



NEW AGENDA

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STAFF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT IN STATISTICS AND OPERATIONS RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

Challenges in Statistical Sciences

When Professor 'Maseka Lesaoana joined the Department of Statistics and Operations Research (STOR) at the University of Limpopo (UL) in February 2003, the highest qualification of most staff members was an Honours degree. The challenge of assisting these colleagues to improve their qualifications was exacerbated by the fact that senior staff members also had administrative responsibilities. The situation was not unique: statistics departments at universities across the country faced a similar problem. Being marooned in administrative positions for many years (as head of the department, and later as director of the school), slowed down her plans to support junior staff – in particular, to supervise masters and doctoral students. However, Prof Lesaoana used her administrative positions to strengthen collaboration with experts in statistics and operations research regionally and globally.

Improved Staff Qualifications

After relinquishing administrative positions in July 2014, articles in accredited journals grew exponentially and two doctoral students (one in statistics education) graduated in September 2016. Before 2015, four colleagues graduated with master's degrees in statistics. Since then, two more have received master's degrees and another completed a PhD, the first ever in STOR. Two other colleagues are expected to complete their masters' by mid-2017. In addition, many other students who are not members of staff are currently enrolled for post-graduate studies.

Collaboration in Supervision

Prof Lesaoana has collaborated with colleagues from the following universities overseas: the National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in Zimbabwe; University of Alabama, USA (main collaborator, Prof James Cochran); University of Melbourne, Australia (Prof Santosh Kumar); University of Maryland, USA (Prof Partha Lahiri); University of Navarra, Spain (Prof Luis Alberiko Gil-



Prof M Lesaoana

Alana); Hasselt University, Belgium (Prof Christel Faes and other VLIR experts). Prof. Iven Van Mechelen of KU Leuven University in Belgium has been a volunteer mentor to our PhD students in STOR. Nationally, Prof Lesaoana collaborates with Prof Samuel Manda (Medical Research Council) and Prof Elias Munapo (North West University). These collaborations support the supervision of doctoral students and the writing of articles and book chapters in STOR.

Sources of Funding

Collaboration with industry and research organisations has provided financial support towards students' fees and training, including participation in local, national, regional and international research activities. This support has come from:

- Eskom, through its Tertiary Education Support Programme (TESP), for postgraduate students since 2010.
- Statistics South Africa (together with Eskom, SASOL and the NRF), for the department to host the 2010 Operations Research Society of South

Africa conference and the 2013 South African Statistical Association (SASA) conference.

- SASA/NRF Crisis in Academic Statistics, through Stellenbosch University, for Prof P Lahiri on doctoral supervision since 2015.
- the national department of science and technology, for various projects, including students' participation in international conferences and related events in South Africa.
- the VLIR-OUS (Belgium) scholarship programme, financial support for some students.

Doctoral Students' Research Activities

Our PhD students are working in the following research areas: statistics of extremes; time series analysis; clustered data modelling; small area estimation techniques; and operations research methods.

Current Research-Related Activities

In addition to being the university's coordinator for the DST-NRF Centre of Excellence for Mathematical and Statistical Sciences (MaSS), Prof Lesaoana is a member of

- the NRF Steering Committee to establish a national graduate academy for mathematical and statistical sciences that will complement the mandate and activities of MaSS
- the National eScience Postgraduate Teaching and Training Platform (NEPTTP), a Wits-led consortium
- the OECD Expert Group under the Global Science Forum, working on research ethics and new forms of data for social and economic research
- the Statistics Council of Statistics South Africa. [NA](#)



Contact details:
Professor 'Maseka Lesaoana
Tel: +27(0)15 268 2459
Email: lesaoana.maseka@ul.ac.za



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CONTACT US

Email: newagenda01@gmail.com

Website: www.instituteforafricanalternativescapetown.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/newagendaonline

Twitter: @IFAA_CT

Tel: +27 21 461 2340

Address: 16th Floor, Pleinpark Building, Plein Street, Cape Town 8001

IFAA STAFF

Editor

Prof. Ben Turok

Deputy Editor

Zunaid Moolla

Office Manager

Christine Leibach

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Subscriptions

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Advertising

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Scientists and labourers work side by side at Cape Town maggot farm – a success story for the DST's Bio-economy Strategy

When someone mentions maggots, the words “yummy” or “valuable” hardly leap to mind. Images that can only be described as “horrid” or “disgusting” are more likely to be conjured up.

But for Jason and David Drew, maggots have become a lucrative business. The entrepreneurial brothers started a maggot farm that has generated millions of rands in turnover, and is a significant source of income for the impoverished community of Philippi, Cape Town.

The need for poverty alleviation and community development inspired the brothers to get involved in maggot farming by establishing AgriProtein Technologies. This biotechnology start-up grows maggots that are fed on organic waste material – producing a nutrient-rich fertilizer in the process – before being harvested and dried into a natural and sustainable animal feed called MagMeal. MagMeal is a cheaper form of protein feed than fishmeal or soya meal.

AgriProtein Technologies was started in 2009 with funding from the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA), a Department of Science and Technology (DST) entity. The company received more than R23 million from TIA as part of the department's National Biotechnology Strategy, which was published and approved by Cabinet in 2001. Biotechnology is one of the tools required for South African industry to become more competitive on a global scale, and it makes an important contribution to the Green Economy.

In 2013, Cabinet replaced the Biotechnology Strategy by approving the Bio-economy Strategy, which reiterates the country's commitment to technological innovation and its potential to unlock the “innovation chasm” between research and commercialisation.

The DST is looking to develop technologies that will leapfrog development and contribute to the national imperatives of food security, poverty alleviation, job creation and socio-economic development, as outlined in the National Development Plan, the New Growth Path and the Industrial Action Policy Plan.

AgriProtein Technologies is one of the DST's success stories. The company employs teams of entomologists, animal nutritionists, engineers and labourers in



processes that range from machinery design and laboratory tests to nursing baby maggots and the final packaging of MagMeal.

Co-owner David Drew says that the majority of the approximately 90 people employed by AgriProtein live in Philippi, Govan Mbeki settlement and Mitchells Plain. “The most beautiful thing about the company's location is that our workers can walk to and from work, which leaves them with a better disposable income because they save on transport costs,” he explains.

Karen Arendse, a mother of one who was previously unemployed, joined the factory six years ago and works as a forklift driver. Ms Arendse says that initially she had nightmares about the maggots. “I am now accustomed to the environment and I see maggots as part of my life.”

Other employees concur that working with maggots can be nerve-racking at first, but the distaste subsides with time, and the focus turns more to the salaries that have changed their lives.

A research association with Stellenbosch University has Dr Ian Banks working as an entomologist for the factory. He explains how they use food waste from various local factories to make food for the maggots of black soldier flies.

“Food waste from chocolate, powdered milk, dog biscuits, fruit and vegetables can be good food for maggots, but we carry out rigorous quality control tests in the laboratory before the waste can be passed as suitable. The lifecycle of the flies is similar to the better-known butterfly lifecycle. The process followed

by AgriProtein is natural, except that each stage is manipulated to improve production,” says Dr Banks.

The strength of the factory rests in the high-level expertise held by the employees (both young and old) and the funding received from TIA.

The factory emphasises sustainability, as the Drew brothers have an immense love for natural resources and the environment. One of David's concerns is the effect on natural resources caused by the rapid growth of the world's population. “Regardless of policies and legislation put in place to protect natural resources, people still need to eat and use resources for other important activities,” he says.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is tasked with managing the development and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. Among other policies and programmes, its Small-Scale Fisheries Policy supports investment in community entities to take joint responsibility for the sustainable management of fisheries resources and to address the depletion of critical fisheries stocks.

As David Drew points out, “AgriProtein contributes to the protection of the fishing industry. The world consumes more fish than it can produce, and fish stocks globally are rapidly declining. However, for every tonne of MagMeal produced, about 3 tonnes of live fish are saved.”

He believes that one factor contributing to the decline of fish stock is its use as a source of protein in chicken feed. Other sources, like grains, insects and maggots, have the same quantity of protein and could relieve the pressure on fish stocks.

Indeed, nothing goes to waste at AgriProtein. They are now at an advanced stage of testing the residue of the maggots' feed to produce a soil compost.

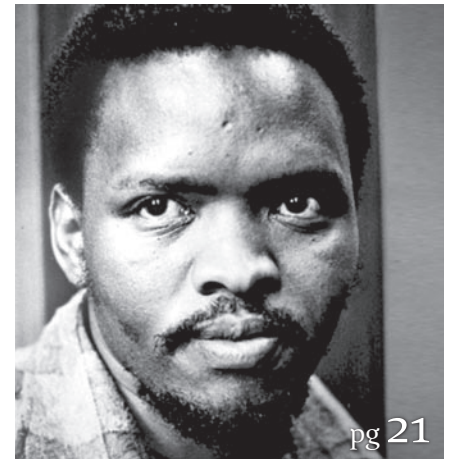
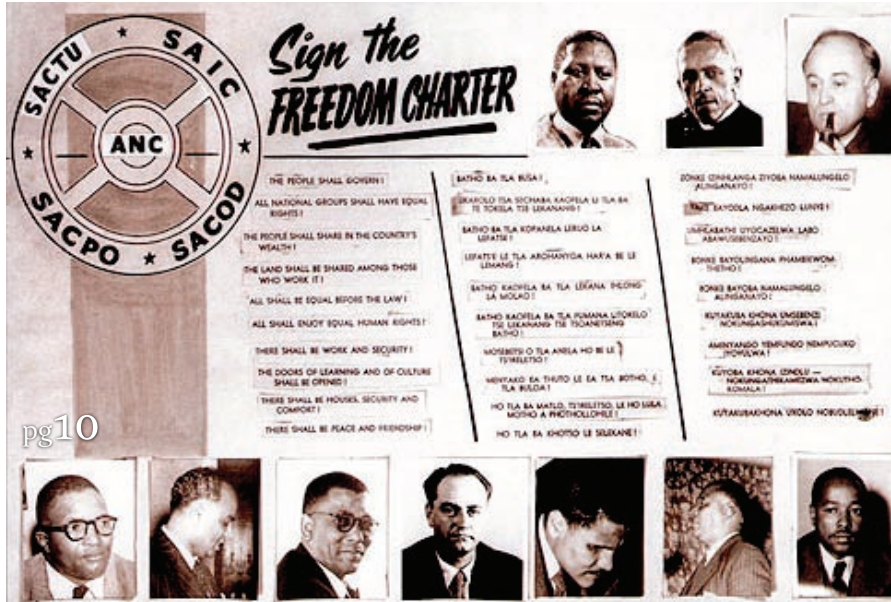


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“Decolonisation” should be an invitation to think

By Michael Nassen Smith

The central message of the 2015 generation is this: “we are not “Born Free.” The struggles that many students face at our country’s universities support this idea. A large proportion of the student body cannot afford fees, accommodation and even basic necessities such as food. To cope, many enter into unmanageable levels of debt, and so cannot escape the burden of poverty unfairly placed upon them at birth. #FeesMustFall galvanized the entire higher education community and achieved remarkable victories in 2015. Students were seen fighting in solidarity with workers for fair pay and an end to the exploitative practice of outsourcing. Heading into 2016, the students were at the vanguard of progressive struggles in the country.

The student’s demands stretch beyond financial issues such as fees and outsourcing, and into pedagogy, content of curriculum, university aesthetics, and the composition of teaching staff. They have advanced these struggles under the label of “Decolonisation,” arguing that South African universities are alienating, in both psychological and material terms, to a generation of black students born into the so-called “rainbow nation”.

Decolonisation is a concept that germinated on our campuses in 2015 and soon spread into public discourse and imagination, attracting much confusion and contestation along the way. Historically, the term has been used by different political movements across the former Third World to guide anti-colonial and anti-

imperialist struggle. The term has signified various conceptions of what a postcolonial state and society should look like. These conceptions have, in turn, justified historically specific forms of political praxis, from political negotiations to guerilla warfare. Decolonisation has thus meant different things depending on context and the ideological persuasion of those using it.

The use of the term by South Africa’s student class of 2016 must also be understood historically. Currently, there is no single understanding of “decolonization” that is accepted by all of those students who call themselves “fallists.” And perhaps there need not be. What has driven this generation to protest is a desire to interrogate the conditions of a post-apartheid South Africa in which the residues of colonialism and apartheid remain so starkly visible. Instead of searching for a definition of the word “decolonization,” one should understand it as an injunction and clearing to think about the state of our nation.

This thinking should confront the current realities of racial, class, and gender injustices and critically assess both the successes and failures of the anti-apartheid liberation movement. It should also be concerned with the question of how to reignite progressive struggles in the country while identifying in concrete ways what the obstacles are that lie in the way of realizing a non-racial and non-sexist society. This New Agenda Edition, which canvasses varied, and often disagreeing, intellectual engagements

with the student moment of 2015/16, contributes to this urgent exercise.

In the first section of this edition, “Race and Nation,” we begin by republishing an exchange between Neville Alexander and Mahmood Mamdani on changing the national metaphor from the “rainbow nation” to the “gariiep.” In this exchange we see both authors agreeing on the limitations of the rainbow metaphor yet disagreeing on what to replace it with. Alexander is eager to do away with race-based thinking and emphasise the fluidity, ambiguity and openness of identity. Mamdani, on the other hand, argues that any conception of the South African nation must emphasize the primacy of the black majority to the polity.

These debates have deep historical roots. An interview with Ben Turok, director of IFAA, an ANC veteran and founder of MK, does much to illuminate how the multi-racial Congress Tradition consolidated in confrontation with Africanism in the 1950s and 1960s. Turning towards the present, we publish a piece by Njabulo Ndebele which attempts to explain the rise of Black Consciousness among students and reflects on the seeming generational gap in thinking between old and young. Thereafter, John Lamola, in a piece which is rich in historical and philosophical content, writes about the promises and pitfalls of Biko’s conception of Black Solidarity.

The second section, “Student Voices” opens with The IFAA Student and Youth Department linking the crisis in South Africa’s Higher Education system to neoliberalism.



IFAA's Youth Department argues that the university crisis is a microcosm of broader issues in the political economy of post-apartheid South Africa. This is followed by an interview with Trevor Shaku on #FeesMustFall UFS. The struggles at WITS and UCT in particular seem to get more airtime and coverage in the press and so we were delighted to publish an interview with a student leader at another institution. This section concludes with an article by this author, Claire Lester and Carilee Osborne, all former

students of the University of Cape Town, which attempts to make sense of "fallism" and chart a third way between a growing ideology in student spaces and "rainbowism." Finally, in our "Critical Thinking" section, we publish Angela Davis speech at the Steve Biko memorial lecture of 2016.

As Ben Turok remarks in his interview in this edition, history requires this generation to lead the country forward and deepen the gains achieved in 1994. Unfortunately, the past year has seen a fracturing of

the student movements, numerous instances of bullying, intimidation and violence, closure of debate and argument, and an unnecessary escalation of confrontations and tensions between students, staff, private security and the police. It is hoped that these issues are resolved in 2017. What is needed is broad-based engagement and open rational conversation on the issues confronting universities and the society as a whole. We hope this issue contributes towards that urgent imperative. **NA**

On Leadership

By **Ben Turok**

There is no doubt that the student movement has shown instances of great courage and tenacity. The huge victory over fee increases was the outcome of an impressive national campaign. At various universities, students stood up to massive intimidation by police and private security guards and are now being rewarded with belated recognition. Many students are forcing debates about curriculums and pedagogy into the open and rightly calling out the Oxbridge mentality of our universities.

Yet what is still largely lacking in student politics is the kind of thoughtful leadership that ensures continuity, momentum and the building of a broad movement with significant links with other sectors in society. This would ensure that student demands are taken seriously and implemented by authorities.

Other strands of our social fabric are even more lacking

in leadership. Organised labour is fractured and in crisis. Business is riddled with narrow short-term concerns. Civic organisations are nowhere near as powerful as they were in the 1980s, although a number of social movements like Equal Education and the Treatment Action Campaign have recorded important victories. The churches are a shadow of their former influence.

Most striking of all is the absence of leadership in the ANC and government. Petty manipulation has replaced leadership. One scandal is followed by another: the National Prosecuting Authority, the South African Revenue Service, the police service, the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Eskom, and so many others. South Africa's governance fails to inspire confidence in our people. It is notable for dithering, inconsistency and patronage. The government has made many promises about creating a developmental state that is deeply embedded in society and places the needs of the poor majority at the forefront of policy decisions and

formulations. These promises have not been fulfilled.

It is no wonder that the students, workers and social movements are calling for the rebooting of the liberation struggle. If this is not achieved, despondency will set in as poverty and inequality deepens. One small breakthrough is the emergence of ANC veterans who seem to have forced a reluctant ANC leadership to recognise their voice. Whether they succeed in forcing the same leadership to admit to failure is yet to be seen.

South Africa needs thoughtful leaders of integrity who can articulate a coherent and sensible way out of our morass. We hope for more Thuli Madonselas. The former public protector demonstrated enormous courage, faced down huge intimidation with dignity and upheld the importance of integrity in public life. Few in our country demonstrate similar attributes. Perhaps a new generation of progressive struggles across the country will produce them. **NA**

NOT A RAINBOW BUT A RIVER

PROSPECTS FOR A NONRACIAL FUTURE

By Neville Alexander, with a response by Mahmood Mamdani

At the time of writing in 2001, the late South African educator Neville Alexander was directing the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa at the University of Cape Town. Mahmood Mamdani was (and is) the Herbert Lehman Professor of Government at the School of International and Public Affairs and professor of anthropology, political science and African studies at Columbia University.



Neville Alexander



Mahmood Mamdani

These excerpts from a conversation first published fifteen years ago¹ reveal the authors' lucid diagnoses and

the likely prognosis for social relations in South Africa. To read them in 2016 casts their warnings as prophetic.

The sickening recurrence of what are euphemistically labelled “racial incidents” in South Africa is an indication that much work remains to be done by all who cherish the ideal of a nonracial South Africa that drove the struggle against apartheid. In spite of these occurrences, most South Africans remain committed, at least rhetorically, to the idea of building a nonracial democracy in which both unity and diversity will obtain. *Under what conditions is the realisation of such a community possible?*

NEVILLE ALEXANDER: PROSPECTS FOR A NONRACIAL FUTURE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The economic sphere

To begin, we may ask: What should happen in the economic sphere of this

society in order to ease the development of a non-racial ethos?

