

# The ANC and the Liberation Struggle in South Africa

Essential writings

Edited by  
Thula Simpson



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The history of the ANC, which is the oldest liberation movement on the African continent, is one that has generated a great deal of interest amongst historians in recent years. Gone are the days when the history of African nationalism could be relegated to the margins of the study of the South African past. Instead, with the ANC having ascended to the helm of political power, a position it has maintained for over twenty years, there can be no question that its history occupies an important and permanent place in the history of the nation.

This volume gathers together some of the most important contributions to the literature on the ANC's role in South Africa's struggle for liberation. Besides important themes such as gender, ethnicity, and healthcare, contributions from leading historians also address why the ANC decided to engage in armed struggle; what role the South African Communist Party played in making this decision; how the ANC External Mission contributed to the upsurge of mass protest in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s; and the ANC's contribution, relative to the other components of the liberation struggle, in ensuring the eventual demise of the old racial order. The chapters in this book were originally published in the *South African Historical Journal*, the *Journal of Southern African Studies*, and *African Studies*.

**Thula Simpson** is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. He has published extensively on the ANC's armed struggle and the organisation's relationship with popular protest movements in South Africa. He is the author of *Umkhonto we Sizwe: The ANC's Armed Struggle* (2016).

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Heather A. Hughes

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Jane Starfield

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*Women and the Problem of Family in Early African Nationalist History and Historiography*

Meghan Healy-Clancy

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## Chapter 4

*The African National Congress in the Western Transvaal/Northern Cape Platteland, c.1910–1964: Patterns of Diffusion and Support for Congress in a Rural Setting*

Andrew Hayden Manson and Bernard Mbenga

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*The Lasting Legacy: The Soviet Theory of the National-Democratic Revolution and South Africa*

Irina Filatova

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*The Genesis of the ANC's Armed Struggle in South Africa 1948–1961*

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*The African National Congress (ANC) Underground: From the M-Plan to Rivonia*

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*Secret Party: South African Communists between 1950 and 1960*

Tom Lodge

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*The ANC, MK, and 'The Turn to Violence' (1960–1962)*

Paul S. Landau

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*Armed and Trained: Nelson Mandela's 1962 Military Mission as Commander in Chief of Umkhonto we Sizwe and Provenance for his Buried Makarov Pistol*

Garth Benneyworth

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**Chapter 13**

*Transformations in the ANC External Mission and Umkhonto we Sizwe, c. 1960–1969*

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Melissa Armstrong

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**Chapter 15**

*Main Machinery: The ANC's Armed Underground in Johannesburg During the 1976 Soweto Uprising*

Thula Simpson

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**Chapter 16**

*'Umkhonto we Sizwe, We are Waiting for You': The ANC and the Township Uprising, September 1984 – September 1985*

Thula Simpson

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**Chapter 17**

*Sex in a Time of Exile: An Examination of Sexual Health, AIDS, Gender, and the ANC, 1980–1990*

Carla Tsampiras

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**Carla Tsampiras** is Senior Lecturer in Medical Humanities at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Her work is concerned with understanding how constructions of ‘race’, gender, sexuality, and class influence understandings of, and responses to, health concerns. Her other areas of interest include gender, violence and slavery in South Africa, the global crises, and Health and Medical Humanities.

# Preface

The essays in this book form part of an important turn in South African historiography. The reasons for the shift are twofold, and both have their origins in the political transition of the 1990s. The first is that the post-1994 dispensation highlighted the significance of a number of events and themes from within the country's African nationalist tradition that had previously been neglected by most historians of South Africa. But one of the causes of this neglect was that the resources necessary for the study of those topics were not available to researchers during the apartheid years. An important feature of the post-1994 period has been the emergence of a number of archival collections relevant to the liberation struggle.

These are the two factors that have fostered the emergence of the new literature. In the early 2000s they converged, and it is since then that the study of the ANC and the liberation struggle has come into its own. I have been fortunate enough to be both a witness and a contributor to this process. During my research on the ANC's armed struggle, I often felt the need for a companion general *History of South Africa* that could place the events I was considering within the context of broader developments in the country. It is a need that I have tried to address in my work, as is reflected in my two contributions to this volume, which focus respectively on the role of the ANC underground during the 1976 Soweto Uprising and the township rebellion of the mid-1980s.

I believe this volume as a whole will perform a similar integrative function, and that it raises a number of important issues that must be considered in any future history of South Africa.

The long period between the formation of the ANC and the negotiated settlement of the 1990s meanwhile indicates just how complex and protracted the liberation struggle was. One manifestation of this complexity is the remarkable diversity of the *forms* of resistance that the ANC felt compelled to adopt during its course. This diversity is well represented in this volume.

The first chapter is by Heather A. Hughes, a biographer of John Dube,<sup>1</sup> who was the first president of the ANC. In her chapter she discusses the ways in which Dube's life was interpreted and reinterpreted by succeeding generations of ANC members. She describes how these re-evaluations were crucially influenced by the changing imperatives of the struggle, and she shows that this process has continued into the new South Africa, where his reputation and visibility have grown as a consequence of the post-apartheid government according him a prominent place in the nationalist canon.

