraged the negotiated transformation of the apartheid state into a democratic South Africa four years later.