It is common cause in South Africa that, unless a racial redistribution of material resources is realised within the lifetime of the present generation, all the glib rhetoric of social transformation, national democratic revolution, and African Renaissance will come to mock their authors and exponents for years to come. Even a relatively conservative commentator such as the Reverend Beyers Naudé is quoted as having said that “true reconciliation was only possible when we bridge the economic gulf, for you can’t build a society of justice on the increasing gap between rich and poor”. Only if the government moved towards an equitable redistribution of wealth, land, property and income could the political “miracle” begin to uproot the evil of racism in South Africa.

When we consider the continuing disparities between the rich and the poor, crudely, between white and black, we may well ask whether the new South Africa, in the words of Constitutional Court Judge Albie Sachs, is doing anything other than legitimising inequality. The point is best made by the simple story of Mr Maxwell Flekisi,

a father of three... earning R193 per week... [who] gives vent to the feelings of disappointment that are eating up millions of South Africans today, as reported in the Cape Times: “[Since] the 1994 elections Maxwell has felt an increasing edge of desperation in his life. A desperation that renders all the freedoms and dignity guaranteed by the new political dispensation void. ‘I can say that the promises made by the ANC have not been kept’”.

The real situation is that hardly any change has taken place in the relations of economic power and control. Moreover, in the foreseeable future and in terms of the prevailing system, no such fundamental change is to be expected. All the sources of economic power remain in the hands of those who controlled them under apartheid. The statistics are readily available. A recent detailed and extremely agonised analysis... cites the 1991 warning issued by the then left-wing economist Stephen Gelb:

An accumulation strategy which focuses on restructuring and regenerating the manufacturing sector in particular, by using the “neo-liberal” (market-based) policies to alter cost structures and explore profitability and to expand markets for manufacturers, above all through exports... would, in sum, reinforce the dualistic structure of South African society.

He adds significantly:

Yet that formulation captures the strategic direction adopted by the ANC government, which, at the same time, claims commitment to a vision that states “we cannot rebuild our society at the expense of the living standards of ordinary men and women. We cannot develop at the expense of social justice.”

What is beyond all doubt is that the macroeconomic strategy adopted by the ANC government... no longer has



The struggle over the definition of identities in South Africa has only just begun.

the unqualified sanction of those who can be said to have fathered it in the shadows of the political field of play. A shift has taken place in the strategies of the people who control the world economy... Joseph Stiglitz, a vice-president of the World Bank, during a recent visit to South Africa, captured the essentials of the change in strategic thinking in a newspaper interview. He found the prescriptions of the “Washington consensus” wanting on two fronts:

One: they fail to take account of the complexities of the real world, where neither the market nor information is perfect.

Two: together with World Bank president, James Wolfensohn, [Stiglitz] has shifted the values on which economic policy should be measured. To look at gross domestic product is not enough, they argue – the key indicator of global and national economic wellbeing needs to be human development and equity.

All this, however, is what we might label... household criticism, attempts at reforming and refining the existing structures and dynamics. It tried to deal with the software of the problem. What we have to do is to look at the hardware itself. The real question is whether the moral and political decision by which three hundred years of colonial plunder and rapine and half a century of apartheid, i.e. affirmative action based on “race” and “culture”,

are condoned can constitute a visible platform from which to launch the rocket of transformation. It might seem unreasonable and unrealistic to demand at this late stage that the history of dispossession, expropriation, racist exploitation and accumulation be revisited. However, the fact is that unless it is done, the logic of the capitalist system, as we know it, will simply reproduce the racial inequalities that have been programmed into the South African social system by the peculiarities of its history.

The stubborn facts of history

Today, the movement of history is becoming increasingly discernible. There is a clear shift of power in various sectors from exclusive white control to increasing black, token and real, managerial control. This is indicative of the fact that the black middle class, which has been kept in confinement artificially through the policies of apartheid, has finally liberated itself. There is no doubt that the rapidly growing black middle class of people are the real beneficiaries of the compromises reached in 1993–94. They, rather than the urban and rural workers, constitute the base of “rainbowism” and have every interest in exploiting and even exhausting the implications of that metaphor in economic, political and sociocultural terms. I shall indicate presently that this particular metaphor popularises and entrenches the notion that coexisting colour (or racial) groups and probably helps to create captive markets for ethnic entrepreneurs.

To put the matter bluntly, it is in the interests of such entrepreneurs among the ruling elites to try to keep the definitions of the black “ethnic groups” as fluid as the National Party ideologues had done in the case of their white constituency previously. By doing so, the cohesion of the majority of the oppressed and their common interest in national liberation, which constituted ➤

the ideological basis of the struggle against colonialism and apartheid, can be pressed into the service of those who are now in the position to inherit or accumulate power in all social spheres. The “minorities”, which might once again be allowed to fragment themselves as much as they like, are accommodated within a model human rights charter and a genuine culture of tolerance. On this reading of the evolving situation, one or other versions of an “Africanist” solution of the question of national and subnational identities appears to be in the offing. However, the actual boundaries of the dominant social category have not yet been drawn. An excellent illustration of the fluidity of the concept “African” in the South African context is the lyrical extolling of his African being by Thabo Mbeki, the deputy-president of South Africa, in a recent, and very significant, speech in Parliament. It is also clear that the struggle over the definition of identities in South Africa has only just begun.

The political importance of metaphors

One way or the other, there can be no doubt that South Africa has reached a watershed moment as far as identity politics is concerned. For this reason, it is vital that all journalists, as well as political and cultural pace-setters consider deeply and carefully what metaphors and what social categories they create, support, reinforce or, alternatively, counter, undermine and discourage.

In recent writings... I have systematically raised the issue of the importance of political metaphors. It is axiomatic that political metaphors born out of one set of conditions are not automatically appropriate for a different set of conditions. It is, therefore, problematical that so many South Africans are ready to imitate other countries’ jargon and discourse

in order to describe the very different reality in which we are living. I cannot, for example, judge in any more than superficial ways the appropriateness of the rainbow metaphor in the context of the United States, but there is little doubt in my mind that it is arguably the worst metaphor with which to symbolise the destiny of the Republic of South Africa. Instead of the “foreign” colour-centred image of co-existing racial groups, I have put forward the more “indigenous” image of the Gariep (“the great river”), which is the Khoe name for the Orange River, with its many tributaries that have their catchment areas in all parts of the country.



Decolonisation is not possible without deracialisation.

The essential notion behind this suggestion is that we have to conceive of the social categories in a more dynamic manner; we have to underline the *process* of identity formation rather than the *reified notions* of existing and inherited identities... In this conception, settler-colonial societies such as South Africa have been constituted, culturally speaking, by the confluence of different tributaries... In South Africa, these are, very crudely, the African, the European, the Asian, and the modern “American”. The tributaries are never washed away as in the assimilationist model... While they obviously affect the common cultural area in different ways, they are themselves influenced... by backwash effects from the main stream. We can demonstrate the truth of this assertion by taking almost any domain of social

life, such as sport, religion, language, and so forth.

MAHMOOD MAMDANI RESPONDS

I shall begin in the same way that Dr Alexander does, with apartheid. Often, apartheid is understood as being a part of 350 years of racial discrimination. I disagree with this. The last 350 years have been the consequence of colonial rule. As with any form of colonial rule, apartheid too turned around using two core identities: race and ethnicity.

Race was an identity that united beneficiaries. Afrikaners, Dutch, English, Portuguese, Greeks, Germans were all united into a common identity called “white”. Ethnicity was not used to unite victims under the label “black”; it was used to fragment them – Xhosa, Zulu, Pedi and so on.

What the New Left in South Africa called “racial capitalism” should have been called “colonial capitalism”. We would have then been in a position to draw some lessons from the experiences of decolonisation around this continent. The relevant lesson for our purposes is that decolonisation is not possible without deracialisation. Even the most conservative forms of decolonisation required deracialisation.

Conservative deracialisation, narrow deracialisation, was called “Africanisation” around this continent. In South Africa, it is called black empowerment. I think it should be properly called black business empowerment.

Black business empowerment is an idea whose time has come. I mean this in the following sense: anyone who thinks you can have a predominantly white bourgeoisie in a predominantly black country, after independence, without political upheaval, should have their heads examined.

All I am suggesting is that you cannot have political independence in this era without its consequence, capital

accumulation amongst those colonised yesterday. Our choices lie not in whether there will be capital accumulation or not, but its extent and nature and in the relationship of its beneficiaries to the state and to the bourgeoisie.

We cannot go away from black business empowerment, but we can go beyond it. The real question we need to focus on is: How do we broaden deracialisation? In the economy, how do we go beyond benefitting a narrow elite tied to the bootstraps of the apartheid bourgeoisie to ensuring a dignified livelihood for the great mass of working people? And in society, how do we go beyond business, to deracialising education and culture, science and sports?

This is where I have my first disagreement with Dr Alexander. He says in "Prospects for a Nonracial Future in South Africa" that the real beneficiaries of the compromise in 1994, the real social base of rainbowism, are members of the rapidly growing black middle class. I disagree.

The beneficiaries of rainbowism include two groups. The first and largest are most of the beneficiaries of apartheid, and the smaller group comprised of some of its victims, both to whom rainbowism has given a new lease on life.

The beneficiaries of rainbowism among the victims of apartheid are too few. The social base of rainbowism among black people – even among the black middle class – is too narrow. Rainbowism involves too much of an embrace of inherited inequalities.

On the horizon, if I may speak as a university intellectual, is an impending clash between rainbowism and nationalism, between an embrace of inherited inequalities and a mobilisation against it, between the "reconciliation" ideology and "renaissance" ideology.

The relevant question is: Will the mobilisation against inequality be rhetorical – even demagogic – or will it seek to reconnect with and rekindle the

social and political movement that brought apartheid to an impasse?

Most likely, it will involve a mishmash of both. But the terms of the mishmash, and the direction in which it will flow, depends on initiative, our initiative.

Minority rights and majority aspirations

When I first read Dr Alexander's critique of the rainbow as a metaphor and the call to adopt the Gariep (the great river) instead, I was delighted. My response was not mainly because the rainbow is an English word, and Gariep a Khoi word. It is more so because the rainbow has no notion of a majority: there is no black in the rainbow! The Gariep, in contrast, allows us to think both of the main stream and the streams that joint it along the way and become part of it...

But then I read Dr Alexander saying that the Gariep he has in mind has no cultural mainstream, that it comprises four minority streams... I disagree.

I would like to put a set of propositions to you. First, the question of identity in the public sphere is not really that of cultural identity. It is of political identity.

Second, political identity is about entitlements. Why is it that few or none of those who want to be defined as Africans today would not have stood up twenty years ago to say so? The answer is simple: to be considered an African today is to be entitled, whereas to be considered African twenty years ago was to be stripped of any entitlement.

There is a lesson here. At the core of identity politics is a question of entitlement. The question of entitlement is really that of social justice. If we do not address the question of justice forthrightly and swiftly, it will boomerang on us in the form of identity politics, whether racial or ethnic.



We cannot go away from black business empowerment, but we can go beyond it.

This means that so long as the legacy of apartheid is not addressed, the core identities created by apartheid will be reproduced. The core majority identity will be black, jelled around a demand for entitlement. And the core minority identity will be white. Dr Alexander's Gariep will have a political mainstream.

This has a bearing on how we think about minority rights... [T]he key condition for the realisation of a nonracial democracy is not the protection of minority rights but the realisation of majority aspirations. To think otherwise, to ask minorities to think of their rights as opposed to majority aspirations, is to do them disservice. It is either to prepare them to fight back in the cause of an era gone by or to prepare them to leave the country!

Dr Alexander is right that identities are fluid. But identities are also reproduced through institutions and crystallised as entitlements. This is why, if we want to deracialise identities, we have to deracialise institutions. This is why, if we want to deracialise identities, we have to deracialise institutions. If you want a nonracial society, you cannot shut your eyes to racial inequality. The only road to non racialism is deliberate, rapid and sustained deracialisation. In the specific context of South Africa, there can be no deracialisation without black empowerment. [NA](#)

NOTE

1. From CV Hamilton, I Huntley, N Alexander, ASA Guimarães and W James (eds). 2001. *Beyond Racism: Race and Inequality in Brazil, South Africa and the United States*, London: Lynne Rienner, 471–508.

HISTORY REQUIRES THIS GENERATION TO LEAD

AN INTERVIEW WITH BEN TUROK

Michael Nassen Smith, IFAA's new deputy director, spoke with ANC veteran and New Agenda editor Ben Turok about the echoes of South African struggle history in today's student movements.

Michael Nassen Smith: What did you make of the student protests that emerged in 2015? It seemed to take everyone by surprise.

Ben Turok: It certainly took me by surprise. What happened is really quite substantial in terms of social unrest and it is extraordinary that everybody says there was no organisation, no real coherent strategy. There was a great deal of "spontaneous combustion" and yet it won major victories. We have always argued that struggle requires organisation, requires policy, requires leadership, requires consistency. Students seem to have done without that until now.

And you know it throws me back to the days of Che Guevara and his proposition of the "detonator theory". To some extent, we also used this in South Africa. The formation of MK [uMkhonto weSizwe, the armed wing of the African National Congress (ANC)] was meant as a detonator: you make people feel that there is new power, new strength, and you are able to create

an atmosphere for change. I must say that I have always been very sceptical of it – but I think maybe I was wrong, because this detonator seems to have sparked something.

MNS: What do you make of the students' demands?

BT: There are two separate points: fees and curriculum. It is clear that a large number of students come from very poor backgrounds and can't afford a university education. If a first-year law student at UCT has to pay R100 000, where is a domestic worker going to get that, ever! And yet that student wants to do law and he or she is very clever. So I certainly support the idea that a student who has the capability should be able to go to UCT for free. But I think there can be no argument that the children of millionaires shouldn't pay. We don't need universal free education. Things are getting mixed up. We want free education for those who can't afford it. That is social justice.

About decolonisation, I have for a long time been saying that our universities need to be decolonised because they have remained traditional and modelled on an alien Oxbridge style. For example, I know somebody who holds an MPhil in economics who tried to register at the University of Pretoria for a PhD. The department said to this person, "You don't have statistics, so you can't register." Now, economics is not statistics. Why

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Although the prisons were racially segregated, we were all in court together. The non-racial Congress Movement became a reality in the Treason Trial.

do you have to do stats? The reason is that they want to be in line with Oxbridge. The universities in Western countries now teach a certain kind of macroeconomics and South African universities are following the style. Why? We are in South Africa, in Africa, why don't we pioneer our own style? In every economics department in an African university – and I have lectured at many – you can talk about development economics, Andre Gunder Frank, Samir Amin, dependency theory, political economy. The students are familiar with it. Not here, not in South Africa.

Economics is just an example. We certainly need to become African, absolutely. But this has not been on the agenda. Until now.

MNS: The students have embraced new heroes and a new ideology. What are

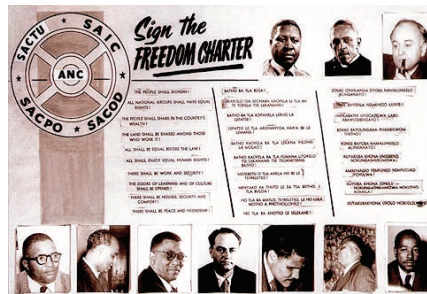
your thoughts on the re-emergence of Africanism and identity politics in student circles?

BT: Let me start with a bit of history. In the 1940s, members of the ANC Youth League began to talk about African nationalism in an exclusionary way. It is important to make the distinction between Africanism and exclusionism. I recall at that time there was a group who were anti-white, anti-communist, and who operated within a branch of the ANC Youth League in Orlando, Soweto.

MNS: [Nelson] Mandela and [OR] Tambo were included in this?

BT: No, no. This was a small group of Africanist youth leaders. It was the foundation of the PAC [Pan-Africanist Congress]. Robert Sobukwe gradually assumed the unofficial leadership of the Orlando Africanists and so of the PAC. Obviously, the ANC at the time had a very different policy. The ANC was moving towards a multiracial outlook, which then became consolidated in the Congress of the People and the very successful campaign that launched the Freedom Charter.

The ANC was the huge mass movement that galvanised the Defiance Campaign, which led to the Treason Trial in 1956. The extraordinary thing about the Treason Trial is that there were 156 accused and we were all members of different organisations, from the Indian Congress, the Coloured Congress, the ANC and the Trade Union Congress. Although the prisons were racially segregated, we were all in court together. It was this that cemented the Congress Movement politically. The Congress Movement became a reality in the Treason Trial as a non-racial movement. Of course, the Africanists did not like that, nor did the white Liberal Party, which was also anti-communist. They didn't like it



Source - sahistory.org.za

because we consolidated, we became a family.

We had great reservations about Africanism. The Freedom Charter's first clause says "South Africa belongs to all who live in it" and, frankly, the ANC leadership had made a calculation that the minorities in South Africa were so large that there was no way that you could ignore them. Furthermore, the minorities were very powerful in the economy and social fabric and it was totally unrealistic to think that Africanist exclusionism was going to succeed. Our feeling was that this exclusionism was a distraction, because there we were, attempting to build a national movement involving all the people. Don't forget the Indian Congress at the time was a very powerful organisation, with its history of Gandhi and passive resistance and so on. They were very strong and the Indian working class in Natal was very militant. The coloured workers in Cape Town were very militant. And there was the trade union movement, which was multiracial. Of course there were problems with white unions and

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The Indian working class in Natal was very militant. The coloured workers in Cape Town were very militant.

coloured unions and African unions but, as a body, the South African Congress of Trade Unions was a multiracial organisation.

MNS: Where was the Communist Party in all of this?

BT: Well, eventually the Communist Party made its position clear. The origins of the Communist Party were in the white working class. It was not an accident that Bill Andrews, a white British worker, was chairman of the Communist Party for quite a few years. It took a long time for the Communist Party – which had a strong contingent of white leftists, many from Eastern Europe, people like Ray Alexander and so on – to accept that the liberation movement led by the ANC was a legitimate course. It took a long time. Don't forget that many thought that the ANC was a bourgeois movement led by the middle class. There were communists who thought that the ANC was a liberal organisation, petty bourgeois – and there was an element of truth in that. There was another group, led by Yusuf Dadoo, who said no, communists must identify with the ANC. Moses Kotane certainly supported this view. So there were different schools within the Communist Party. In about 1958 or '59, the Communist Party had a conference which made a final resolution.

On the question of race, whites were very well ensconced in the Communist Party from the beginning and there was no way that they would leave. That created a very fertile ground for non-racialism and, indeed, in the Communist Party there was a very strong sense of comradeship across race. We did not have race barriers in the Communist Party. It was unheard of.