Jane Starfield meanwhile reflects on the writings of one-time ANC National Executive Committee member Dr Modiri Molema, focusing particularly on his contributions in the fields of history and ethnography, which, she notes, had been 'until then powerful discursive tools in the armoury of colonial domination'. She discusses how Molema, with his nationalist ambitions, sought to reclaim them as instruments that could be utilised in the struggle for liberation.

<sup>1</sup> H. Hughes, *First President: A Life of John Dube, Founding President of the ANC* (Auckland Park: Jacana, 2011).

Meghan Healy-Clancy offers a gendered perspective of the ANC's early years. Focusing particularly on the 1930s, she describes the ways in which women made a variety of political contributions as participants, documenters and theoreticians of the struggle. Whilst noting that they typically premised their activism on their roles as mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters, she seeks to challenge the notion that in doing so they functioned as either a stabilising or a conservative influence. She argues that they were deeply 'concerned to create a new sort of African family – both capable of protecting its privacy and [of serving as] a model for new forms of public life – that could nurture an African nationalist body politic' capable of challenging the racial order.

Andrew Manson and Bernard Mbenga consider the ANC's strength on the ground in the Western Transvaal/Northern Cape platteland between 1910 and 1964. They argue that there existed a close correlation between levels of ANC support in the area, and attempts by the state to impose segregationist and apartheid policies. They argue that the last of the attempted impositions that they discuss, namely the enforcement of the Bantustan policy in the 1950s, served to establish the area as an ANC stronghold in the long term, and one that would make an important contribution at various stages of the struggle, beginning with its role as a 'pipeline' out of the country into neighbouring Bechuanaland in the early 1960s.

The next cluster of chapters considers the radicalisation of the ANC in the years immediately following the Second World War. Irina Filatova explores the 'National Democratic Revolution' (NDR), which has been the cornerstone of ANC policy since the 1960s. She traces the genealogy of the doctrine and shows that after its initial development in the Soviet Union, it was transmitted to the ANC through the South African Communist Party (SACP) in the 1950s. She also discusses its career within the ANC from the 1960s onwards, pointing out that it not only survived the fall of the Berlin Wall, but it also outlived the collapse of apartheid in such a way that it may yet represent the country's future.

Stephen Ellis discusses the ANC's move to armed struggle, a process that culminated in the establishment of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), which became the ANC's military wing. His essay advances three main points: firstly, that it was the SACP and not the ANC which took the first step towards violence; that Nelson Mandela was in fact acting as a disciplined SACP member when he formed MK and served as its first commander-in-chief; and that these factors combined with the external support rendered to MK by the Soviet Union meant that the armed struggle was in fact 'inscribed in the politics of the Cold War' from its birth.

Of Raymond Suttner's two articles, the first deals with the ANC's response to the growing threat of legal proscription in the 1950s. He explains that the movement's counter-strategy centred on the so-called 'M-Plan', which was devised early in the decade to enable it to continue operating underground if the need arose. He argues that the plan's impact on the ANC has been more profound than historians have previously acknowledged, and that some aspects of the movement's political culture, such as its tendency towards hierarchical top-down forms of organisation, should be traced to the 1950s and the implementation of the plan, rather than to the exile period from the 1960s onwards, as has often been claimed. Suttner's second essay considers Chief Albert Luthuli's attitude towards the formation of MK. Based on an analysis of Luthuli's speeches, he argues that they indicate that his stance was one of 'possible pragmatism' on the question of violence.

In making this point, Suttner is responding above all to the works of Scott Everett Couper, a biographer of Luthuli,<sup>2</sup> who has argued that the former ANC president remained implacably opposed to the adoption of armed struggle in South Africa until the end of his life. Couper's

<sup>2</sup> S. Couper, *Albert Luthuli: Bound by Faith* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2010).

chapter in this volume is a rejoinder to Suttner in which he reiterates his basic argument. Referring to the fact that Luthuli received the Nobel Peace Prize within a week of Umkhonto we Sizwe's launch in December 1961, he says it is a 'historiographic oxymoron' to contend that Luthuli accepted the award 'for his unambiguous advocacy of strict non-violent methods to fight Apartheid and the next week supported the launch of the armed struggle'.

Paul Landau also considers the move to armed struggle, revisiting the issue of the role of the SACP in the establishment of MK. He focuses particularly on the interaction between African and non-African Party members. Perhaps his principal area of disagreement with Stephen Ellis and others who have written before him, is that rather than seeing the SACP as acting as a unified, cohesive political force during the late fifties and early sixties, he feels that there was much more competition *between* Party members than has previously been acknowledged, and he makes that the focus of his analysis.

Tom Lodge touches on some of the same questions in his chapter, which focuses on the history of the SACP in the decade following its banning in 1950. Two issues in particular receive his attention: the first concerns the Party's reconstitution as an underground organisation in the years following its prohibition; whilst the second relates to the role played by its members within the wider liberation movement during the same period. Whilst concurring with Ellis that many communists acceded to command positions in the ANC, he echoes Landau in arguing that to extrapolate from this a 'picture of the party in command is too simple', for it fails to capture the complexity of the ANC's internal political dynamics.

Garth Benneyworth considers the first phase of the armed struggle, discussing Nelson Mandela's African tour of 1962, in which the MK commander's mission was to mobilise continental support for the newly formed military organ. In his article Benneyworth considers the links Mandela formed with freedom fighters and military personnel from across the continent; the training he received whilst abroad; and his activities in South Africa upon his return. In the process he revisits an unsolved mystery of South African history, namely the fate of the gun that Mandela received during his African tour and later deposited at Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia, but which has never been recovered.

Arianna Lissoni discusses the history of the ANC's External Mission between 1960 and 1969, a period stretching from the Sharpeville Massacre to the Morogoro Conference. She details the difficulties that Oliver Tambo and his colleagues faced in establishing and consolidating the movement's position in Africa. She shows that the principal challenges they faced were the need to overcome hostility both within and beyond the ANC's ranks towards the reconstitution of what had been an Africans-only organisation in South Africa in the fifties into a 'unitary, non-racial liberation front' in exile; as well as the problem of adjusting MK and its often restless cadres to a new, and much more adverse strategic environment.

For all the stresses and strains that the movement encountered during the decade, those years proved to be crucial in the struggle, because by 1969 the External Mission had ensured that the ANC would survive what had been a determined and nearly successful attempt to secure its annihilation.

Melissa Armstrong explores the issue of the provision of health care within the ANC between 1964 and 1989. She argues that the needs of MK cadres, who formed the single largest component of the exile community, served as the principal influence guiding the evolution of the ANC's medical section. She points out that the health section began its existence as a small clinic in MK's camp in Kongwa, Tanzania in the 1960s, while she identifies the mid-1970s, when the ranks of the ANC were swelled by a new generation of exiles, as the key period in the creation of what became an institutional (and indeed a bureaucratic) Health Department. She argues that the efforts of this medical sector during the exile years proved to be 'critical for the survival' not only of MK's cadres, but the movement as a whole.



## PREFACE

Armstrong's contribution is complemented by an article by Carla Tsampiras, which discusses perhaps the greatest challenge the Health Department faced during its existence, namely the threat of AIDS. Focusing initially on the AIDS education that the ANC offered to its members, she expands to discuss pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections generally, before reflecting on what her findings suggest regarding the sexual practices and healthcare needs that existed in the movement in the years leading up to its legalisation in 1990.

Clearly, whatever one feels about the issues that are raised – and the chapters show that there already exists strong disagreement about a number of them – there can be little doubt regarding the importance of their role in creating the new South Africa and determining some of its most salient characteristics. Previously the articles existed in widely dispersed publications. Yet their influence has been such that their basic arguments will in many cases be widely known, invariably second hand via other publications, and often with their original provenance remaining unacknowledged. This volume is offered in the hope that the task of gathering these works into a single collection will be useful to the general reader in providing an introduction to the basic literature on the ANC and the liberation struggle, whilst also serving as a resource for those specialists interested in taking the next step in the development of the field.

**Thula Simpson  
Hatfield, Pretoria  
December 2016**

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The chapters in this book by Heather A. Hughes, Jane Starfield, Meghan Healy-Clancy, Andrew Hayden Manson and Bernard Mbenga, Irina Filatova, Scott Everett Couper, Paul S. Landau and Carla Tsampiras, were first published in a special issue of the *South African Historical Journal* (SAHJ) in September 2012 (Volume 64, Number 3) that commemorated the ANC's centennial. The chapters by Raymond Suttner, Tom Lodge, Garth Benneyworth and Melissa Armstrong, as well as Thula Simpson's essay on the ANC and the township uprising, all appeared in other issues of the SAHJ.

Thula Simpson's article on the ANC underground in Johannesburg during the Soweto Uprising was first published as an article in *African Studies* in 2011.

The chapters by Arianna Lissoni and Stephen Ellis were first published as articles in the *Journal of Southern African Studies* in 2009 and 2011 respectively.

I would like to thank the authors and the journals concerned for permitting the inclusion of these works in this volume.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Nicholas Barclay, Oscar Masinyana and Jenny Guildford from Routledge, Taylor and Francis, for their help and encouragement in seeing this book through to publication.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this volume to the memory of Angela Gumedede Simpson.

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# **Dialectical Dances: Exploring John Dube's Public Life**

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## **Abstract**

This article investigates the relationship between biographical subject and author. By using the example of John Dube, it traces the changing fortunes of the 'the life' at the hands of various writers, during his life but more particularly after his death. It culminates with a discussion of the recently-published first full-length biography of Dube.

## **Introduction**

John Langalibalele Dube, the founding president of the South African Native National Congress one hundred years ago, has only recently become the subject of a full-length biography. Yet he has by no means been neglected in the historiography of twentieth-century African nationalism in South Africa. Several competing images of him emerge. One – perhaps the most striking – posits a clear trajectory to his public life: that he started out with a radical mission, upsetting colonial officials and missionaries in the process, but along the way made compromises and ended his career politically emasculated and a supporter of segregation. Another version, by contrast, stresses his consistency as a moderate voice; yet another finds his ambiguity, his multiple voices, most in evidence.