MNS: What was your personal experience with these debates and the politics between the ANC's multiracialism and the Africanists? ➤

BT: My active period in South Africa was the late '50s, when I had a senior position in the movement, when I worked with Walter Sisulu, Yusuf Dadoo, Moses Kotane, Michael Harmel. But then I went to jail in 1962, so I was a bit out of touch with certain developments. And then I went into exile. So many things happened when I was in exile and I can't speak with authority, but what I can say is that the ANC and the Congress Alliance, which was still separated into racial categories, was solidly behind the idea of the Freedom Charter that South Africa belongs to all who live in it.

In exile, while I was teaching on the continent, there was a PAC group that went to lobby [Tanzanian President] Nyerere, they lobbied [Ghanaian President Kwame] Nkrumah, they lobbied to the effect that the ANC was selling out because the ANC was led by whites and communists. When I was in Dar es Salaam, on the OAU Liberation Committee, people like Nyerere seemed to favour the PAC because it was Africanist. The ANC battled with this idea of Africanism in exile. Nkrumah was different because he had a Marxist orientation, but many other leaders in Africa thought that the PAC was the real thing and the ANC was the sell-out.

MNS: What explains the success of the Congress Tradition then?

BT: Because it was right. This brings us to the present day. The makeup of South African society means that racial exclusionism won't work. We also can't just talk about "black empowerment", "black advantage", and so on. You see this in the business world with the focus on ownership and management positions. We need deep structural changes. The ANC realised –and you can see this in the Morogoro Document of 1969 – that



It was important to go to the masses and build peoples' power among all groups in the country.

you can't change society by political manoeuvring. You have to change the structure of the political economy. In the trade union and working class movement, they don't play around with identity discussions.

I want to make this clear: African leaders of the ANC were very, very proud of their identity as Africans –Moses Kotane used to say sometimes that he was an African first and a communist second –but there was a commitment to unity and shared struggle. Look at Mandela. He was very much an African. But ANC leaders were not satisfied with identity politics as a liberating force. They reckoned that they had to go much deeper into society, into the political economy. Strategically, it was important to go to the masses and build peoples' power among all groups in the country. A focus on identity alone is a shallow focus; it does not deal with the socio-economic structure of society. We in the Congress movement always understood that if you don't deal with the socio-economic foundations, you are hanging in the air.

Identity politics involves short sharp protest actions that are symbolic, as opposed to a working-class or mass struggle. This involves organising the workers, having a trade union, having paid-up membership, having meetings, having a policy, having vision, having

strategy and tactics. This is struggle. It takes a longer-term view because it has a more fundamental view of how you change society. One might succeed in the short term on the basis of identity, and the students have achieved significant gains and must be applauded. Yet what is needed is a student body that is going to be effective and long-lasting. One with policies directed towards building a new university and a new society. Maybe I am polarising it a little too much, but that is my view.

MNS: What do you see as solutions?

BT: Students must build power around their demands. Is the student movement developing a theory? A revolutionary theory or a protest theory? Is there a document that you can turn to and say that this is the platform around which the future will be built? I am sure work is being done but this needs to be taken seriously. Ad hoc protests are not enough. Maybe the worst thing is that struggle based on identity politics can disintegrate quite quickly.

Leadership is required. People follow leaders and people join movements where there are leaders they respect. This is common cause. The student movement needs a respected leadership which is conscious of history, which understands the place of students in the total society, which is able to generate demands that are reasonable and sensible, and which can get the support of the public.

If the students want to sustain victories they have to retain public sympathy because the public is going to pay. They need to build a wide base of support. History is requiring this generation to lead. That is what South Africa is waiting for. **NA**

THEY ARE BURNING MEMORY!

A STUDY OF INTERGENERATIONAL DISSONANCE

By Njabulo S Ndebele

The author is an award-winning writer and academic, and current chancellor of the University of Johannesburg.



Njabulo Ndebele (source www.thejournalist.co.za)

Fire, a weapon of choice in recent protest action, leaves behind ashes and silence. What voices of meaning could rise out of such ashes? What could they tell us about the future of our still new democracy?

“They are burning memory!” This is what I said to myself in my unmediated first reaction to the television coverage of the burning of portraits of historical figures and other commemorative objects by protesting students at the University of Cape Town earlier this year. By the time I had downloaded some images from the internet, my reactions had become a little more mediated.

One of the images that struck me was of a plaque commemorating Jan Smuts. The inscription was readable from the light of the flames: “Jan Christiaan Smuts. 1870–1950. ‘His life was gentle, and the Elements/So mixt in him that Nature might stand up,/ And say to all the world: This was a man.’” And then, in two languages: “ERECTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE CAPE. OPGERIG DEUR DIE MENSE VAN KAAPLAND”. The grandeur of a Shakespearean recall, about to be consumed by hostile fire.

Two historic periods seemed to stare at each other at that moment. On the one side, a history of conquest, finally ended in 1994. On the other, another period, begun in 1994, still confronting the unfolding complexities of its own beginnings. The young, circling the bonfire, say that the legacy of Smuts, still so overwhelming, seems to snuff out the possibilities of their own future. They are unable “to

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The question of who becomes what after being something they would rather no longer be can be both simple and complex.

breathe”, suffocating in the legacy of “whiteness”.

It remains to be seen whether total erasure is possible. “Without memory, it would virtually be impossible to learn,” wrote Desmond Tutu in his foreword to a book entitled *Reflections in Prison*:

We could not learn from experience, because experience is something remembered. I would forever have to start at the beginning, not realising that a hot stove invariably burns the hand placed on it. What I know is what I remember, and that helps to make me who I am.

So, when student activists drive on to a campus with tyres and litres of petrol, what are the memories that made them who they are at that precise moment? ➤

What had they learned, and in what context, that compelled to take the action that they did? What was the connection between who they were, or thought they were, and who they envisaged they would be after the act of burning? What was the memory of the past whose representations were being burned, and what was the projected memory of the future that would rise out of the ashes?

WHAT MEMORY

At the heart of the call for the “decolonisation” of UCT was a more elemental source of student disaffection: being “black” in a “white” world. The “black body in pain” needed to be affirmed as human against its dehumanising exploitation during more than a century of captured service to Rhodes’s imperial capitalist vision and the rampantly racist view of the world that drove and justified it.

The colonial system established superior-inferior relationships between “white” and “black” humans. In reality, the system dehumanised both. The “decolonial” project intends to expose the less-recognised dehumanisation of “whites”, to bring into the open the “uncivilised” heart of the self-proclaimed “civilised”. This “uncivilised” part of the “civilised” self has been historically projected onto other humans. The more the “civilised” saw this “uncivilised other”, the less they could see the “uncivilised” in themselves.

Part of the “decolonial” project is to change the racist attitudes and behaviour attitudes of “whites” towards “blacks”. This also has to do with the perception that South African “whites” did not give up much for the post-apartheid objective of reconciliation. “Whites” seemed to assume that the country they claim to have “built” is desirable to everyone, including the millions of “blacks” who were on the receiving end of its being “built”.



It is sobering and critical to learn how easily the visionary goals evolved over a century of struggle could be forgotten in the transformation of the state since 1994.

So what is expected of the exposed “colonial”? Is it remorse, guilt, identification as African, adopting Bafana Bafana, moving from the “white” suburbs to the “townships”, giving away a portion of their wealth in some way? There is only one thing they could do that makes a lot of sense to me.

The list of things they could become is really their business; I cannot tell them. I would not do what they did to the likes of me: pass laws to compel them into being something else they have not been. But I do want to say four things to them:

- that their pre-1994 social and personal sensibilities are unsustainable in the society that South Africa has been evolving into
- that I, as a “black” person, am part of the numerical and visionary majority that committed to bring this society into being
- that this majority would be the norm of human presence in this new society
- that the substance and mechanisms of bringing that norm into being are supremely negotiable within the constitutional parameters of a new democracy, and the human sensibility that accords moral legitimacy to that constitutional

intention. The co-creation of South Africa remains a vital constitutional imperative.

Perhaps this question of what is to be expected of “white” South Africans can partly be answered by asking what is possibly the ultimate question of agency in the new South Africa. What did the “blacks” of South Africa have to become once they had been conquered? The list is long.

They had to give up their social systems as they had lived them for generations; they had to become workers, cheap labour, forced to disperse across the entire southern African landscape. In the process, they became something they may not have envisaged. They learned many languages. They intermarried massively over time, blurring cultural boundaries between them. They became locally cosmopolitan in ways that those who consigned them to servitude could not. Working in “white” people’s homes, they were exposed, often in intimate proximity, to the “uncivilised” inside the “civilised”. As the economy grew beyond the control of the “whites”, the “blacks” inevitably became graduates, teachers, priests, lawyers, scientists, engineers, politicians, trade unionists, journalists, writers, artists, agriculturalists, pilots, professors.

The question of who becomes what after being something they would rather no longer be can be both simple and complex. It all suggests that South Africans were compelled by a set of historical circumstances to cooperate, at first, within a system of structured compulsions. Those who were in the numerical majority and yet violently controlled, compelled to work, and considerably wounded in body and soul have been formally agitating for a new society since 1912.

It is sobering and critical to learn how easily the visionary goals evolved over a century of struggle could be forgotten in the transformation of the

state since 1994, and how the social and political features of an oppressive society can be assimilated and reproduced by those once oppressed – such that their relative failure to follow those visionary goals is blamed on the racism of an ageing oppressor who is no longer in power. Visionary agency is given up precisely at the moment that it should be affirmed and intensified.

BEING “BLACK” TODAY

In this context, the current manifestations of “black pain” come across more as an attribute of victimhood than agency. To reclaim agency, a different question has to be asked: *What would constitute relief from “black pain”?* What is “black” wellbeing? What would be the alternative identity and social features of “black” wellbeing when “whiteness” has been vanquished and removed from the scene? In what kind of society would it flourish? Who would bring that society about? Would there still be “blackness” after the demise of “whiteness”?

As the Rhodes Must Fall movement unfolded across the country, the resurgence of “black consciousness” in the third decade of a free and democratic South Africa confronted me with what I can describe as an intergenerational dissonance. By this, I mean that my disaffection with the current state of South Africa and the visionary retreat I sense cannot be characterised in the terms of “black pain” used by the current generation of disaffected “black” students.

I could attempt a preliminary comparison. Forty years ago, my “black pain” was more a generalised sense of being oppressed across the entire South African landscape. But the apartheid-imposed limitations on my movements were countered by an internal sense of expansiveness that I and many of my peers experienced as the very meaning of “black consciousness”. It went hand in hand

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My fear of “white” people was replaced by an enormous sense of inner possibility and power.

with the intention to achieve “black” wellbeing through our autonomous agency to create a society based on new relationships among ourselves and with all other people.

A “black”, externally depreciated in value, discovered profound inner value that sought to replace oppression with freedom for all. My fear of “white” people, no matter how economically or militarily powerful, was replaced by an enormous sense of inner possibility and power. This did not in any way minimise the brutal reality of what could happen to me were I to fall into the hands of the “white” system, as Steve Biko did. Despite the overt power of the racially oppressive system, there was something in me beyond its reach.

Something in the national environment today, articulated on some university campuses in 2016, appears to have reached that inaccessible inner core in “black” students, and appears to have destabilised that core significantly. The affected “black” appears to have

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It is time to recognise that the norm of human presence in South Africa is “black”.

lost control over the emergent means of self-definition in the evolving, free and democratic social realm. A “black” identity in these circumstances becomes a fundamentally reactive one, anchored in the residual agency of “whiteness”, real or imagined.

There is another point of comparison. Forty years ago, the majority of “black” students were required to apply to institutions specifically designated for them. There, they were “black people” first and then “black students”. Their colour was a given reality and numerically normal. (Today, “black” students in “historically black universities” are comparatively less vocal as “blacks” than those at “historically white institutions”. The capacity to define space for self-expression seems to be a factor that requires greater understanding.)

Forty years later, I feel far more in a “black” country than in a “white” country. I do not feel compelled to be designated “black,” and even less so to designate myself as such. The intergenerational dissonance I feel expresses itself even more starkly here: a generation of “black” students who treasure the designation “black” and an older generation that does not experience the same pressure to wear it. This may have something to do with a kind of “groundedness” that is unevenly distributed across the range of environmental and psychological spaces. It is about carrying one’s sense of confidence without the indignity of having to justify and fight for it.

In 1973, Chabani Manganyi published his book, *Being-Black-in-the-World*². Reading this book in 2016 raised another set of questions. What if student activists of the Rhodes Must Fall movement had encountered this book in their undergraduate syllabus at any South African university? What if they had studied it together with the writings of Steve Biko, Frantz Fanon, Walter Rodney, CLR James and others? James L Gibson wrote: “Perhaps no ➤

country in history has so directly and thoroughly confronted its past in an effort to shape its future as has South Africa.” This could be expected as the educational preoccupation of a country where learning was at the core of the evolution of identity. I am speaking here of a sense of radical normalcy in what should be a free country. It could have been expected that a new canon would form the base of a shared intellectual culture spanning fiction, biography, autobiography, poetry, drama, history, political science, anthropology, sociology, engineering and science. What would have been the impact of such knowledge on the #RhodesMustFall discourse of “blackness” and “whiteness”?

In *Being-Black-in-the-World*, Manganyi conveys a grounded faith in the elemental nature of human transformations that have been going on in Africa since the continent’s first interactions with Europe. He argues that “being-in-the-world with a black body” and “being-in-the-world with a white body” have similar human aspirations. Both fundamentally share the human necessity to make culture, which, Manganyi writes, “may be understood as constituting the most concrete medium for the structuring of the dialogue between man and the universe”. Any differences are indicative of differences in the respective histories of “being in dialogue with the world”.

Whenever we take on “racism” and it glares back at us from its pedestal, it seems that we remove our gaze from the condition of “black lives” where they really matter and require our tireless attention. The question that hangs in the air is the fate of the townships where the overwhelming numbers of “black lives” live. When the fires rage and consume school after school, clinic after clinic, train after train, bus after bus, library after library after laboratory; when family lives seem precarious; when tender corruption takes away resources to improve “black



We have to strive to reconstitute the social public at the very moment that we feel impelled to question it.

lives”: it is as if “black lives” matter only when they are assaulted by “white” people, not when they conduct the daily business of life, of making culture, right there where the greatest national investment would change the quality of our democracy for the greatest common good long into the future.

Of course, anti-racism action is an important aspect of social activism. The challenge is how to characterise it. I see it as a norm of “being-black-in-the-world”, previously contained, spreading beyond the township into the nooks and crannies of the South African landscape and its social configurations. That it encounters barriers means that it is on the march, and bringing down the barriers is a function of a normative expansion that requires greater definition and a



To free the human from the historical distortions of race, South Africans need to continue to affirm their idealism.

determination to set the conditions of its character in place. It is a historic reality that has to be anticipated by all those South Africans who have been on the favoured side of history.

It is time to recognise that the norm of human presence in South Africa is “black”. That recognition is central to understanding where the real agency for shaping the future is overwhelmingly located, so that “blackness” becomes so normal it ceases to exist.

A SENSE OF BEAUTY

I would like to share what I remember most about the events at the Union Buildings on 23 October 2015. It is not the meeting between President Zuma and university vice-chancellors inside, or the thousands of student demonstrators outside; not the president’s promise that he would address the students, and that he did not do so; not crowds of protesters growing restive from waiting without end in the hot sun until they began to push down the perimeter fence that stood between them and the president. Nor is it the tear gas, the helmeted riot police behind transparent shields, the crack of gunshots, nor the burning vehicles in the streets. What remains vivid is something far less dramatic, and for that very reason, a treasure of my memory.

I remember the student activists who in the suddenly quiet, ghostly, aftermath of a massive public protest, remained behind to clean up the streets. They pushed, pulled and lifted debris that had been dragged onto the streets. They swept away paper, remains of burnt tyres and other litter of protest. They were calm yet determined, as if they were doing something they felt they had to do.

They could have just walked away from the scene of their drama like many others had done. Why did they remain to clean up? Perhaps they needed to perform a ritual act



(Pic: <http://townpress.co.za>)

of conclusion, one that surprisingly invites quiet, potent pondering. Their actions quietly conveyed a message to the public and – I think even more vitally – to themselves. They were activists, they seemed to say, who never abandoned the power of reflection even in the heat of an intense public moment. They actively cared about what they thought of themselves, but also what society thought of them. The scenes in which the anger and rage of protest stood face to face with the potential terror of official state violence, the street-cleaning students seem to say, should never be the only memories to take home.

We also take home the memory of how we have to strive to reconstitute the social public at the very moment that we feel impelled to question it. These students tell us that the social public is never to be altered in destruction and then abandoned. To restore and reaffirm the social public is the responsibility of all generations of South Africans. At all times, the social public is the treasured space of community.

I think there is still another message in their actions. Destruction,

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It is time to recognise that the norm of human presence in South Africa is “black”... where the real agency for shaping the future is overwhelmingly located, so that “blackness” becomes so normal it ceases to exist.

they seemed to remind us, is wired heavily into the workings of the colonial that is being assailed. The assimilative nature of powerful oppressions can be reproduced by those that fight them, unwarily drawing them into a vicious cycle. Those who have been victims of the single story can easily lose the

sense of the beauty they yearn for in their struggles, and give in to the ugliness of means gone wrong. They too can impose the single story as a weapon against others, explaining them away, and thus casting away the responsibility to know them. In the public space, to free the human from the historical distortions of race, South Africans need to continue to affirm their idealism.

Since the bonfire of artworks at UCT, fire as a weapon of protest has spread throughout the higher education system and rekindled beyond. When the portraits of the “colonials” have been burnt, the timeless questions remain: what is the future of the townships? What is the link between that future and schools and universities? What is the link between Sandton and Alexandra? When will the fires be tamed, and what will it take to tame them, so that new artwork can be forged? To create new industries and forge inventions to meet the needs of a people, in intimate dialogue with their new world? What will it take to tame fire, and to remember that fire can be a companion to invention?

This requires of those who use it a lot more thought, a lot more rigour in the thinking, more thoughtful detail in the doing, more investment in time and focus to understand the rich complexity of people living in the social realm, to meet the challenges stretching across time into the centuries ahead, with South Africa emerging as a successful democracy?

These are questions I leave you with. **NA**

NOTES

This is an edited version of the 10th Annual Helen Joseph Lecture, delivered on 14 September 2016 at the University of Johannesburg. The full transcript is available at <http://www.njabulondebele.co.za/2016/09/they-are-burning-memory>.