Eric Hobsbawm devised the notion of a 'dialectical dance' as a way of characterising those who, in times of profound change, had neither a vested interest in maintaining the status quo nor in completely overthrowing it.<sup>1</sup> At various times they danced between different ideologues and extremists; on balance, they tended to be politically moderate. Early twentieth-century South Africa was possibly such a setting: in the aftermath of the South African War, there were sharply competing ideas as to who should be included in and excluded from a state-building project that sought to consolidate the interests of a

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1. E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789–1848* (New York: Mentor, 1962), 84–85.

modernising industrial economy, whose leaders were themselves divided into squabbling factions. Was someone like John Dube one of these dialectical dancers, balanced awkwardly as a moderate,<sup>2</sup> or else unable to hold a position, swayed by his own constituency as well as those keen to minimise his influence?

The notion of a dialectical dance simultaneously brings the relationship between subject and scholarship into focus: it may be the case that it is choreographed not so much *through* a public life as *outside* of it and/or *afterwards*, as different writers survey the evidence and come to their own various conclusions. Marks alluded to this phenomenon with specific reference to Dube: 'On the whole, American scholars have heard the voice of Booker T. Washington, British liberals that of Victorian liberalism.'<sup>3</sup> The theme of this article, then, is the ways in which Dube's public life has been understood and interpreted in the historical/biographical record. It draws inspiration from the work of Lucy Riall, who made a strong case for the need to understand how 'a life' is constructed in retrospect and over time, in her study of the Italian nationalist Giuseppe Garibaldi.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of the sources that have been drawn upon, written sketches and more discursive treatments in which Dube is the clear subject are the most important. Reference is also made to selected historical texts which have shaped our image of him, despite the fact that he plays only a bit part in them. Discussion concentrates on published texts, although it should be noted that at least two of Dube's contemporaries, G.G. Nxaba and R.R.R. Dhlomo, both had intentions of producing biographies and had begun to make sketch notes which survive in the archival record;<sup>5</sup> likewise, there are unpublished theses that have exerted an important influence and merit inclusion for this reason. In addition, reference is made to a certain amount of oral evidence, where this has had some influence in shaping perceptions about Dube's life.

2. We should, however, note Campbell's caution that 'the dichotomy between "moderates" and "radicals" is grossly inadequate for disentangling the web of association' within the African middle classes. He was referring specifically to the interwar years but the point holds more generally. J. Campbell, 'T.D. Mveli Skota and the Making and Unmaking of a Black Elite', paper presented at the University of the Witwatersrand History Workshop, 1987, 20.
3. S. Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-century Natal*. (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1986), 69.
4. L. Riall, 'The Shallow End of History? The Substance and Future of Political Biography', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 40, 3 (2010), 375–397.
5. G.G. Nxaba's 11-page manuscript is in the American Board Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard. Although difficult to date, it was likely written before 1917, the year in which Dube's first wife, Nokutela Mdimba, died. Nxaba was related to Dube through this marriage. Its focus is on the early years of Ohlange and the struggles of the staff under the Dube's leadership to establish the institution. It also recounts details of Dube's family background to emphasise his prominence – for example, that his father James had once loaned the sum of £1,000 to a white man – and is the only known source to list all of John Dube's siblings. R.R.R. Dhlomo edited *Ilanga* for nearly 30 years; in his retirement, he was attempting to write a biography of Dube, but struggling under difficult circumstances: 'no typewriter, and by candle light', as he told Tom Karis, who interviewed him in 1964 (University of KwaZulu-Natal Malherbe Library, Karis-Carter Microfilm Collection, Reel 9A, Dube section). Both Nxaba and Dhlomo wished to convey a sense of the adversity against which Dube had had to struggle (which they keenly felt themselves), as well as the considerable material accomplishments of his parents.

### The making of John Dube's reputation to 1946

By the time of his death in 1946, John Dube had acquired a towering reputation as a leader of his generation. He had of course enjoyed considerable prominence in public life, most notably as founder of Ohlange (1901) and *Ilanga* (1903), and then as inaugural president of the African National Congress (1912–1917), but three decades had passed since the last of these achievements. Moreover, half of his presidential incumbency has been marked by inactivity, and he had had to relinquish control of both Ohlange and *Ilanga* in the 1920s. While he had remained active at the helm of nationalist politics in Natal and Zululand, he had fallen out with detractors both within and outside Congress and his acceptance of a position on the Natives Representative Council in 1937 divided opinion. How, then, had his unrivalled stature been established?

The tireless efforts of his remarkable mentor, William Wilcox, are of some significance. Wilcox often enters the story of Dube's life as the missionary under whose auspices the young John Dube travelled to America to study in the late 1880s, but then as often departs from it, never to reappear. In fact the two men stayed closely in touch, collaborating on issues as diverse as orthography, mission station rents and the launch a self-help scheme (the Zulu Industrial Improvement Company). In 1909, in order to assist Dube with a fundraising mission abroad, Wilcox wrote an article for the *Missionary Review of the World*.<sup>6</sup> Entitled 'John L. Dube, the Booker Washington of the Zulus', it stressed Dube's Christian duty and achievements at Ohlange. Wilcox and his wife were forced to return to the States in 1918, penniless and defeated in their independent endeavours to set up self-help Christian communities in South Africa.<sup>7</sup> Yet they never gave up their support for Dube. Wilcox produced another article on Dube's work in 1927, just months before he died. This time, Dube had been elevated: 'The story of John Dube, the Booker Washington of South Africa'. Again, it was written to assist his protégé on a mission abroad to raise funds for a trades building at Ohlange; again, it was certain to attract attention in one of the most widely-read Christian magazines of the time.<sup>8</sup>

Wilcox's 1927 article, written when its subject was 55, contains an outline biographical narrative, beginning with Dube's struggle with faith and conversion to Christianity at school; his pleading with Wilcox to be allowed to travel to America; the hardship he faced there in his attempts to be educated; his breakthrough as a public speaker and early success on the fundraising circuit; his return to Natal and founding of Ohlange and *Ilanga* and his fortitude in keeping them afloat, despite a severe lack of resources; his presidency of the African National Congress; and his continuing power as a public speaker before numerous influential audiences. The youthful episodes in this account,

6. In *Missionary Review of the World*, 32 (1909), 917–919.

7. The Wilcoxes' missionary endeavours in southern Africa are recounted in Cherif Keita's documentary, *Cemetery Stories: A Rebel Missionary in South Africa* (Carleton College, 2009).

8. W. Wilcox, 'The Story of John Dube, the Booker Washington of South Africa', *Congregationalist* 10 March 1937; University of KwaZulu-Natal Campbell Collections, Killie Campbell Cuttings Book 4, 131. By the time Dube took this trip, he had relinquished his total control of Ohlange but continued to support it in a number of ways.

presented in minutely-detailed direct speech, feature far more prominently than the later adult life.

'Well, John', I asked him, 'what troubles you?'

'Nothing much', he replied, 'only I want to be a Christian, and you asked us all to come and have a talk with you.'<sup>9</sup>

Wilcox's own sense of achievement was intimately bound up with Dube's, particularly his role in setting the young man on the path that led to subsequent greatness. He thus presented his narrative as a heroic battle with, and eventual conquest of, darkness and adversity, and of fame well-earned. It is an account, moreover, that carries the stamp of great authority, given the closeness of the two men. Lastly, since it recounts Dube's early years in such detail, it has been one of the most important sources of information about this youthful period in his life ever since.

It is of interest that apart from the title, there is no other mention of Booker Washington in this article. By the time of his death in 1915, Washington had become a byword for responsible African American accommodation within the status quo. Dube had sought Washington's endorsement for his work in South Africa as early as 1898; this had finally been conferred in 1910. Although both Dube and Wilcox had tended to rub against the grain far more than Washington had ever done, they undoubtedly admired his achievements (and since both had been bitterly thwarted in their endeavours for want of cash, were perhaps even a little envious of the resources he was able to command). In any event, they were clearly prepared to ally themselves with his memory for present and future purposes.

Whoever penned Dube's entry just a few years later for *The African Yearly Register* (possibly the general editor himself, T.D. Mweliso Skota, or another prolific contributor, H.I.E. Dhlomo)<sup>10</sup> did not refer to him in these terms at all. The *Register* is interesting as an example of how the biographical sketch can be used not merely to convey 'factoids' of information about the subject but also to present that subject as he (and in a few rare examples, she) was viewed by contemporaries. Manganyi saw the historical significance of the *Register* as the first attempt by black South Africans to exploit the biographical form for purposes of declaiming a new identity, 'part and parcel of the attempt at creating the New African'. This was an intellectual non-starter for him, because the concept of the 'New African' embraced the ideology of the coloniser and denied the possibility of what he called 'cultural improvisation'.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, the only two editions of the *Register* that ever appeared, in 1930 and 1932, together sold 12,000 copies:<sup>12</sup> it was both popular and influential in its own time and has been an important source of information for scholars of modern southern African history ever since.

9. Wilcox, 'The Story of John Dube'. Two years previously, Wilcox had published his memoirs of his first attempts to establish mission work among the Tonga at Inhambane in the 1880s; it is couched in the same immediate style. See his *The Man from the African Jungle* (New York: Macmillan Press, 1925)
10. Couzens discusses the matter of authorship in his *The New African. A Study of the Life and Work of H.I.E. Dhlomo* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1985), 1.
11. N.C. Manganyi, 'Biography: The Black South African Connection', in A.M. Friedson, ed., *New Directions in Biography*. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1981), 55–57.
12. Campbell, 'T.D. Mweliso Skota', 2.