1. Maharaj, M (ed.). 2001. *Reflections in Prison: Voices from the South African Liberation Struggle*. Cape Town: Zebra Press
2. Manganyi, NC. 1973. *Being-Black-in-the-World*. Johannesburg: Spro-cas/Ravan



UNIVEN TRANSFORMS INTO A UNIVERSITY OF CHOICE

The University of Venda (UNIVEN) is committed to delivering high quality academic programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

The University has invested in significant resources, ranging from highly qualified academics and NRF-rated researchers to new buildings, including student residences, staff offices, state of the

art laboratory equipment and a modern ICT infrastructure, to ensure that it produces graduates with skills relevant to our regional and national socio-economic development strategies. A

new institutional culture of excellence and quality, characterised by peace and stability on campus, has emerged. The University feels truly proud of the calibre of graduates that it produces



and is confident that it is creating great future leaders. The Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Venda, Professor Peter Mbatlana, says "UNIVEN is a relatively young institution, 35 years



old, which has undergone massive transformation in the past ten years towards a modern, locally relevant yet internationally competitive University. We pride ourselves in our diversity,



with a strong research and academic orientation that is sensitive to the socio-economic development of our communities. We currently have a student population of just over 15 000 contact students". >>

UNIVEN's research output continues to grow exponentially. UNIVEN is the closest institution of higher learning to three of the most significant archaeological sites in southern Africa: Mapungubwe, Thulamela and Great Zimbabwe. Consequently, UNIVEN provides an ideal destination for international researchers who want to work in the area.

UNIVEN plays an active and leading role in the field of community engagement. The Vuwani Science Resource Centre brings science, mathematics and technology closer to rural communities. UNIVEN is proud of the community-based research of the Institute for Rural Development. International partnership in community engagement is a specific strength of the University.

Following a decade-long academic re-engineering exercise and the introduction of new professional programmes, such as agricultural engineering and the training of chartered accountants in the SAICA-accredited BComm accounting programme, the University is developing agriculture as a niche area within its broad differentiation strategy. **NA**



University of Venda

BLACK SOLIDARITY AND THE QUEST FOR A TRUE HUMANITY: BIKO'S ENDURING DILEMMA

By *M John Lamola*

The author is a lecturer and research fellow at the University Fort Hare and deputy chair of the South African National Heritage Council's panel of experts at the department of arts and culture.



M John Lamola

Steve Biko's philosophy of Black Consciousness argued that a racially defined black solidarity could bring about a nonracial future in South Africa. This apparent paradox calls for an examination of the dialectical thinking upon which it was built.

Black solidarity, "the realisation by blacks of the need to rally around the cause of their oppression – the blackness of their skin – and to operate as a group to rid themselves of the shackles that bind them to perpetual servitude" (Biko 2004, 100), is the political expression and manifestation of Black Consciousness, both historically and currently.

In 1968, students in black universities abandoned the multiracial National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and founded the South Africa Student Organisation (SASO) on the platform of black solidarity (which embraced all ethnic groups that apartheid law had dubbed "non-whites"), under the intellectual leadership of Stephen Bantu Biko (1946–1977), who held the position of president until his house arrest in 1973.

As articulated by Biko and enshrined in SASO's 1973 constitution, the doctrine of black solidarity in the era of the anti-apartheid struggle argued for the self-withdrawal of politically conscious black people, as a racially defined collective, from opportunities of racial integration

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For Biko, the root problem was not the objective system of apartheid; it was racism as an attitude of mind among white South Africans.

and specifically from cooperation with whites, however sympathetic the latter were with the struggle against structural anti-black racism. In the post-apartheid dispensation, this doctrine translates into a political praxis of the self-disengagement of black people from multiracial nation-building processes and social partnerships, thus militating against the prevailing social consensus of the ideal of a non-racial democratic polity.

It thus might seem paradoxical to put this together with Biko's (2004, 108) >>

epic declaration that

[w]e have set out on a quest for true humanity, and somewhere on the distant horizon we can see the glittering prize. Let us march forth with courage and determination, drawing strength from our common plight and our brotherhood. In time we shall be in a position to bestow upon South Africa the greatest gift possible – a more human face.

“Drawing strength” from a black solidarity that monumentalises collective racial experience, we “march forth” towards a future dispensation of non-racism: “a completely non-racial society without guarantees of minority rights, because minority rights implies a recognition of portions of the community on a race basis” (ibid., 149). Is this a latent contradiction? If so, how do we rationally account for it, and what are the practical political consequences?

In reaction to the controversy and discomfort that the ideology of Black Consciousness was generating, Biko turned to the philosophical technique of dialectical logic to justify its rejection of racial integration and multiracial alliances in the struggle against apartheid.

This rationale of Black Consciousness is set out in what Biko (in Moore 1973, 87) intimated was his best writing: the 1972 essay, “Black Consciousness and the quest for a true humanity”. Here, Biko adopts dialectical reasoning to expose the nature of racism in South Africa, effectively arguing that the seemingly negative practice of black group self-awareness is efficacious for the attainment of an inclusive and humane racial consciousness and equality.

The triad of thesis–antithesis–synthesis, as developed from the Socratic tradition into a logic of historical change by GWF Hegel (1770–1831), is thus plunged into the vagaries of the vexed question of race

relations. Mabogo More (2008), in the essay “Sartre and South African apartheid”, discusses Biko’s interest in the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, which, for our purposes, explains Biko’s exposure to and interpretation of Hegel. We see similarities between Sartre’s 1943 references to “anti-racism racism” and Biko’s justification of an antithetical “black solidarity”. However, Biko’s “antithetical” racial self-assertion worked against the attainment of the “synthesis”, the ideal of a true humanity that he idealised.

To show this, this essay will assess how Biko’s thinking accords with Hegel’s dialectical system as the logic of socio-historical progress. It starts off with an appreciation of Biko’s dialectical reasoning and ends with a demonstration of how a judicious application of the dialectical method inexorably exposes the theoretical inconsistencies and practical contradictions of Black Consciousness as a political philosophy.

The resultant critique of the political instrumentality of Black Consciousness is meant as a contribution to the quest for a post-racial selfhood that is simultaneously cogent and revolutionary. The aspect of Black Consciousness as “an attitude of mind, a way of life”, a liberatory self-awareness against racial slave mentality, is not the subject of our critique. The point of contention is the practical engagement of this racial-black awareness with persistent white racism. It is in this respect that Biko brought dialectical reasoning into the fray.

BIKO AND HEGEL

“The *thesis*, the *antithesis* and the *synthesis* have been mentioned by some great philosophers as the cardinal points around which any social revolution revolves” (Biko 2004). Biko’s adoption of Hegel’s dialectic was not entirely accidental or culturally misplaced. In Karl



Black Consciousness should be conceived as a psycho-philosophical dialectical moment, a step towards the synthesis, the dream of a post-racist consciousness.

Marx’s inverted materialist form, embraced by the leaders of the 1917 Russian Revolution, Hegel’s dialectic has occupied a respected place far beyond the cultural and intellectual boundaries of European philosophy. It is lauded as the most comprehensive and compelling representation of the process of historical change and development of social institutions.

Hegel’s particular innovation was to conceive of logic as consisting not only in the validity of statements and their conformity to the ultimate laws of thought, an approach established by Aristotle and traditional logic, but as principally involving the process by which the *content* of statements derives from and relates to reality as the incarnation of Divine Reason (Hegel 1969, 64). In Biko’s thought, the content of the analysis determines its validity. Thus, to misconstrue the resolution of a dialectical process in a real social context is simply an act of irrationality, which manifests itself politically as an ideology.

To show how Biko’s dialectical analysis accords with these foundational attributes of Hegel’s system in a post-apartheid South Africa, we have elected to utilise *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory* by Herbert Marcuse (1977).

According to the pre-Leninist dialectical perspective – which is our theoretical framework in this article – the “what is” is never reified. Because all reality is mentally conceived, so conceived reality is constantly remodelled by thought. This, in Marxian historical terms, translates into a proposition of perpetual revolution as the only true state of social institutions. Marcuse aptly expressed this in his anti-Stalinist epilogue: “Reason in its very essence is contradiction, opposition, negation, as long as freedom is not yet real” (ibid., 434). This isolation of reason-as-contradiction posits the antithesis as the most critical phase of a dialectical process.

DIALECTICS OF BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS

In his theory of race relations in South Africa, Biko proceeded thus: “[f]or the liberals, the *thesis* is apartheid, the *antithesis* is non-racialism, but the *synthesis* is very feebly defined. They want to tell the blacks that they see integration as the ideal solution” (Biko 2004, 96; own emphasis). Biko rejects “apartheid” as the problem as simplistic; scorns the proposed antithesis of “non-racialism”, and views the corollary synthesis of racial “integration” as inadequately justified.

Following Marcuse, the definition of the *antithesis* is our paramount focus. This is critical to a judgement of the theoretical cogency and political efficacy of Black Consciousness and its role in the actual historical manifestation of a dialectical revolutionary process. Correctly zeroing in on this, Biko rebuts and reformulates the elements of his dialectical tool thus:

The thesis is in fact a strong white racism and therefore the antithesis to this must, *ipso facto*, be a strong solidarity amongst the blacks on

whom this white racism seeks to prey. Out of these two situations we can therefore hope to reach some kind of balance – a true humanity where power politics will have no place. (ibid.)

The redefined thesis, the problem, is no longer the apartheid system. It is a “strong [deeply-rooted] white racism”. The redefined antithesis to negate it cannot be non-racial praxis but a “strong black solidarity”.



“The given state of affairs is negative and can be rendered positive only by liberating the possibilities immanent in it.” – Merleau-Ponty

For Biko, the root problem was not the objective politico-economic system of apartheid; it was racism as *an attitude of mind* among white South Africans. The antithesis should not be a zealous propagation of social integration across the colour bar. It has rather to be a self-conscious organised refusal by blacks to cooperate with all the manifested dynamics of this supremacist racial complex.

The *antithesis* to the real thesis of white racism is *black consciousness expressed in the political form of black solidarity*. This implied a self-withdrawal from multiracial liberal formations in order to galvanise resistance on the basis of black lived-experience of white racism. In historically poignant

terms, therefore, for Biko, the negation to apartheid racism could not be the multiracialism espoused by supporters of the hegemonic Freedom Charter of Nelson Mandela’s ANC. Drafted in 1955, the Charter’s most famous phrase was incorporated into the Preamble to the 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa:

South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white... black and white together – equals, countrymen and brothers – adopt this Freedom Charter, and pledge ourselves to strive together... until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

Significantly, Biko (2004, 96) emphasised that “it is much more important for blacks to see this difference [the new identification of the problem] than it is for whites”. This was crucial because their action is the negating principle that should induce the attainment of the end goal. He consequently admonished that “[w]e must accept that the limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those who they oppress”. Because “the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed”, so the mental liberation of blacks from a sense of racial inferiority would be the trigger for dialectical movement.

The end goal, the synthesis, appears to motivate and inspire Biko’s assertion. However, in our view, the ingredients and the recipe for this ideal are poorly conceived.

According to Biko’s analysis, racial consciousness should essentially be viewed as a negative. It is a false consciousness, a denigrated sense of being human. A white person with a self-conception of racial superiority is as much in a state of inhumanity as a black person with a racial inferiority complex. To lump these together hastily, without the necessary self-humanising anti-racist protest by ➤



The social, cultural and intellectual self-isolation of the black aggrieved cannot realise the synthesis of a humanised South Africa.

victimised blacks, would lead to the perpetuation of false consciousness: a pervasive false humanity that leaves the white value system intact and revered by un-black-conscious blacks. The blacks thus assimilated would be the elite that had been found acceptable by the white-supremacist psyche. It would be “an integration in which black will have to compete with black, using each other as rungs up a step ladder leading them to white values” (ibid., 100).

Only with the refusal of black people, individually and collectively, to be racially abused – that is, with the attainment of their true humanity – would South Africa be a free and human country. Black solidarity is the antithesis, the engine of the history of South Africa. The condition *sine qua non* for the attainment of national humanity is “the determination of the blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self” (ibid.). With this tone of reflective satisfaction, Biko closed his “Black Consciousness and the quest for a true humanity” with his vision of bestowing “upon South Africa the greatest gift possible – a more human face” (ibid., 108).

NEGATION OF THE SYNTHESIS?

Biko’s cogent identification of the pathological nature of white racism as

the thesis is unquestioned; equally so, his teleological vision of a South Africa not obsessed with race. However, his dialectical scheme raises the question of how the antithesis – a dis-engaging black solidarity – is sustained within a political movement that is seeking a non-racial end. At a crucial point of his thinking, Biko has glibly stated that the synthesis, the alternative to racial complexes, is “some kind of balance – a true humanity where power politics will have no place” (ibid., 96). How is this “true humanity” to be achieved in a political context that could generate this resolution from SASO’s 1973 Policy Manifesto?

We believe that in all matters relating to the struggle towards realizing our aspirations, whites must be excluded... that in pursuit of this direction, therefore, personal contact with whites, though it should not be legislated against, must be discouraged, especially where it tends to militate against the beliefs we hold dear. (in Frederikse 1999, 116)

The political *modus vivendi* of a programme that promotes racially defined self-grouping while purporting to serve a post-racialist conception of humanness raises a series of ethical and strategic questions. As expressed by Biko and SASO – and in the current post-apartheid residual incarnation as the Azanian People’s Organisation (AZAPO) political formation – the Black Consciousness movement appears to contradict its intention, its end.

In dialectical terms, if black solidarity is inimical to the achievement of authentic non-racialism, it appears that Biko’s philosophy provides an antithesis (black solidarity) that frustrates and contradicts the envisioned synthesis (true humanity realised in non-racial selfhood and an egalitarian society).

In all philosophical dialectic traditions from Socrates to Marx, the antithesis is a negation of the thesis; it cannot be a negation of

the synthesis. The thesis (here, the white racial superiority complex), on the other hand, is always the corruption of the synthesis (non-racial humanity). The antithesis has to realise the potentiality of the original reality. Otherwise, as in this case, it becomes an illogical dead end, a self-contradiction, a defeat of the purpose. This would be the reversal of the dialectical process: a logical confabulation that renders Biko’s theory even nonsensical.

Our observation is that black solidarity, the antithesis, is monumentalised as a permanent, static reality in black consciousness theory. In Hegel’s idealism, the antithesis is not a spatio-temporal reality. It is *the logic of the motion of reason*, of negation, the self-negation of the thesis. Hence, it is erroneous to posit black solidarity, self-grouping, as a politically and socially necessary antithesis. Black solidarity could be a *principle* of the progression to non-racialism: an attitude of mind working on and against white racism.

What is paramount, and logical, is the end-goal/synthesis, the non-racial selfhood that Biko calls “true humanity”. Emphasis should be placed there, on overcoming the negativity in the thesis, and not on the hypostasised antithesis itself. This point is clarified by Marcuse (1977, 66):

the negativity everything possesses is the necessary prelude to its reality. It is a state of privation that forces the subject to seek remedy. The dialectic process receives its motive power from the pressure to overcome the negativity.

The instigation and reason for the motion is the achievement of the new, idealised reality. This occurs *through the process* of self-negation. The self-negation does not itself become the principal agent. It is a mistake to reify the antithesis into a necessarily

permanent feature of a revolutionary process. Even Marx (1974, 29) deemed it necessary to emphasise that Hegel's dialectic,

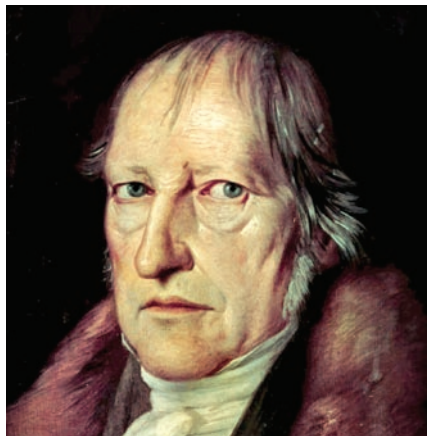
in its rational form, is a scandal and abomination to bourgeoisdom... because it regards every historically developed social form as in fluid movement, and therefore takes into account its transient nature not less than its momentary existence; because it lets nothing impose upon it, and is in its essence critical and revolutionary.

In our considered view, black pride and group self-awareness can be asserted only as an antithesis to white racism as a *transitional* moment, because the antithesis is bound to achieve its goal. Black Consciousness, *qua* consciousness, should be conceived and communicated as a psycho-philosophical dialectical moment, a step towards the synthesis, the dream of a post-racist consciousness. The ahistorical persistence of "anti-racist racism" is both logically and ethically untenable and strategically self-defeating.

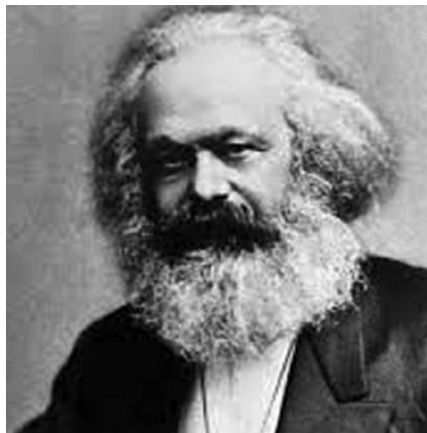
UNITY OF OPPOSITES

It is common sense that every idea or opinion can be contradicted, but this simple contradiction is not dialectics. The dialectical form is constituted by the appreciation that what is opposed is involved in the opposition itself. There is a connective unity between the thesis and its antithesis.

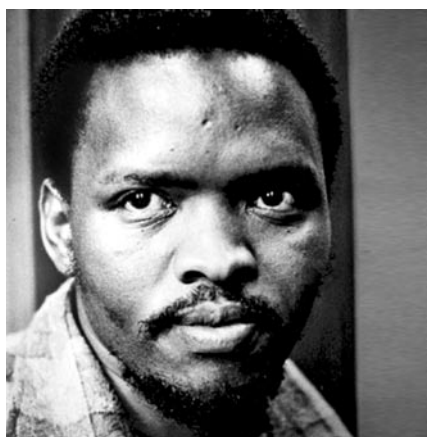
The Marxian contribution to the Hegelian dialectic was to highlight or reify the "temporal" disunity of the subject and object as an actual occurrence in history: in capitalist production, the labourer (subject) is alienated from the fruits of his labour (object), paradoxically sowing the seeds for a revolution leading to the ideal/synthesis of socialised labour. The antagonism between subject and object must be conjoined, with the



Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel



Karl Marx



Steve Biko (Source sahistory.org.za)

one issuing out of the other, a negative instigating its positive. This "causal" connection is also emphasised by Merleau-Ponty:

The dialectic embraces the prevailing negativity as well as its

negation. The given state of affairs is negative and can be rendered positive only by liberating the possibilities immanent in it. The last, the negation of the negation, is accomplished by establishing a new order of things. (cited in Marcuse 1977, 315)

For our argument, "strong white racism" has to be taken as an object, from Biko's vantage point, and "strong solidarity among blacks" has to be taken as the subject ("the determination of the blacks to rise and attain the envisaged self"). Such a black solidarity that does not also have actual engagement with white racism – that is, a subject with no contact with its object – can result only in an atrophied black self-isolation.

The two need to be in a dialectical relationship, to interact with each other, to impel the hypostasised subject to induce the negation of the imperfect thesis. This view includes the reality of each group's seclusion from the other, while at the same time imposing a theoretical obligation for a strategic contact between them. The new order can be realised only when the object (white racism) is not thought of as independently fixed apart from its subject (defiant black consciousness), but as enlightened by the expressions of black minds freed from their inferiority complex.

With such a perspective of the subject-object pair, Biko could have easily argued that, in Hegelian terms, these antagonistic racial complexes will dissipate as the white supremacist complex is starved by the absence of blacks ready and willing to be ordered around and marginalised.

The antithesis is an assertion of "black self-awareness" that is engaged with, fused with, and dissolves the thesis of "strong white racism"; not an assertion of a ossified racial consciousness in eternal conflict with white racism. It is the thesis, and not the synthesis, that has to be negated. ➤

BLACK CONSCIOUSNESS TO NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

From a purely political pragmatic perspective, dialogue is synonymous with the dialectic method, as demonstrated by Plato's Socrates. Holding the tension of opposing viewpoints is a sacrosanct intellectual principle in the dialectical tradition. Inflexible dogmatic positions are inimical to its very essence. Therefore, the social, cultural and intellectual self-isolation of the black aggrieved cannot realise the synthesis of a humanised South Africa. The very principle of dialectical thinking signals an engaged, robust and open-minded approach to seeking solutions to problems, and to seeking the truth.

Within a "relational" conception of opposites, the assertion of "a strong white racism" and "a strong solidarity among blacks" can only be a tactical posture and not an ontological one, in strict materialist terms. We can then conclude that, to the degree that it can be argued that Black Consciousness is necessary, its necessity can be justified only as a transitional attitude that is

dispensed with when consciousness is attained, life is "pumped back" into the black soul, and both the structural and mundane exertions of white supremacy are defied and thus rendered ineffectual.

It is significant that Biko (2004, 105) used the phrase "coming into consciousness", to describe the attainment of a state of black consciousness, writing that "a lot of attention has to be paid to our history if we as blacks want to aid each other in our coming into consciousness". A black person who has thus *come into consciousness* is then able to embrace the challenges of creating and living in a culture in which people are experienced not as racial but as rational beings. In a practical sense, this works against the tendency to withdraw into an ideological ghetto with one's (racially defined) own, with "our people".

This view of Black Consciousness as a stage in the political development of black persons accords with the view expressed by Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, the current chairperson of the African Union Commission and a prominent ANC politician, who was vice-president

of SASO in 1976. Twenty years later, she stated (in Frederikse 1999, 116):

I did not understand BC as an end in itself... it was like being a growing child. You need to crawl before you can walk, and so BC was just one of those stages that you needed to grow up through in politics. But you could not be BC forever – and there was no other alternative except the ANC. NA

NOTE

Sections of this paper are revised versions of a paper, MJ Lamola (2016) "Biko, Hegel and the end of Black Consciousness: A historico-philosophical discourse on South African racism", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42:2, 183–194.

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THE IFAA FORUM



About the Forum:

The IFAA Forum aims to facilitate the democratization of ideas through discussions, dialogues and workshops in Cape Town on pressing social, political and economic issues confronting South African society. Our forum provides a space for peer-to-peer learning for university students and intergenerational dialogue and communication. Presentations and discussions are primarily based on topics in political philosophy, political economy and development economics and are given in a conversational and non-technical style as far as the subject permits.

In 2017, the Sunday Forum will include a range of topics. We are calling on postgraduates, intellectuals and academics to submit abstracts on the aforementioned topics. Here's a list of preliminary presentations.

Helen Douglas	"Need I remind anyone again?" A cycle of prose poems that explore armed struggle as "an act of love"
Kweku Yakubu	On the Moral Economy
Carilee Osborne	The Role of Intellectuals in Social Movements
Shaun Stanley	Reflections on Decolonising the Curriculum
Buhle Zuma	Economics and Consciousness: Fanon and Biko on the dialectic of Existence

To find out more about the forum and the dates and venues of the above presentations see www.facebook.com/theifaaforum and/or email newagenda01@gmail.com.

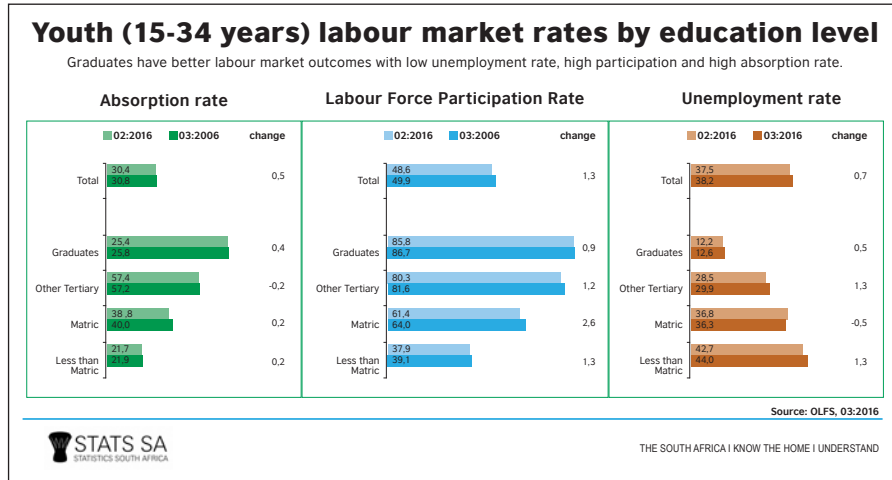
THE DEEPENING EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT CRISIS

The 2016 matric results come out against a year the economic and political background of which has probably been the toughest since the dawn of democracy.

South Africa had the worst drought in years, the economy performed poorly with a quarter where growth was negative, inflation breached the upper limit set by the Reserve Bank, unemployment in the third quarter reached its highest in thirteen years and the spectre of rating agencies adjudging South Africa to junk status ever loomed high and democracy saw the most hotly contested local government election.

Against this background South Africa witnessed the biggest protests in education since 1976, but this time around the meal in the abdomen of the python had moved from basic education to universities. The campaign for #FEESMUSTFALL was heightened with students failing to write exams or doing so under precarious conditions. The universities became the theatre of protest, arson, and student-police clashes. The struggle and challenges for leaving no one behind, the struggle and challenges for the implementation of the National Development Plan and moving South Africa had its proxy displayed at our higher institutions of learning. The drama was not short of discordance. This continued discordance is an albatross remains worrying as the new academic year is to start with major potential of knock on effects on the production and reproduction of skills, deployment in the labour market, production of goods and services, rewards to labour and capital and household consumption of goods and services, welfare and enjoyment of life.

The matric results have reflected the deeper challenge South Africa will continue to face for years to come in relation to deficits of skilled workforce which is a precondition for the implementation of the NDP. The Independent Exams Board (IEB) schools continue to outperform and outclass the public school system. They however provide a pittance of 1.3% of the matric population, 12000 out of 850000. Those public high schools that compete quite adequately with the IEB schools such as the likes of Mbilwi Secondary School in rural Venda perhaps put paid the kind



of discourse South Africa should have as regards education. IEB schools such as Crawford College fees range from R 81000 to R 130000 per annum which is a hundred times the fees that Mbilwi Secondary in rural Venda command. Here the fees are less than a R 1000 per annum.

Looking at what qualifies superior performance at schools I have found startling similarities between Mbilwi Secondary School and Crawford College, possibly well known by educators and ourselves as South African society. It is teachers, teachers, teachers and the role of the principals. Their role is to mould the children. The question therefore is what then accounts for such a large margin in the fees and how is this framed in policy discourse in order to address South Africa dire skills deficits?

The education outcomes in the labour market is captured in figure 1, where obviously being a university graduate has superior dividends. Graduate unemployment for those aged 15-34 at 12% is almost two and half times lower than any tertiary unemployment, it is three times lower than high school unemployment and it is four times lower than those without matric education. The absorption rate of graduate

youth is almost one and quarter times that of other tertiary, certainly twice that of matric and almost four times that of those without matric. So the case for university graduate education is possibly beyond doubt. But what is in doubt is why other tertiary has such poor and downright bad labour market outcomes and what South Africa is going to do about it?

FIGURE 1 LABOUR MARKET RATES BY EDUCATION LEVEL

The figure above is a bitter truth of South Africa's challenged education system. It shows a toxic cocktail that undermines the implementation of the NDP. It captures in part what should inform the disparate costs between public and private schools and the Mbilwi experience that lays bare the limits of high cost to performance of systems. More importantly it is a contribution perhaps to the crucial lessons that should inform public mobilisation for the single most crucial investment for the implementation of the NDP.

Dr Pali Lehohla is South Africa's Statistician-General and head of Statistics South Africa. [NA](#)

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE CRISIS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

By IFAA's Student and Youth Department

The Institute for African Alternatives' research team is Alexander Pennington, 'Manapo' Mokose, Michael Nassen Smith and Zimpande Kawanu¹

The socio-economic conditions that sparked the student protests – fee increases, student debt, labour outsourcing and racial inequality – can all be traced to neoliberal ideology and policies.

Not since 1976 has South Africa's youth been so influential in the country's political life. The university protests of 2015 and 2016 gripped the nation, and will likely continue into 2017 and beyond. "Free, decolonial and quality education" has become the most common tagline in student spaces, and there have also been calls for gender equality, the scrapping of outsourcing and the eradication of arbitrary discrimination of any kind on campuses.²

Although student protests have been marked by controversy, the class of 2015/16 has achieved significant things in a short period of time. Indeed, bracketing the actions of a minority, the "student moment" may reignite progressive struggles on campuses, with the potential to spill over into South African society at large. Free education,



“

Coming to power in the 1990s, the ANC was met by a global consensus on neoliberalism and a great deal of resistance to its economic vision.

decolonisation, and the post-apartheid condition as a whole have become a part of popular discourse. For this, the students should be applauded.

As we embark on the new academic year, many will undertake the task of explaining the rise of the student moment in South Africa. In this article, the Institute for African Alternatives (IFAA)'s student and youth research group contributes to this effort by tracing the crisis in higher education to the evolution of neoliberalism in the post-apartheid era.

NEOLIBERALISM “TRICKLES DOWN” TO SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa’s democratic transition from apartheid in the 1990s drew a significant amount of global interest. Academics, activists, local business, transnational corporations and international policymakers showed interest in the shape it would take, and formed the contested terrain in which the ANC would try to enforce its developmental economic vision (Bond 2013). True to the ideals of the struggle, the economic orientation in the ANC was grounded in the principles embodied in the Freedom Charter, later to be enunciated in the Reconstruction and Development



Increased fees, student debt and outsourcing can all be traced to the neoliberalisation of our institutions of higher learning.

Programme (RDP). The Freedom Charter calls for economic and political equality and a radical redistribution of wealth, imagining a new South Africa as, at the very least, a social democracy. For some, its prescriptions would mark the beginnings of a socialist future in the country.

Like the Freedom Charter, the RDP spoke of the need to restructure the economy, and placed redistribution at the centre of economic policy. In accordance with its overriding theme of “growth through redistribution”

(Marais 2001, 148), redistribution would trigger economic growth and the fruits of growth would be redistributed to satisfy basic needs. The majority population, their basic needs satisfied, would contribute to an “increase [in] employment, demand and production (ibid., 24). The RDP necessarily entailed a strong role for the state.

However, the extent to which the post-apartheid state could pursue that role was mitigated by the specific historical juncture in which the transition took place: the global consolidation of neoliberalism. The failure of Keynesian policies in the 1970s paved the way for neoliberalism to enter the mainstream of political economy. The ideology won support in the global North, championed by Margaret Thatcher from 1979 and Ronald Reagan from 1980, and spread across the world under the management of the Bretton Woods institutions (Harvey 2005, 22–24). Coming to power in the 1990s, the ANC was met by a global consensus on neoliberalism and a great deal of resistance to its economic vision.

The media and right-wing economists played an influential role in weaning the ANC from its developmentalist agenda, but their efforts did not compare to the neoliberal advocacy of the minerals-energy complex (MEC). Sampie Terreblanche (2013) argues that the MEC orchestrated the process of transition through a string of private meetings that convinced the ANC to abandon socialism and large-scale government intervention. Under pressure from both the local business sector and foreign multinational corporations that had their own vested political interest in South Africa, the ANC gave in (ibid.). A mere two years after its birth, the RDP was abandoned in favour of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy.

GEAR was a home-grown structural adjustment programme.



(Pic: <https://cornellreview.wordpress.com>)

Against the RDP strategy to address the inequalities of the past, GEAR promoted redistribution through the market (Aliber, 2003). Its goal of GDP growth showed little concern for the structural make-up of the economy and the need for conscious redress. All the conventions of the Washington Consensus found a home in GEAR: deregulation, privatisation, suppression of trade unions, the lifting of international trade barriers and the corporatisation of social and civic engagement (Ngephah and Mhlaba, 2013).

GEAR succeeded in reducing inflation and maintaining a surplus on the current account and achieved fiscal consolidation. It also redistributed wealth to corporations and the privileged class in South Africa and exacerbated racial inequality. According to government statistics, “average black African household income fell 19 percent from 1995–2000 (to US\$3 714 per year), while white household income rose 15 percent (to \$22 600 per year)” (Bond, 2013). Despite the 3–4 percent employment growth per year promised by GEAR proponents, the late 1990s was marked by annual job losses of 1–4 percent. Despite this, all consecutive economic policies – from the 2009 New Growth Path to the National Development Plan in 2013 – have embraced neoliberal principles (Ngephah and Mhlaba 2013).

THE NEOLIBERAL UNIVERSITY

How does this all relate to the university and the struggles on campuses today? Increased fees, ➤

student debt and outsourcing can all be traced to the *neoliberalisation* of our institutions of higher learning. Neoliberalism is premised on a market-based view of citizenship that is generally antithetical to a rights-based or social conception of healthcare, education or welfare provision. Such services are seen as private rather than public goods.

A causal relationship can be drawn between dwindling state funding and insurgent student protests across South African universities. Patrick Fitzgerald and Oliver Seale (2016, 244) report that the years preceding the 2015/16 student protests saw a gradual decrease in state funding to universities, a key indicator of the logic of neoliberalism. With decreased government support, the universities had to appeal to external private entities for funding. These private funders in turn insisted that the universities take up business models and principles, pushing the universities to prioritise cost-cutting through measures such as outsourcing and to increase fees, while swelling the ranks of highly paid administrators to manage the corporate bottom line.

Statistics show that the South African government spends 4.7 percent of revenue (0.75 percent of GDP) on tertiary education and the training sector. This is comparatively low in terms of global standards. For instance, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries spend an average of 1.59 percent of GDP on higher education, with the UK spending 1.23 percent and Germany 1.32 percent (OECD, 2014). The government-subsidies component of South African university income has decreased from 49 percent to 40 percent, while contributions from students have risen from 24 percent to 31 percent (GroundUp, 2015). Tuition fees at the 23 public universities increased from R12.2 billion to R15.5 billion between 2010 and 2012. It is not surprising, then, that student debt



Tuition fees at the 23 public universities increased from R12.2 billion to R15.5 billion between 2010 and 2012.

simultaneously increased 31 percent, rising from R2.6 billion to R3.4 billion (PwC, 2015). This all makes it extremely difficult for young South Africans to access tertiary education. And it is the poor of this country who are affected disproportionately, trapping them deeper in poverty.

As mentioned above, the universities outsourced their labour requirements to private labour contractors in order to cut back on costs. Since the late 1990s, this has resulted in the dramatic reduction of wages and benefits for workers in the cleaning, security, catering, transport and grounds-keeping sectors. The Wits Solidarity Committee in 2011 reported that outsourcing resulted in 613 workers losing their jobs. Cleaners' wages were cut from R2 227 to R1 200, and medical aid, pensions and other benefits were rescinded (Barry, 2015).

The neoliberalisation of our universities has thus constituted an assault on the poor, both students and workers. It is against these material deprivations that students and workers have risen up.

NEOLIBERALISM AND RACIAL INEQUALITIES

All strands of South Africa's liberation movement recognised that a free-market approach to development in a post-apartheid dispensation would have disastrous outcomes.

The ANC's 1969 (Morogoro) Strategy and Tactics Document warned: "To allow the existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even the shadow of liberation". Its 1979 Green Book Report of the Politico-Military Strategy Commission affirmed that "there can be no national liberation without social emancipation". Steve Biko, who has been embraced by today's students as their principal struggle icon, agreed: "[a]ny form of political freedom which does not touch on the proper distribution of wealth will be meaningless" (Biko 1987, 149).

They all recognised that meaningful change in South Africa would require consistent state intervention to redistribute wealth to the black poor majority. Unfortunately, this has been frustrated by neoliberalism in post-apartheid South Africa. The beneficiaries of a free-market dispensation are those who hold capital and, due to the legacy of apartheid, those who hold capital in this country are generally white. Thus, by privatising basic services such as education, healthcare, water and sanitation, neoliberalism has exacerbated historical inequalities. Indeed, whites continue to enjoy disproportionate control over the country's economy, while the black masses remain minority shareholders in the land of their birth.

The situation at our universities today is thus a microcosm of broader problems within South African society. The burdens of increasing fees, student debt and outsourcing have been shouldered by the black working class and poor. With many black students struggling with housing, financial and even food insecurity, racial inequality on campus is palpable (Pillay, 2016). Such inequality can only lead to increasing racial tensions. As South Africa's struggle heroes warned, formal political change has been insufficient

to achieve a non-racial and reconciled society. In fact, failing to deal with these inequalities has fed the beast of racism and race-based thinking.

NEOLIBERALISM AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

A further student demand is to “decolonise” our universities, arguing that academic courses do not speak to the lived experiences and history of the majority of the student body. Instead, courses still offer a Eurocentric account of the country’s historical and contemporary challenges. In this way, the students echo Frantz Fanon’s (1961) appeal to find something different from “the European game”.

It is unacceptable that South African universities continue to carry colonial artefacts in their curriculums, aesthetics, language policies and pedagogy. The statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town (UCT), for example, would have been removed decades ago if our society was genuinely concerned with reconciliation. Other than piecemeal efforts at “transformation”, however, Africanisation or localisation has not been a high priority for South African universities since the transition. This has caused psychological and intellectual alienation on campus. It has also contributed to racial tension, as students seem prone to equate Eurocentrism and white racism. The student activists’ embrace of racial essentialism and aggressive identity politics (largely imported from the USA) might have been avoided if the conceptual, moral and political issues surrounding transformation were given their proper time in the sun by the university community.