In the *Register*, Dube's pre-eminence is established in several ways.<sup>13</sup> A double-page spread is devoted to him, consisting of a photograph on the left and text on the right. Of the nearly 300 entries in the 'living' section, 37 are accorded this honour of two-page spreads (in only one case, that of Mangena Mokone, this stretches to four), 23 of them from South Africa and neighbouring territories and the rest from other parts of Africa. The photograph shows a commanding close-up portrait of Dube, impeccably attired, sporting handle-bar moustaches, and looking confidently just past the camera, as if acknowledging an appreciative audience. In his bearing he is every bit the respected leader. The word 'founder' occurs three times in the opening paragraph: this is clearly a source of Dube's great stature, being the *originator* of so much that defined the African middle class: a newspaper, a school, and a political organisation. Importantly, all three were still in existence at the time of publication, unlike countless other efforts that had spluttered into life and failed for lack of resources, something of which Skota himself was all too aware.

The main part of the entry focuses on Dube's tenure as president of Congress, particularly on the delegation he led to Britain in 1914 to protest the passing of the Natives Land Act. In this version, the mission ended because of the declaration of war in August and statements by British politicians that they would continue to press for the rights of Africans – in other words, due to circumstances beyond the control of the delegation. The narrative continues that some time later (date unspecified), Dube resigned from the presidency, a careful formulation leaving his reputation intact. Several subsequent accounts claimed that he had been pushed, rather than had jumped (and it was an episode that Wilcox had misremembered in his contribution, declaring that Dube had served two terms in office).

The final paragraph begins by noting that he has continued to play a leading role in education and politics in Natal. His talents as an orator are recounted, as are his popularity 'with all sections of the community' and his fame among chiefs across the subcontinent. These last points indicate in the *Register's* discourse that Dube had played an important role in reducing ethnic and linguistic divisions and in fostering the nationalist (or even Pan-African) vision so vital to Skota. Interestingly, the description 'progressive' is not used in relation to Dube. Since it acts as 'the ideological touchstone or keyword of the whole book',<sup>14</sup> omission is possibly as suggestive as commission, indicating a certain ambivalence towards him.

### **The making of John Dube's reputation after 1946**

Some writers argue strongly that biography can properly be undertaken only after the death of the subject. This is not merely due to the important matter of defamation and the threat of legal proceedings that might prevent the publication of anything that could potentially be construed as slanderous while the subject is alive. It is also about perspective and the need to assess lasting influence, particularly in the case of well-known or

13. For Dube's entry, see T.D. Mweli Skota, ed. and comp., *The African Yearly Register. Being an Illustrated National Biographical Dictionary (Who's Who) of Black Folks in Africa* (Johannesburg: R.L. Esson and Co. and The Orange Press, 1932), 144–145.

14. Couzens, *The New African*, 7.



controversial figures.<sup>15</sup> If this last-mentioned point is any guide, then Dube's prospects in the following two decades were not promising. While he emerged a giant from the press coverage immediately after his death, what little was added to the published record thereafter served to question, rather than reinforce, the image of greatness that had been so carefully crafted through his life.

On his death in February 1946, Dube's achievements were extensively recounted in both print and funeral eulogy. However, an observation about funeral eulogy can equally apply to print recollection at the time of death, that it will tend by its very nature to "celebrate, commemorate, honour, dedicate, mourn" and thus *praise* the life of the deceased'.<sup>16</sup> Since this is a widely-accepted convention – whatever one feels about the life, this is not the appropriate time for any sort of dispassionate appraisal – the contribution of eulogy to the making of a posthumous legacy needs to be treated with great caution. In Dube's case, his supporters used the occasion for a concerted attempt at establishing a reputation of heroic, even epic, proportions.

Although most newspapers carried stories about Dube's passing, *Ilanga* (as one would expect) led the tributes, and several pages were given over to praise for his achievements, in editorials, letters, reports of speeches, songs and sonnets. It was not only the amount of space devoted to such praise, but also the prominence of the contributors that was important. Senator Edgar Brookes and H.I.E. Dhlomo headed a long list, Dhlomo setting the tone:

It is the practice in this country to judge the achievements of Africans in a condescending spirit by making a special tape-measure for the blackman. His work is assessed and valued not according to absolute standards but according to the theory that he belongs to a child race – and thus certain allowances and considerations have to be made for him. This attitude, this practice, has done much injury to African endeavour in art, music, and other spheres. The life and achievements of Dr Dube are above this.<sup>17</sup>

Dhlomo then turned to the theme of Dube's greatness, pointing to the many ways in which he had faced up to and conquered adversity, emerging stronger each time. Both Booker Washington and Dube had 'led their people out of the Egypt of oppression and despair' to the Canaan of 'Hope, Solidarity, Self Help, self-realisation and expression'. But whereas Washington had confined his achievements to education, Dube's could be measured across a broad terrain, as 'an educationist, a politician, a publicist, editor, artist'. The difficult task of unifying Africans, which Dube had tackled with great energy, was also something unknown to Washington. Dube was clearly the greater leader.<sup>18</sup>

The young Jordan Ngubane's contribution for *Inkundla yaBantu* in June 1946 probably helped to make Dube's life and work more accessible to his own generation. His assessment

15. On the effects of defamation laws, see P. Alexander, 'The Art of the Impossible: Problems of Literary Biography', lecture presented to Christ's College, Cambridge, November 2003. On this same issue as well as on that of perspective, see H. Lee, *Biography: A Very Brief Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 9–10.
16. D. Ochs, cited in A.D. Kunkel and M.R. Dennis, 'Grief Consolation in Eulogy Rhetoric: An Integrative Framework' in *Death Studies*, 27, 1 (2003), 3; emphasis added.
17. *Ilanga*, 23 February, 1946.
18. *Ibid.*

was mixed, even equivocal, already demonstrating a willingness to question the *Ilanga* image. While Dube had been considered a radical at the time of the Bhambatha Rebellion, Ngubane's verdict was definite: he 'was not a revolutionary or a radical. Even his style of writing and angle of approach were not remarkable for their aggressiveness. He wrote in somewhat plaintive and moderate tones in pleading the case of his people'. As his influence grew in white circles, continued Ngubane, so it waned in African ones; he had also been 'chased around' by the ICU. Yet he possessed qualities which made him an impressive figure: 'His enemies said he was stubborn and sometimes capricious. His friends admired his patience, ability to negotiate through difficult situations and his refusal to take defeat.' Above all, 'he was against racial nomination of any sort . . . whether we agree with him or not, he was a distinguished nation-builder'.<sup>19</sup> Here was Dube presented as the flawed hero.

Just two years later, a highly influential work appeared, Edward Roux's *Time Longer than Rope*.<sup>20</sup> Roux, who was active in leftwing politics, knew Dube and had taught at Ohlange, and in this sense he spoke with some authority. He pointed out that 'in his youth [Dube] appears to have been rather more of a radical' than when we encounter him in the heat of the Durban anti-pass protests of 1929. On this occasion, he is described as a 'good boy', watching the unfolding events from the safety his Chevrolet, the protesters taking no notice of him. Later in the narrative, Dube re-appears as a 'traitor' for allegedly supporting the Hertzog Bills. 'But who cared for Dube? He was known to be a Government man', Roux adds.<sup>21</sup> These were fleeting if memorable anecdotes, without serious analytical support or documentary evidence. Yet here was the earliest articulation of that perception that would reappear: Dube had been radical in his youth and had danced rather a long way rightwards through his political career.<sup>22</sup>

R.V. Selope Thema's 'How Congress Began', which appeared in *Drum* in 1953, failed to make any mention at all of Dube, choosing instead to focus on Pixley kaIsaka Seme, who had lately passed away. Given the title of the piece, this seems distinctly odd. Selope Thema had been closely involved in Dube's exit from the presidency in 1917, and may have had his own motives for airbrushing him from his recollections. Nevertheless, this article has been influential as an eyewitness account and has helped to boost Seme's reputation as having founded Congress almost single-handedly.

In *The African Patriots*, published in 1963, Mary Benson portrayed Dube (whom, like Roux and Thema, she knew) in a more charitable light, despite the fact that the ANC had recently embarked on an armed struggle from exile, and the old, 'polite' political methods of the early generation of nationalists were by then heavily under attack. She described Dube on the eve of his assumption of the Congress presidency as 'a determined and practical visionary' who had been moved by the Natal government's failure to provide schooling for Africans. His vision extended to the founding of *Ilanga* and a couple of years

19. J.K. Ngubane, 'Three Famous Journalists I Knew: John Langalibalele Dube', in *Inkundla yaBantu*, 9, 121, Second fortnight, June 1946.
20. E. Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope: The Black Man's Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (London: Gollancz, 1948). This work was reissued by the University of Wisconsin Press in 1964. Page references are from the later edition.
21. Roux, *Time Longer Than Rope*, 100, 250 and 288.
22. An observation also noted by R. Hunt Davis in his 'John L. Dube: a South African Exponent of Booker T. Washington', *Journal of African Studies*, 2, 4 (1975/6), 511.

later he 'had courted arrest by protesting outspokenly against the execution of Zulus during the Bambata rebellion of 1906'. Anticipating a theme of later scholarship, Benson claimed that even in 1912, 'first and foremost Dube was a Zulu patriot... [this] was both a virtue and a disadvantage; however, for the time being the Native National Congress saw only his virtue'. By the 1920s, she continued, Dube had become a 'moderate', though with strong words against government policy.<sup>23</sup>

Benson's work was part of a wave of emerging Africanist scholarship, whose primary impetus was the achievement of statehood across the continent. Nationalism and the nature of resistance to colonial rule were prominent, linked themes in this literature<sup>24</sup> and served as the context for the first sustained evaluations of Dube's career, by Shula Marks in the United Kingdom and Manning Marable and R. Hunt Davis in America. Marks's *Reluctant Rebellion: The 1906–8 Disturbances in Natal* was published in 1970; her interest in Dube's role was developed in an article in the new *Journal of Southern African Studies* and subsequently in a series of interlinked essays on African leadership in Natal.<sup>25</sup> Marable's doctoral thesis for the University of Maryland was submitted in 1976; it was never published, although shorter contributions, partially based on it, were.<sup>26</sup> Davis's study appeared as an article in another recently-established periodical, the *Journal of African Studies*, in 1975/6.<sup>27</sup> Marks's first article in part positioned itself against Davis's work, which in turn drew substantially on Marable's work in progress. Thus, although it was the last in this trilogy actually to appear, Marable's contribution is dealt with first.