Neoliberalism has certainly played a role in all of this. As our universities embrace corporate funding models, private interests can dictate what is to be taught and researched. These interests, often directly feeding the



(Pic: <https://cornellreview.wordpress.com>)

funding pipeline, are more concerned with achieving a return on investment than interrogating the role of a public university in broader society. There are, of course, many committed and engaged academics on our campuses – but the fact that we have seen a greater focus on professional programmes, to the detriment of the humanities, is no



The crises that confront every sector of South Africa today call out for creative, critical and effective ways of thinking. This is what we need our public universities to produce.

surprise. The crises that confront every sector of South Africa today call out for creative, critical and effective ways of thinking about and understanding our particular conditions. This is what we need our public universities to produce. But institutions that rely on corporate

investment must offer skills that serve the marketplace, as it is shaped by neoliberal capitalism (Nash, 2013).

In line with this, “excellence” and “world class status” become the yardsticks to measure success. Internationally, this ethos has undermined traditional concerns for intellectual discovery and moral engagement with local realities. The ideal of the university as a public good and a site for inculcating the values of substantive democracy is eroded under neoliberalism (ibid.). Instead of being taught to interrogate society, individuals (particularly in commerce departments) are encouraged to adopt and polish their own “personal brands”; the university, too, increasingly presents itself in marketing-speak. The space for critical thinking starts to shrink. We only need to think of the general apathy of universities prior to 2015 as evidence.

The neoliberal ethic of individual self-advancement has also sunk into teaching, management and pedagogy. Lecturers are now seen as “service providers” and their students as “clients”. Management is more concerned with establishing uniform standards and procedures than engaging with the content of curriculums and the state of teaching. In this environment, the bureaucracy becomes increasingly powerful. ➤



Deepening their struggle, the students can act as a fulcrum to resist neoliberalism in the broader society.

Collaboration among academics is eroded as they are forced to compete with one another, either in the number of publications produced or to grab the limited opportunities for higher or more prestigious positions. Instead of establishing real and productive connections across disciplines, departments become hyper-specialised and isolated (Nash, 2013). The ideal of a scholarly intellectual community is replaced by an enclave culture that is wholly unfit for the vast efforts required to institute substantive curriculum and cultural reform on campus.

CONCLUSION

Over the course of the last two years, students across our campuses have achieved remarkable victories and placed neoliberalism in the dock. The state announced a zero-percent fee increase for 2016 and pledged to assist with debt relief and additional funding for underfunded students. The steps taken towards affordable education for the poor need to be extended to all sectors of education. Workers have also benefitted from the students' solidarity, with a series of victories ranging from the gradual re-introduction of insourcing by the university to immediate free study benefits for their children. The University of Johannesburg and UCT initiated this transition in 2015. Wits, the University of Pretoria and Tshwane University of Technology have all

followed suit, announcing plans to commence insourcing on 1 January 2017.

To sustain this momentum, students need to take a long-term view and enter into strategic alliances with other sectors of civil society, engaged academics, and sympathetic sections of the state. Deepening their struggle, the students can act as a fulcrum to resist neoliberalism in the broader society. Lessons from the student moment of 2015/16 should be incorporated into the national discourse on justice, transformation and redistribution. The fact that the black majority cannot afford to pay university fees is proof of continuing inequalities created by colonialism and apartheid. It is thus necessary to reignite conversations about the negotiated democratic settlement and to reassess the economic vision contained in the Freedom Charter and the RDP.

Government and civil society need to engage with the students and use the space that has been opened to challenge neoliberalism and develop a society more in keeping with the vision of our struggle heroes. Indeed, intergenerational solidarity is needed. With meaningful conversation and collaboration, we might be able to reboot the ideals that guided the liberation struggle for so many years. We might be able to look back on the student moment of 2016 as the beginning of a movement towards achieving the non-racial, non-sexist and equitable society that all progressives strive for. NA

NOTES

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1. Michael Nassen Smith is the Deputy Director of the Institute for African Alternatives. Alexander Pennington, 'Manapo Mokose and Zimpane Kawanu are research interns. They are all graduate students at the University of Cape Town.
2. For an outline of student demands and politics in 2015, see articles by Leigh-Ann Naidoo and Siphoo Seepe in *New Agenda* 60 (4/2015).

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UNFREE IN THE FREE STATE

AN INTERVIEW WITH TREVOR SHAKU



Trevor Shaku

'Manapo 'Mokose, IFAA Student Intern spoke to Trevor Shaku who is studying towards a postgraduate certificate in education at the University of the Free State (UFS) in Bloemfontein. He is the national secretary of the Socialist Youth Movement and spokesperson for the Workers and Students Forum at UFS.

'MANAPO 'MOKOSE: What is your association with the Fees Must Fall movement?

TREVOR SHAKU: I was part of the national Fees Must Fall (FMF) movement meetings which took place immediately after the wave of protests that engulfed the country in October

2015. We met in Johannesburg for three meetings on November 27th, December 1st and again from the 11th to the 13th of December. I'm part of that movement, and I participate in two capacities, as a UFS [University of the Free State] student and as a member of SYM [the Socialist Youth Movement].

MM: I assume there are different goals with each university, and different problems. What was your contribution from the University of the Free State?

TS: True to the national Fees Must Fall movement, we at UFS fought to halt the proposed fee increment of 2015. But most importantly, the movement was the beginning of a wave that would eventually have to bring about free education to the poor. Insourcing [contract workers on campus] continues to be an important element, as reflected in the development of the Workers and Student Alliance. With regard to distinctions between universities, at UFS we have a problem of racism. While it is reflective of

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We're not a group organising a coup d'état. We are concerned about the livelihood of our people.

the situation in the country, other universities, especially liberal universities, do not face the question of racism as we do. On top of that we fight for institutional reforms, not only relating to the question of colour but to questions of gender.

MM: What inspired you to take action? Was it the FMF action at Wits University?

TS: There was a build-up of events before Wits, orchestrated by student organisations and especially student leaders at UFS who saw themselves as revolutionaries. There were less than twenty of us at the time. First of all, we reflected on the situation on our campus and realised that there is a lot of political apathy among students, and that it would take not only education per se, but mainly action on the ground. So we formulated a group called the Socialist Student Front. That was around May, June, July. And then, in September, Steve Hofmeyr [an Afrikaans pop singer known for his racist views] came to perform at Kopsie Kerk [Church] in Bloemfontein, and we staged a little picket there. We were mainly trying to convey the message that the university cannot associate itself with such racists, as the church [property] belongs to the university.

For me, that was the catalytic event that built up momentum among students *before* the FMF campaign. The Wits FMF campaign helped to augment the programme and broadened participation. Since then, most of the students who took action have remained in student politics or ➤

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We were able to organise workers here at UFS and lead them to win a minimum wage of R5000 and a commitment by management to insource.

student activism and continue to fight for issues that confront our campus.

MM: What concerns do you have about the student movement?

TS: At the national Fees Must Fall meetings that succeeded the October campaign, the question of the identity and organisation of the movement came up but there were no conclusive resolutions. Mine and a few other comrades' contention was that the movement must be socialist in identity, but we were defeated after all. Regarding the form of the organisation itself, they said that it must be left as loose as it was – without leadership and without structures, although we knew that they existed in an informal sense. There was no programme concluded up there that systematically detailed what should be done, at what time and who, for example, must initiate the protests. The universities were to go at will and do as they wish.

For me, that was a bit counter-revolutionary, because you cannot begin to try to tackle an issue but leave the question of organisation unresolved. If the question of organisation is unresolved, you're not going to be able to mobilise adequately, because it is the organisation or the

structures which must be responsible for mobilisation. I blame that weakness for the wavering period in the recent wave of students' struggles towards free education. The weakness of not having structures, the weakness of not having a leadership, and the weakness of not having a programme. This year, many students were victimised, brutalised by the police and the heavy securitisation of their universities. Because of our weaknesses, our comrades were arrested and we were not effectively able to mobilise legal and financial resources to bail them out.

We need to seriously sit down and formulate a programme for the student movement. It could continue as it is, open for everyone, but have pillars that it knows that it is committed to fighting for. Regarding leadership, there is hostility towards the word "leadership" because it has assumed this connotation of hegemony. If our aim is to have the FMF remain as organic as it is – embraced by many people or students from across higher education institutions – perhaps we should reconfigure the meaning of leadership for us. But leadership nonetheless must be there.

MM: We don't hear much about what is happening at UFS. Why is that, and what are you doing about it?

TS: I'll attribute that to three things. The first one is that Bloemfontein generally is not a hub of media industry. As a result, we struggle to get coverage on the issues that we fight on, and if something is not at a crisis point, usually we do not even get that coverage. The second thing is that there's little alliance between the academic staff of this university and the students. One of the things that I have seen at Wits or at UCT is that the researchers and academics have taken up our questions and written about them. We don't have that cohesion

at UFS. Thirdly, we students are the problem. We're not writing. We usually shout slogans like "We are on our own". But if we are on our own and we don't write our stories, who do we expect to write them?

As for what we're doing to change this condition, there has already been a good development within the university. An initiative that unites students and staff members has been developed, called the Progressive Academic and Staff Forum. I believe that, through it, in future we will be able to align ourselves with them and that they will take an interest in writing about our cause in their research. I have been writing extensively for The Journalist (thejournalist.org.za) and also calling on my comrades to write and to debate on mutual issues of concern. Regarding the media, that one is difficult. We don't have any measure at hand that will ensure that they pay attention to us. What we can do is make more noise through social media and attract media houses that way. In the meantime, we do as much as possible to publicise events on social media.

MM: As a student in the movement, what would you like South Africa to know?

TS: One, I want South Africans to know that first and foremost our cause, the one we are fighting for, is legitimate. We're not a group organising a coup d'état. We are a group that is concerned about the livelihood of our people.

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If we are on our own and we don't write our stories, who do we expect to write them?

We're fighting for free education, not because it's fashionable to do so but because it's a necessity for the poor majority, which is predominantly black, to access universities and other institutions of higher learning without any hindrance or financial difficulty.

Number two, that our commitment to the struggle extends beyond fees and free education because the university, as a centre of knowledge production, also needs to be changed. We have seen the production of pseudo-science ideologies, or pseudo-science theories which engulfed the globe during colonialism. Eugenics, social Darwinism and scientific racism theories, for instance, were produced within academic spheres and were used to persuade people that some groups were superior and others inferior. That paradigm continues to this day. The university as a centre of knowledge has a lot to contribute to that and to change perspectives. Universities produce a paradigm. That paradigm must be beneficial to society.

Thirdly, there are many facets to our movement. On this campus, I have led outsourced workers alongside a few comrades in the Workers and Students Forum. Through the Forum, we were able to organise workers here at UFS and lead them to win a minimum wage of R5000 – up from R2500 – and a commitment by management to insource. The negotiations for that are underway. We have given the workers confidence. Previously, they were exploited and they suffered quietly for fear of being dismissed. But now they have taken control of their workspaces. They are able to challenge their employers on a verbal but also legal basis. I am there regularly, with a few of my comrades – especially from SYM – to assist them in terms of the daily issues they face with their employers.

MM: What do you see as failures, whether individually, as FMF, or the SYM?



They take books and raid them for quotes, thinking that quoting Sankara or Nkrumah makes you revolutionary.

TS: So far, a failure is hard to find. What we've always wanted is vibrant political activism on our campus and we've got that. A challenge – not a failure – is that we're struggling to educate the student constituency. "Educating" not in the sense of indoctrinating, but opening up a space where there is love for learning and love for debates. We haven't arrived at that level yet, which presents a very huge potential detriment to our movement and the vibrant space that we have established so far. Because of inadequate content, student campaigns can miscalculate the landscape and balance of forces of a period and fail to prepare adequately for it.

Further, there's a lot of phrase-mongering within the student movement and amongst the so-called leaders of our campuses. They take books and raid them for quotes, thinking that quoting Sankara or Nkrumah makes you revolutionary. Meanwhile, you're just a person who memorises, who does not digest the things that he or she reads. And without digesting the things you read, you can't translate them effectively to your cause. So, there will be a wrong diagnosis of the problem. We've seen it already. For example, campaigns have been reduced to campuses when they should be directed straight to the government, because that's where

the problem originates. Especially campaigns like fighting for free education. A rector cannot give us free education.

MM: The theme of this special youth issue of New Agenda is *Born free, born in chains*. Does that inspire any sort of reflection?

TS: Indeed. We are born in chains. The statement awakens us to the realities that we are facing in South Africa and calls for us to stand up and challenge the myth of the "born frees". The born-free mentality has been propagated as a political strategy of the ANC and the ruling alliance, alongside its "rainbow nation" message, to say that we do not have to fight because we are free. But reality is saying quite the opposite. We can see that, so much as there was a political concession or a compromise during the CODESA [Convention for a Democratic South Africa] negotiations which resulted in the 1994 elections, we are only free to do things in principle, but in reality we are not able to do so. You are free to go to school anywhere you want, but because of financial difficulties, you can't do that. You are free to access health services, but you can't do so because your socio-economical status does not permit you. So indeed, we are not born free, we are born in chains.

MM: What is freedom to you?

TS: Freedom to me would be when we are free to do everything indeed. That, if they say we are in a freedom dispensation, I can go to school for free, I can access health services for free. These are basic needs. For me, in fact, I say only socialism means freedom. All that we see today is just bogus liberal democracy that is trying to sugar-coat the real meaning, or the real essence, of freedom for the people because most of the things, they are not in fact even free to do. **NA**

FALLING RAINBOWS

ANATOMY OF A FALSE CHOICE

By *Claire-Anne Lester, Carilee Osborne and Michael Nassen Smith*

The authors are graduate students at the University of Cape Town and associates of the Institute for African Alternatives

The events taking place on South African university campuses during the past year reignited vigorous political debates on race, transformation and decolonisation. The students at the forefront named themselves “Fallists”, from the 2015 protest hashtags of #RhodesMustFall and #feesmustfall. Although their immediate concerns relate to higher education, their grievances are far broader. Put simply, Fallism is a rejection of the post-apartheid condition.

The Fallists’ immediate goal is to expose the faultlines in so-called “Rainbowism”, the dominant post-apartheid paradigm that fuelled the transitional state-led project of nation-building. They point to its illusory conflation of *formal equality*, declared with the adoption of the 1996 Constitution, with *material equality*. “Rainbowism” tends to draw a thick line between South Africa’s apartheid past and the democratic present, invoking images of a new “rainbow nation” imbued with a sanitised ethic of “ubuntu”. By falsely implying that the social and economic legacies of apartheid and colonialism have been overcome, it claims a premature resolution of the real demands of justice and reconciliation.

Fallism – a term that covers multiple strands of the student

movement across the country – challenges this notion by identifying and highlighting the economic, cultural, psychological and aesthetic vestiges of the past. Calling for the residues of colonial and apartheid injustices to fall, it wants to initiate the end that “Rainbowism” suggests is already here. In the process, it rejects “Rainbowism” and its associated components of “peace”, “reconciliation” and “ubuntu”.

It is important to emphasise that we agree with the starting point of Fallism. Like the authors of this article, Fallists desire a non-racial society based on substantive equality. Clearly, it is necessary to interrogate the post-apartheid consensus. Clearly, South Africa has failed to deal adequately with the consequences of the past. However, we take issue with the ideological and theoretical toolkit



It becomes very difficult to talk about ideas when you first have to agree on the thinker’s lineage.

employed to understand the causes of our contemporary situation. We believe that it supports a regressive political praxis that undermines the ability of South Africans to reach a non-racial and economically equitable society.

SHAKY GROUND

Fallism grounds its critique of the post-apartheid condition in a *particular* interpretation of a combination of ideologies. Formally, it draws upon black radical feminism, black consciousness and pan-Africanism. Each of these has a rich and nuanced history with many valuable contributions to progressive thought and political praxis. However, the Fallists’ view is shaped more conceptually within the horizons of postmodern and postcolonial theory and tends to manifest as vulgar identity politics.

The politics of identity is not problematic *per se*. In fact, a lot of what it has propagated is useful. Concepts like “white privilege” and “intersectionality” open up complex human interactions in a way that makes understanding and deconstructing them more accessible. However, blending identity politics with a vulgar standpoint theory makes for a crude and unhelpful guide for social change.

Standpoint theory is premised on the belief that a person's identity, understood as a socio-political-historical subject position, is *epistemically salient*, meaning that their way of knowing and validating knowledge is determined by their identity/position. When combined with identity politics, this can result in a person's arguments or analysis being dismissed *purely* on the grounds of their identity (itself defined externally). Under the sway of these ideas, students have dismissed the work of Frantz Fanon or Stuart Hall – until they discover that they are not the white, European men their names imply. It becomes very difficult to talk about ideas when you first have to agree on the thinker's lineage. In this way, Fallism tends to reify the very identities that it sets out to deconstruct, giving the impression that there is an essential difference between people of different races, genders and sexualities. Ironically, it also replicates the machinery of any patriarchal, racist or class-based hierarchy that dictates whose voice may be heard and whose ignored.

There are some Fallists who argue that this overt essentialism is a strategic move. Let's take the example of racial identity. Some argue that overt racialisation is a necessary stage to pass through to reach the final goal of a racially and economically transformed South Africa. Only then can the second stage of non-racialism begin. In practice, however, the first stage can take on an autonomous force, such that it is impossible to say when the "temporary project" of racialism will end and that of non-racialism begin.

More seriously, for racialism to work at all, racial identities must be fixed. Fixed identities, especially when they are attached to some kind of entitlement, also tend to convert "difference into "otherness", such that the "other" can be characterised as evil, inferior, undesirable and eradicable. As

Neville Alexander said, "by insisting on racial categories [as the only criterion guiding redistribution]... you are simply perpetuating racial identities, which means racial prejudice, race thinking and so on. The very opposite of what you want to do in the longer term, which is to get to a non-racial ethos" (Barron, 2010).



Fanon's transcendental humanism explicitly contradicts the ideals of Negritude and nativism that Fallism increasingly ascribes to.

The idea of "essential difference" is both a product and key tenet of postcolonial theory, particularly subaltern studies, that appears to have taken hold in student politics. Since the 1980s, this theory has been increasingly influential in certain humanities disciplines (especially anthropology and gender studies) in the global – and South African – academy. Authors of the postcolonial canon, like Partha Chatterjee, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Dipesh Chakrabarty, base much of their analysis on the assumption that so-called "non-Western" societies are fundamentally different from those in the so-called "West" (Chibber, 2013). In so doing, they continue the discourse of "the West and the Rest", despite this binary being at the core of what they claim to take issue with. It might also be worthwhile to point out that this fetishisation of difference belongs to a postmodern project, informed

by arguably poor readings of "white males" from Nietzsche to Derrida, that valorises the particular in order to denounce "Western universalism".

We reject this notion of essential difference and assert that it ought to be abandoned as a mechanism to advance a truly emancipatory politics.

NO WHITE WORLD, NO BLACK WORLD

Perhaps ironically again, the most powerful arguments against this line of thinking have been made by the same theorists the Fallists use to advance their conception of the "decolonisation" project. Fanon's transcendental humanism explicitly contradicts the ideals of Negritude and nativism that Fallism increasingly ascribes to (Gilroy 2011). In *Black Skin, White Masks* for example, he writes:

I have no wish to be the victim of the Fraud of a black world. My life should not be devoted to drawing up the balance sheet of Negro values. There is no white world, there is no white ethic, any more than there is a white intelligence. There are in every part of the world men who search. (Fanon 1952)

Fanon is not discounting any historically contingent differences between black and white people. *Black Skin, White Masks* does, after all, explore the phenomenology of black experience under white supremacy. Yet it is guided by a clear commitment to the fact that there is no essential difference between white and black. Fanon's point is reinforced by Edward Said (1993, 336):

No one today is purely one thing. Labels like Indian, or woman, or Muslim, or American are not more than starting-points, which, if followed into actual experience for only a moment, are quickly left behind. Imperialism consolidated the mixture of cultures and >>

identities on a global scale. But its worst and most paradoxical gift was to allow people to believe that they were only, mainly, exclusively white, or black, or Western, or Oriental. Yet just as human beings make their own history, they also make their cultures and ethnic identities. No one can deny the persisting continuities of long traditions, sustained habitations, national languages, and cultural geographies, but there seems no reason except fear and prejudice to keep insisting on their separation and distinctiveness, as if that was all human life was about.

Said (ibid.) was no naïve celebrant of cultural diversity and humanism, as he continued:

It is more rewarding – and more difficult – to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about “us”. But this also means not trying to rule others, not trying to classify them or put them in hierarchies, above all, not constantly reiterating how “our” culture or country is number one (or not number one, for that matter).

In some academic circles, the positions of Fanon and Said have become increasingly garbled by their assimilation into a hodgepodge postcolonial theory that is obsessed with colonial representations of the non-European “native” or “Oriental”. Vivek Chibber’s (2013) critique of postcolonial theory powerfully accuses such postcolonial theorists of reproducing the same Orientalism they purportedly hate.

A recent local example was the UCT Fallist who declared that science



Postcolonial theory – at least, as is currently taught and understood in student movements in South Africa – does not allow us to emancipate ourselves from the colonial imaginary.

must be done away with, which gave rise to a #ScienceMustFall trend on social media. Clearly, when European colonialism falsely attributed all meaningful knowledge production to the “West”, it promoted the corollary that Africans have had no part to play in scientific progress. However, postcolonial theory’s flirtation with relativism has also served to support students’ bifurcated reading of history. In short, postcolonial theory – at least, as is currently taught and understood in student movements in South Africa – does not allow us to emancipate ourselves from the colonial imaginary.

CONCLUSION

It is important to note that one can acknowledge the hypocrisy of “Rainbowism” without falling into the particular ideological morass that informs Fallism.

We need to open up the space for a more generous and more fruitful debate. It is imperative for everyone

who is interested in realising the needed social and political shifts in South Africa to take up this conversation in earnest. We can no longer accept “identity” as a mediator of “allyship”, but should instead advance a politics of solidarities and comradeship based on principle, and a movement of people working to build something together. One that would affirm the reality of continued injustices across the spectrum and embrace calls for decolonisation without slipping into exclusivist nativism or narrow nationalism. On our campuses, one need not be a Fallist to support the creation of historically grounded and ethically responsive curricula, free education, and the dismantling of outsourcing.

The Fallists are also right to complain that our education has not provided us with the rich history of progressive thought in this country. Perhaps revisiting and rehabilitating this living archive is a first step towards opening the space of discussion, and towards a deeper political movement to dismantle the legacies of apartheid and colonialism. NA

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THE UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE IS COMMITTED TO EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

The University of Fort Hare (UFH) has embarked on a journey to establish and develop a centre for excellence in research, teaching and scholarly engagement in the field of early childhood development.

The Early Childhood Development Centre (ECDC) represents the University's commitment to developing a niche academic capacity that can contribute to addressing the key questions and challenges related to child development in South Africa. It aims to extend its current academic focus on children in the formal schooling system (5 – 9 years old, including children in Grade R) to children from birth to four years old outside of the formal schooling system.

African children in poor communities and living in rural areas are far more likely to be excluded from any form of Early Childhood Development (ECD) support than those from affluent communities in urban areas. This, on account of the stubborn key factors of poverty and inequality that condition patterns of access and the development outcomes achieved. For the country to meet its legal and developmental obligations, massive scaling up of the reach and quality of the support provided to young children is necessary. This should necessarily be done in a manner that privileges those young children currently excluded from the reach of ECD support if patterns of unequal access and outcomes are to be transformed. This is the challenge the ECDC aims to address.

The ECDC seeks to advance knowledge of the development of young children in their communities, and to use this knowledge for building capabilities and transforming public childhood provisioning for social justice and achieve meaningful outcomes. It aims to do so by:



Artists impression of the ECD Centre being built at UFH's East London campus

- Stimulating, supporting and undertaking transdisciplinary early childhood research, teaching and learning, and service;
- Searching for transformative, affordable and contextually relevant ways of providing quality childhood development services; and
- Advocating and informing childhood policy, programmes and practices.

The ECDC has identified three strategic priorities. Firstly, it will undertake and lead transdisciplinary research in childhood studies. The key strategies it will adopt in this regard are the development of a longitudinal research programme, action-oriented research and building the ECD Research Niche Area (RNA).

Secondly, the ECDC will contribute to innovation and development of ECD qualifications as the basis for its human resource development activities and as pathways to professionalisation in the field. The strategies to this end include the development of a suite of specialist ECD qualifications and programmes, including a Diploma in Early Childhood Development (Birth to 4 Specialisation)

and a B Ed ECD (Birth to 4 Specialisation). In addition, the ECDC will be active in developing a bilingual focus in its curriculum, materials development and continuing professional development activities. Specialist curriculum design and programme development will be built as well as teaching, learning and development practice with a bilingual focus.

Thirdly, the ECDC will contribute to enhancing ECD provisioning through collaborative design and implementation of programmes. The Centre will pursue the strategic goal of enhancing access to quality ECD services and promoting equity in the development outcomes achieved by 0 – 4 year old children and their families in the Buffalo City Municipality and rural areas in the Eastern Cape, by 2025.

The ECDC will gradually build its capacity to implement its mission over the next decade. During the inception phase of its development the focus will be on appointing a strong leadership and management team to refine and take the vision of the Centre forward.

The inception phase will also provide an opportunity for implementation of the first wave of its longitudinal cohort study. The development phase of the Centre will be geared towards accelerating the capacity of the ECDC, while the final phase will be geared towards consolidation of its research, teaching and community engagement programmes.

For more information contact:
Dr Namhla Sotuku : nsotuku@ufh.ac.za 

WE CANNOT STOP DREAMING LEGACIES AND UNFINISHED ACTIVISMS

By Angela Davis

The author is a US writer, activist and distinguished professor emerita in the history of consciousness and feminist studies department at the University of California, Santa Cruz.



Angela Davis (Source: www.speakoutnow.org)

Our understandings of the past are very much determined by our positions in the present and how we imagine the future.

We are called upon to celebrate those whose dreams and activism made it possible for us to inhabit this present. And as dissatisfied as we may be – and in fact should be – with the present, it was ushered into being by the transformative impact of past revolutionary struggles.

The disjuncture between what we once imagined as a future of freedom and justice and the present, whose unfreedoms and injustices have become as apparent to young people as those of the past were to us, produces new dynamics of struggle. I must constantly remind myself that

the revolution we were fighting for at some point began to recede to the background and become the constantly unacknowledged background of the victories we did win. The revolution we wanted was not the revolution we helped to produce.

So when I reflect on the current moment in the United States, I ask myself what might we have done differently had we known that the election of the first black president would be followed by the farcical election campaign we are currently experiencing.

I ask myself whether a greater insistence on the hidden structural dimensions of racism, the economic, cultural and generally institutionalised forms of racisms which fostered the continued development of a huge psychic reservoir of racism, might have made a difference. The kind of difference that might have prevented the Trump campaign – and I will mention his name only once – from trafficking with the white rage that is a product of the growing inequalities generated by global capitalism. These white people who are suffering, who know that their children will be worse off than they are, are led to attribute their misfortunes to the rise of people of colour. And so the open appeal to racism comes in the form of the representation of Mexican undocumented workers as rapists and

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The revolution we wanted was not the revolution we helped to produce.

criminals and the equation of Islam with terrorism. The subtext, of course, with the open attack on President Obama, is that black people and other people of colour have usurped the places and privileges that rightfully belong to white people.

THE SOURCE OF OUR LEGACIES

From a very early period of my activism, South Africa was our primary beacon of hope. From my earliest years as an activist, I eagerly read Sechaba and The African Communist. My comrades and I embraced the leaders of the ANC and the leaders of the South African Communist Party as our leaders. Solidarity with the anti-apartheid struggle infused our movements against racism, our movements for social justice, with a vast reservoir of energy. The release of Mandela in 1990 and the victorious



election in 1994 brought collective euphoria to black communities and anti-racist struggles everywhere. Here at last was the path to freedom. I would not have been able to imagine then that, two decades after the defeat of apartheid, we would be confronted with militaristic responses to peoples' protests.

But before we immerse ourselves in the chaos of current moment, let us visit the source of our legacies. This evening we are memorialising Steve Biko. Steve Biko offered us a politics of blackness that released it from the constraints of inferiority and let us know that black people could collectively embody humanity and the foundational impulse toward freedom. Blackness was to be reimagined and reconstructed in the very process of collective struggle. As Mandela said,

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Women have always been at the heart of anti-racist progressive activism.

Steve Biko was the spark that lit a veld fire across South Africa. His message to the youth and students was simple and clear: Black is Beautiful! Be proud of your Blackness! And with that, he inspired our youth to shed themselves of the sense of inferiority they were born into as a result of more than 300 years of white rule.

Black was not only proclaimed to be beautiful; black would become the sign of a trajectory toward human emancipation. In Biko's own words, it becomes more necessary to see the truth as it is if you realise that the only vehicle for change are those who have lost their personality. The first step is make the black man see himself; to pump life into his empty shell; to infuse him with pride and dignity; to remind him of his complicity in the crime of allowing himself to be misused and therefore letting evil reign supreme in the country of his birth.

I must also point out here that the political discourse of the time had the effect of foreclosing the participation and the acknowledged conscientisation





Learning how to imagine the possibility of something different is the very essence of education.

of those that did not fall under the sign of the male gender. As we know, some of the most passionate activists in the student movement of that period were women.

We know that the first major protest – so to speak, the “mother of all protests” – had been the women’s march to Pretoria on August 9, 1956. And so I have kept in my mind the image of that monumental gathering. Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Albertina Sisulu, Fatima Meer, Florence Matomela, Ruth Mompati, Sophie Williams-De Bruyn and all of the 20 000 women staging a silent protest here in Pretoria in front of Union Buildings: “Now you have touched the women; you have struck a rock; you have dislodged a bolder, you will be crushed.” Women have always been at the heart of anti-racist progressive activism. We thus have to give ourselves permission to honour the women activists as we celebrate the legacies of the men who have come to represent the struggles of the past.

And those men who most deserve to be celebrated – men like WEB du Bois, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X in the United States; men like Nelson Mandela, Chris Hani and Steve Biko in South Africa: as influenced as they may have all been by ideologies of patriarchy, their work helped to create a discursive arena for the development of black feminist consciousness. They were also aware that their leadership was precisely enabled by those with

whom they struggled, the men and the women as well. We are profoundly thankful for these legacies, but we do not receive them uncritically.

STUDENTS AT THE FOREFRONT

Our understandings of the past are very much determined by our positions in the present and how we imagine the future. From the perspective of the present, we can apprehend what was hidden behind the restrictive discourses of the past.

Steve Biko died so that we would be able to develop these perspectives today and we understand today some of the silences, the erasures, and the foreclosures of those past struggles. We have also learned important lessons from the arrest Biko endured: from his imprisonment, from the torture, from the long struggle to reveal the true circumstances of his death.

Biko organised students. Students have always been at the forefront of radical change. An essential dimension of the learning process is critical thinking, learning how to question things as they are. Learning how to imagine the possibility of something different is the very essence of education. Facts are easily attainable, especially today as people with access to the internet have access to infinite libraries. But what do we do with that information? Steve Biko and his comrades led vast numbers of students to ask questions about apartheid and to imagine a different world, even as they clashed with the world as it was. Knowledge is useless unless it assists us to question habits, social practices, institutions, ideologies and the state. This questioning cannot end, even when victories are won.

Students are now realising that the legacies of past struggles are not static. If these legacies mean anything at all, they are mandates to develop new strategies, new technologies of struggle. And these legacies, when

taken up by new generations, reveal unfulfilled promises of the past and therefore give rise to new activism.

As an activist of Steve Biko’s generation, I have to constantly remind myself that the struggles of our contemporary times should be thought of as productive contradictions because they constitute a rupture with past struggles but also reside on a continuum with those struggles. They have been enabled by activism of the past. They are unfinished activism. Activism enabled by the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955, which was at its core a women’s boycott; by the Women’s March 60 years ago; by the founding of Black Panther Party almost exactly 50 years ago, by the uprising Soweto 40 years ago, by the struggles undertaken by Biko and his comrades to create the South African Students Organisation, by the struggles of Nelson Mandela and the heroic members of the ANC, by uMkhonto we Sizwe.

This is the genealogy that young activists share across oceans. The young activists of today stand on our shoulders and precisely because they stand on our shoulders, they see something of what we have seen but they also see and understand a great deal more. They are beginning to address unresolved questions. They stand on our shoulders, but we do not provide a steady foundation precisely because our questions were questions of a different era, our critiques were expressed in the inadequate discourses of the past. The young activists want to reveal the erasures. They want to question what we did not have the full capacity to question in our time. Therefore they sway. They totter. They falter. They make terrible mistakes just as we did at their age when we stood on the shoulders of those that came before us. But just as we learned from our mistakes, they must be allowed to



We are profoundly thankful for these legacies, but we do not receive them uncritically.

learn from theirs, even when it appears that they are simply repeating our mistakes.

One of the truly exciting dimensions of the activism both here and in the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States is that they are being led by women. I had the honour of meeting Nompandolo Mkhathshwa, who is the current president of the Student Representative Council at Wits and Shaeera Kalla, who is the past president. Under their leadership, the contestation about tuition fee hikes began to resonate across the country and across the world.

Some have said that the students' demands for free education are unrealistic, but they are only unrealistic because we continue to live with the mandates of capitalism and we are compelled to think of education as a commodity. This is not the way things should be. Freedom should mean in the very first place the freedom to learn, and the prerequisite for enjoying freedom of education should not be the capacity to pay. If students are calling for free education, they are reminding us how retrograde our social priorities have become. They remind us of the world we should be inhabiting, and of the legacies that produced impulses toward the future. When they move from "no fee hikes" to "free education", they remind us of the revolution we need to be fighting today.

BLACK LIVES MATTER

Three young women in the US – Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors and Opal Tometi – first produced the hashtag #blacklivesmatter in the aftermath of the vigilante racist killing of Trayvon Martin. They went on to create the Black Lives Matter network when the Ferguson protests erupted two years ago. These young women are collectively striving to remind us of the revolution we need as they try to develop strategies for struggle today.

There has been an uneasy relationship with the veterans of the movement that came before them. The veterans often take themselves, their knowledges, too seriously. Sometimes we assume that our questions and the tentative answers we provided deserve a permanence that silences future questions and answers. Sometimes we look for leadership in the familiar guise: the charismatic male leader who, in the US, has historically emerged from church and religious circles. When we cannot find that, we say that their movement has no leaders. They answer back: We are not a leaderless movement; we are a leader-full movement. The Black Lives Matter movement seeks to build new forms of leadership, feminist leadership, whether of women, men, queer, trans or straight. Leadership that is collective, inclusive and democratic.



The particularity of the black predicament is precisely that which is capable of yielding a robust universality.

Perhaps we need the leadership of those who have historically been barred from leadership positions, those who have been silenced. Perhaps we need leadership that will assist us to develop new vocabularies that encourage inclusiveness and interconnectedness, that recognise the interdependences, intersectionalities and internationalisms of our struggle. In other words, vocabularies that highlight the feminist dimensions of all of our social justice struggles.

Our languages and our institutions participate in the reproduction of ideologies of gender that violently exclude those who cannot find themselves within binary gender structures. Trans women of colour have brought new analyses of our institutions, especially the institutions of punishment, which have deepened our understanding of the importance of abolitionist approaches. The abolition of imprisonment as the dominant form of punishment and the abolition of policing as we know it must also involve the abolition of racism and the abolition of gender policing and a constant critique of hetero-patriarchy.

We have learned about the symbiotic interconnectedness of state violence and intimate violence. We now perceive an economy of violence in which the symbiotic relationship of various modes of violence – state, institutional, intimate – thrive on excess violence directed at certain communities, including trans communities of colour. Revealing these reservoirs of violence and openly challenging them helps to diminish the overall economy of gender violence. The message of the Black Lives Matter movement is that black lives are not abstract and not fungible lives that can be subject to oppression under the sign of universal equality of human beings. The movement challenges what we might call the "tyranny of the universal" and says that black lives offer very important and very powerful histories and temporalities >>

and languages and aesthetics and possibilities of freedom.

This tyranny of the universal was first challenged in political social action, I believe, by the Haitian Revolution. If we examine struggles against slavery everywhere, we find resonances of the Haitian Revolution, of the insistence of women and men who would come to call themselves Haitian that to be human is to collectively struggle to be free. There is no such thing as “free” for a single individual. Bourgeois democracies have always conceived a limited freedom, a freedom accorded to racial, class and gender elites that acquires its value precisely because of its powers of exclusion.

There is a direct line from Haiti to the Black Lives Matter movement. The insistence on the particularity of the black predicament is precisely that which is capable of yielding a robust universality because, for most of our history, the very category “human” has not embraced black people. Its abstractness has been coloured white and gendered male. There are those who think removing race from the equation – by saying All Lives Matter instead of saying Black Lives Matter – we somehow magically transcend race. But if, in fact, all lives mattered, we would not need to emphatically proclaim that black lives matter.

If you look at the Black Lives Matter website you will see that black women matter, black girls matter, black gay lives matter, black bi lives matter, black boys matter, black queer lives matter, black men matter, black lesbians matter, black trans lives matter, black immigrants matter, black incarcerated lives matter, black differently-abled bodies matter. Therefore, to say that black lives matter is to say that Latino and Asian American and Native American and Muslim and poor and working-class white people’s lives matter. It is to say that all lives matter.



And so as it turns out that the very particularity of the claim that black lives matter leads us to a richer, more inclusive and less hierarchical universal. It leads us not toward narrow exclusive nationalism but rather toward expansive, capacious internationalisms. These internationalisms are symbolised by the strong ties that have been developed between Palestine solidarity and Black Lives Matter. A strong affinity emerged two years ago, when activists on the ground in Palestine become the first to offer solidarity and advice to the Ferguson protestors through social media. The Palestinians recognised that the teargas canisters thrown by the police in Ferguson were from the same company that made the canisters used by Israeli police and military in Palestine. They tweeted advice to their sisters and brothers in this small town in Missouri about how to deal with the militarised police that were attacking them. The globalism of police militarisation was challenged by the globalism of resistance.

POSSIBLE FUTURES

History tends to elude us in the very process of its becoming. We always seem to falter when it comes to realising the present as history. Clarity only seems to emerge when we can no longer affect the passage of historical time. We can never predict definitive outcomes when we are entangled in

the complex circumstances of the present. Stuart Hall pointed out that there are never any guarantees for our struggle.

Nonetheless, it is our collective duty to imagine possible futures. When Mohammed Ali refused to be inducted into the military in 1967, we could not know that this would become an iconic historical moment. Just as was the raising of the fist by Tommie Smith and John Carlos at the Mexico Olympics in 1968. Perhaps [NFL football player] Colin Kaepernick’s refusal to stand during the singing of our militaristic national anthem will become another such moment. Or perhaps the actions by Zuleika Patel and the other girls at Pretoria High School.

This moment very well may be the historical juncture that we have been waiting for. We cannot really know. But we cannot let it pass without asserting collective agency in order to begin to purge our societies of racisms including Islamophobia and settler colonialism as well as anti-Semitism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, assaults against immigrants and refugees, and the unremitting capitalist assault on our environment and on our food sources and on the sentient beings that endure pain and torture as they are transformed into food for profit, food that generates disease in humans whose poverty compels them to rely on McDonalds and KFC for nourishment.

Even though there are never guarantees that we will reach the future we dream, we cannot stop dreaming. We cannot stop dreaming and we cannot stop struggling even if – and I say *when* – we see the crumbling of capitalism. There will always be vibrant legacies. There will always be unfulfilled promises. There will always be unfinished activism. **NA**

NOTE

This is an edited transcript of the 17th Steve Biko Memorial Lecture, given in Pretoria on 9 September 2016.

UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCE

Professor Eunice Pinky Seekoe is the Acting Dean of a Faculty and Overall Programme Director of the Albertina Sisulu Executive Leadership Programme in Health (ASELPH), a partnership amongst the Universities of Fort Hare (School of Health Sciences), Pretoria (School of Public Health) and Harvard (School of Public Health). Prof Seekoe is a Nurse by profession and has worked in academic institutions across the country. She joined UFH's Nursing Science Department in 2010 where she introduced innovative methodologies and strategies. Under her leadership, local and international collaborative partnerships with universities such as Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Elizabeth City State, Dublin City State and Auckland in New Zealand, recently Salt Lake University in Utah have been established with Fort Hare. The faculty has also received a grant from the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) to partner with a university in Sweden on "Health Facility Quality and Patient satisfaction Study in collaboration with the Schools of Public Health of the universities of Pretoria and Harvard.

The University of Fort Hare celebrated 100 year of existence in 2016 and part of the celebrations was the launch of the Faculty of Health Sciences as one of the flagship programmes of the Centenary Celebrations.

The Vision of The Faculty of Health Sciences endeavours to be competent, committed and globally recognised through the provision of excellence in teaching, learning, and research and community engagement. This is achieved through:

- Discovering a wealth of knowledge within the domain of Health Sciences through rigorous scientific learning and research
- Preparing future skilled health professionals for service and life-long learning through innovative curricula and individualised education experiences
- Strengthening health services to Improve the health of the people of South Africa and the international community



Prof Eunice Pinky Seekoe

- Generating financial and material resources to enhance sustainability

The Faculty maintains the values of commitment, integrity, teamwork, equity, competence, professionalism, respect, effective communication, research orientedness and accountability.

The Faculty of Health Sciences has grown from a small academic initiative to

a diverse multi-disciplinary Faculty with a national and international reputation. The research output has increased from national to international accredited journals.

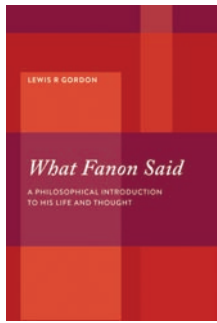
The Faculty has five Departments of Nursing Science, Human Movement Sciences, Public Health, Rehabilitative Sciences and Natural Sciences. It also has five Research Centres and Units; Mentoring for Sustainable Rural Community Resilience and Public Health research Niche Area, Albertina Sisulu Executive Leadership in Health Fellowship Programme, Health Sciences Institute, Effective Care Unit and Health Informatics Research Chair.

The Faculty boasts high fidelity simulation laboratories and provides students with the opportunity to graduate with experiential knowledge in skills and careers in hospitals, clinics, long-term care facilities, private practice and health care organisations.

Students who choose Nursing, Rehabilitative Studies, Public Health, Human Movement and Natural Science courses can pursue careers in public and private hospitals, private laboratories and research facilities as academics and can open their own private practices.

Our dedicated faculty, cutting edge educational technology, active learning classrooms and innovative curricula at basic and post basic levels using Problem Based Learning, Case Based Teaching and Community Based Education methodologies, incorporate real world experiences. These methodologies position the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Fort Hare in place for the students to gain an education that will provide a future that defines and enriches their lives. [NA](#)





What Fanon Said

Philosophical Introduction to His Life and Thought

Lewis Gordon

Wits University Press: Johannesburg, 2016. 191 pp

Reviewed by S'busisiwe Mnguni (MA philosophy candidate, Stellenbosch University)

What Fanon Said is organised into two strands. The first charts Frantz Fanon's life from his infancy in Martinique to his death in the United States, with Lewis Gordon explaining these movements as directed by Fanon's involvement in psychiatry, black liberation movements, or both. The second strand is philosophical, fraught with literary lyricism and parable-like vignettes, reading at times like a sermon in the church of black existentialism. Under Gordon's elucidation, Fanon's philosophy emerges as that which seeks to lay down the conditions that will make possible black-woman and black-man subjectivity. Gordon weaves the more uncomfortable and controversial aspects of Fanon's philosophy over and inside Fanon's chronological biography, an interlacing that is brought to life by Gordon's own role as a philosophy critic.

Gordon outlines Fanon's discussion of Western anxiety over black embodiment, where the white gaze claims that the "(black) body is the man, the man his body." By doing so, the white gaze makes of black people bodies and not-bodies, thus denying them subjectivity. The second chapter, "Writing through the zone of nonbeing", explores Fanon's account of the role of language as a tool of subjugation in *Black Skin, White Masks*.

Explained against the backdrop of Gordon's own philosophy, its rich tone is mired in the leaden honesty that is a feature of black existentialism.

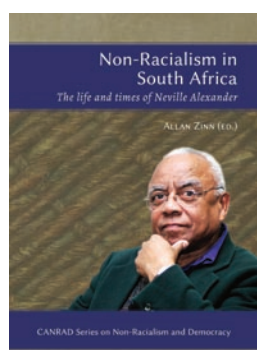
"Living experience, embodying possibility" is the most philosophically dense and challenging chapter of the entire book. Gordon smoothes out the accusations of sexism and homophobia that plague Fanon through a close reading of Fanon's philosophy in the original French. This chapter is breathtaking in its description of the controversial chapters in *Black Skin, White Masks* regarding interracial relationships. What emerges is an analysis of how the anonymity imposed on blackness in an anti-black world results in the black man and black woman living in a world of epistemic closure, a world without reciprocity, in which possibilities are closed off to the black. This chapter gives the reader a high-order crash course in Gordon's own black existentialism as he makes reference to and disputes Negritude, the myth of Black Orpheus and Sartre's anti-racist racism.

More biographical than philosophical, the fourth chapter, "Revolutionary therapy", charts Fanon's life in North Africa and his discussion of Algerian women who frustrate the coloniser by seeing without being seen. "Counselling the damned" discusses violence as a

major theme in Fanon's work, which, like the discussion concerning sexual racism, is laced with controversy. Fanon states that the colony sets the stage for a conflict of rights where one side must lose and violence is inevitable. If colonisation is to win, then violence continues for the colonised; if the colonised win, this would be violence to the colonial forces. The necessity of violence and the inevitability of one side losing make the colonial situation a tragic one. This invocation of tragedy juxtaposed with the important task of creating possibility highlights the remarkable manner in which Gordon's philosophical criticism draws out the most original, disruptive interpretations of Fanon's work.

The closing chapter deals with the end of Fanon's life and his quest for treatment for his cancer. Gordon also runs a final discussion of the major themes of anti-black racism in Fanon's works, such as bad faith, double consciousness and potentiated double consciousness and the over-determination of the black body.

What Fanon Said is a remarkable addition to the Fanon canon. This is not an introductory work for those who are new to Frantz Fanon, Lewis Gordon and black existentialism; it is rather a more intimate exploration of Gordian knots that cannot be undone and the vexingly honest aspects of both Fanon's and Gordon's work. [NA](#)



Nonracialism in South Africa

The Life and Times of Neville Alexander

Allan Zinn (ed.)

SUN MeDIA: Stellenbosch, 2016. 163 pp + DVD

Reviewed by Michael Nassen Smith (MPhil PPE [Politics, Philosophy and Economics])

The late Neville Alexander was a committed anti-apartheid activist and revolutionary Marxist. He is remembered, above all, for his staunch defence of non-racialism in both his intellectual and political work. Shortly before his passing, Alexander was a vocal critic of UCT's racial admissions policy. He argued that the university's choice to use apartheid racial categories to administer redress would keep race-based thinking alive and would take us further away from and not towards a non-racial society. In a fiery polemic in the Cape Times (15 June 2010), he warned that UCT would "pay the price" for its "cowardice" on the race question. Alexander was unmoved by any form of submission to racialism. One wonders what he might have made of our current predicament in which "race" and "race-based" thinking defines our public imagination.

Non-racialism in South Africa: The life and times of Neville Alexander is a collection of presentations by activists and academics to a conference held at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University's Centre for Non-Racialism

and Democracy in July 2013. It is a timely and refreshing work. The book takes the reader through Alexander's thoughts on humanism, education, language, culture and identity. His commitment to lead his life as a revolutionary activist is also explored, allowing for reflections on the relationship between politics, morality and values. His views on non-racialism, and how such a politics might be defended in the face of mounting criticism (even by its former adherents), is patiently and deftly described in Crain Soudien's "Afterword" and "Addendum".

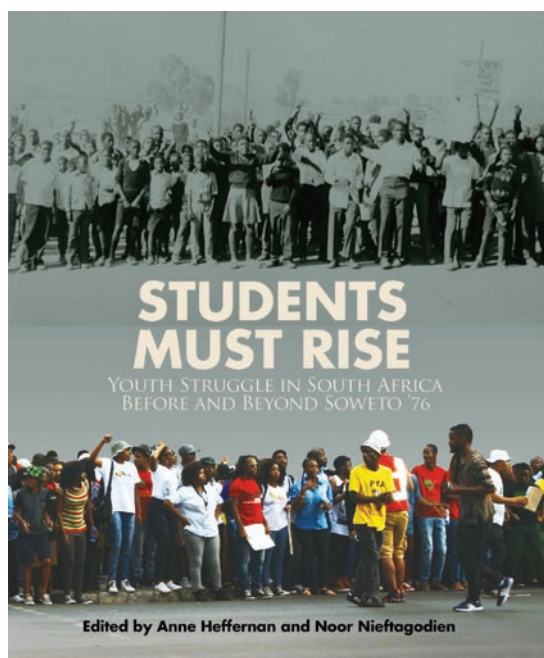
Perhaps the most interesting section is a discussion between Pallo Jordan, Enver Motala and Lybon Mashaba on Alexander's most significant contribution to revolutionary theory in South Africa: *One Azania, One Nation: The National Question in South Africa* (London: Zed Press, 1979)¹. Alexander's attempt to ground revolutionary praxis in a non-racialised conception of South Africa's polity is an underexplored aspect of his work. Pallo Jordan assesses its strengths and weaknesses, traces its

historical roots and compares it with the South African Communist Party's conceptualisations of "colonialism of a special type" and "national democratic revolution" from the same era. The exchange between Jordan, Mashaba and Motala is crucial reading for anyone concerned with historical debates on the national question in South Africa.

Non-racialism in South Africa is an excellent introduction to the work and life of Neville Alexander. The conversations between contributing authors make for a stimulating and interesting read, touching on a variety of the more significant historical, philosophical and political issues in South Africa. As Soudien notes, much more work is needed to present and understand Alexander's work in full. Much more is needed to defend, restate and re-conceptualise non-racialism in confrontation with its contemporary critics and detractors. [NA](#)

NOTE

1. *One Azania, One Nation* is available from South African History Online at <http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/one-azania-one-nation-neville-alexander>



Students Must Rise

Struggle in South Africa Before and Beyond Soweto '76

Anne Heffernan and Noor Nieftagodien (eds)

Wits University Press: Johannesburg, 2016. 224 pp

Reviewed by Alex Pennington (MA candidate, Social Justice in Transformation, UCT)

Students Must Rise was written to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising. Reading it in 2016, with a new education crisis in our universities, can induce a sense of *déjà vu*. My own grasp of the “then” and the “now”, which are often compared, has been a little bit fuzzy. This book’s sometimes bracing, sometimes intimate, personal accounts give the reader a sense that this is a 40-year (or even 60-year) tale without the final chapter that more conventional historical accounts might offer. I was no longer left questioning what is strictly new in the events of 2016, and far more aware of the differences.

It begins with a classical dialectical premise: the proliferation of black schools – intended to ensure a steady

stream of black labour for the white supremacist regime – effectively opened up the necessary space for resistance. The themes present the necessary complexity of the resistance that pervaded South African political, social and cultural life and built an important bridge between urban- and rural-based politics. This is something we do not attend to today, with the relentless focus on historically elite institutions. I also appreciated the details of the relative “unknowns”, the non-brand-name everyday heroes who, in their own important ways, fought to bring down a crumbling order. The authors bring commendable balance to a skewed historical narrative. Certainly, there can only be a healthy appreciation for the skill of the research and writing here

that allows the book to jump between the general and the detailed aspects of the time.

This work does quite a lot to highlight the importance of Black Consciousness and Pan-Africanism, perhaps to draw connections between the past and present. The small mention of non-racialism with reference to the significant role of the United Democratic Front (UDF) is a sign of our times, where identity shapes the weave of history. This is the only criticism I have of the book. The contemporary thesis of “intersectionality” sees capitalism alongside racism, sexism, ableism and heteronormativity, as opposed to a system of exploitation and expropriation. This is a significant development in left politics. [NA](#)

UIF SAVING JOBS THROUGH SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENTS

The National Development Plan is a blueprint serving as a guideline to government departments and state entities on how they can play a role in government wide efforts of creating decent work, reducing unemployment and poverty. The Unemployment Insurance Fund is among the leading state entities in the implementation of the provisions of the NDP to address the slow economic growth, unemployment and poverty in South Africa.

The UIF social investment mandate ensures that, additional to earning good financial returns, investments must be supportive of long term economic, social and adhere to sustainable environmental outcomes. The investments must also yield a good social return for the country. These investments have sustained 6 860 jobs of which 3 024 are permanent, 3 836 are temporary/seasonal and 195 are new jobs created during the financial year ending in March 2016.

UIF INVESTMENTS IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

The UIF investments are contributing to the energy requirements of South Africa and the investments in the renewable energy sector provides a total capacity of 192 megawatt of electricity of which 117 megawatt is solar energy and 27 megawatt is wind generated electricity.

The De Aar project is a shining example of the UIF energy investments and this project produces 90 megawatt of electricity and was completed in April 2016. The solar plant in the area generates enough electricity to power 15 000 houses. Another mainstay project is the Phakwe Group ran projects undertaken in the Northern and Eastern Cape.

INVESTMENT IN FOOD SECURITY

The UIF investments in this regard are undertaken under the banner of the UIF Agri-Fund in partnership with Futuregrowth and Day Breaker Poultry Project. The UIF Agri-Fund has invested in 4 farms situated in Mable Hall in Limpopo. One of the farms is a cash crop farm spanning 450 hectares. The farm in the last financial year produced 235 hectares of white maize, and cotton was planted in an area covering 28 hectares.

A further three farms are located in the Saron area in the Western Cape. In this project a total of 178 hectares has been used to plant grapes, 37 hectares has been used to plant citrus fruit. Furthermore, there is potential to plant an additional 92 hectares of grapes. The Daybreaker Poultry project operates in Gauteng, Limpopo and Mpumalanga and the combined projects have facilities to grow 1.6 million broiler chickens.

INVESTMENTS IN HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

The UIF concluded two investments in this regard that include a BEE hospital manager, Busamed to build a private hospital in Modderfontein and Fund Manager Razorite Healthcare that focus on the provision of affordable healthcare facilities that include rehabilitation and sub-acute centres.

The Modderfontein hospital is a 220 hospital bed with sub-acute facilities. This hospital is under construction. While the RH Fund Manager has concluded seven investments that include:

- Busamed with four hospital facilities
- HealthMed with two facilities

INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION

UIF has invested in three investments that play a role to unlock access to education. The investments were concluded with Eduloan – an organisation that provides financial support to tertiary students and South Point and Educor organisations that provide student accommodation. By March 2016, Eduloan had disbursed about R446 986.64 benefiting 34 047 students, while South Point provided about 10 000 student with accommodation.

UIF INVESTMENTS IN ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

The UIF has concluded two investments with the aim of supporting small and medium enterprises. In this regard the PIC on behalf of UIF has concluded investment deals with Musa Capital and TOSACO.

The investments will support more than 250 SMMEs across various sectors inclusive of agriculture and affordable housing. Musa Capital for example has a supply chain of over 250 SMME's that have facilitated the creation of 2 500 jobs.

TOSACO investments is planning to advance capital to young black entrepreneurs who aspire to own and manage Total Filling stations around the country.



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