Marable's thesis is notable for several reasons. As an African American, he brought an important 'subaltern' perspective to his work. In addition, he interviewed a number of people who had worked with and known Dube, such as Gideon Mvukwendlu Sivetye and William Ireland. Although he was also constrained in the amount of research he was able to complete in South Africa, he concentrated his attention on hitherto-unexplored documentary sources in America (at least for this subject matter), and as a result those chapters tracing Dube's American years and connections are the strongest. His work had little to say about Dube's involvement in Congress, focusing as it did on his educational endeavours.

Marable stressed the formative influences of Booker Washington and a philosophy that involved subscribing to 'a pragmatic alliance with white paternalists'.<sup>28</sup> He then traced

23. M. Benson, *The African Patriots. The Story of the African National Congress of South Africa* (Chicago, New York and London: Encyclopaedia Britannica Press, 1963), 29 and 61.
24. Seminal contributions include G. Shepperson and T. Price, *Independent African. John Chilembwe and the Nyasaland Uprising of 1915* (Edinburgh: The University Press, 1958); T. Hodgkin, *African Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (London: Frederick Muller, 1956); B. Davidson, *Africa in Modern History: The Search for a New Society* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978), and P. Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism and South Africa: The African National Congress 1912–1952* (London: C. Hurst, 1970).
25. S. Marks, 'The Ambiguities of Dependence: John L. Dube of Natal', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 2 (1975), 162–180; Marks, 'The Ambiguities of Dependence'.
26. M. Marable, 'African Nationalist: The Life of John Langalibalele Dube' (Phd thesis, University of Maryland, 1976); M. Marable, 'A Black School in South Africa', *Negro History Bulletin*, 34, 4 (1974), 258–261; and M. Marable, 'Booker T. Washington and African Nationalism', *Phylon*, 35, 4 (1974), 398–406. It is of interest that this last-mentioned work was Marable's first exploration of biography, to which he returned much later: his biography of Malcolm X was published just days after his death in March 2011.
27. Davis, 'John L. Dube', 497–528.
28. Marable, 'Booker T. Washington', 401.

Dube's attempts to establish Ohlange and keep it running with the help of his American Committee and various other American philanthropists. His judgement of Dube's legacy was a harsh one: he was 'leader of the conservative Black nationalist movement... due in large measure to his own limited social vision and lack of independent economic funds'. In embracing a cautious, pro-capitalist ideology and rejecting Gandhian passive resistance, Dube encouraged his followers to accept segregation. Thus, 'the tactics of Natal's small Black middle class helped to create the anti-humane regime in Southern Africa'.<sup>29</sup> There had been redeeming features to Dube's early position – in America in the 1890s, his rhetoric had often been virulently anti-colonial, for example – but ultimately Dube sold out. Marable was thus adding weight to the 'Roux view'.

Davis, like Marable, saw Washington as a major influence on Dube. Indeed, his study was designed around two related questions, why such a passionate Washingtonian exponent came from Natal, and why that individual was John Dube. He saw parallels in the two men's lives and emphasised the American origins of the African National Congress, in part explaining in these terms what he considered its early moderation and responsibility. He argued strongly that Dube must be seen 'primarily as an educator whose political activities formed an extension of a social philosophy founded on education'. In contrast to Marable, Davis concluded that he 'demonstrated a remarkable consistency throughout his public life... that can best be understood when considered in the context of his conscious adoption of Booker T. Washington's philosophy, strategy and tactics'.<sup>30</sup> (It is worth noting that Peter Walshe was probably the first to query the contradiction in such an argument: 'although Dube was... an admirer of Washington, the very formation of Congress as a permanent organisation to defend African interests was more in keeping with Du Bois's methods'.<sup>31</sup>)

Marks's study of Dube was less concerned with positing an American connection than with situating Dube in the changing political economy of South Africa, something that neither Marable nor Davis had attempted. She introduced what became the influential concept of 'the ambiguities of dependence', in order to characterise what she saw as apparent contradictions not only in Dube's publicly-declared position, but in those of other twentieth-century Natal/Zululand leaders as well. As far as Dube was concerned, her verdict differed greatly from all the foregoing writers: he was remarkably consistent, not in his moderation and attachment to Washington but in demanding racial equality and pressing for African unity, both of these 'revolutionary' aspirations in the early twentieth century and sounding distinctly outspoken even in the 1940s.<sup>32</sup>

Yet his structural location as a 'powerless and dependant "intercalary leader" mediating between two unequal societies'<sup>33</sup> was what underlay his apparent shifts between defiance and acquiescence. Rejecting the somewhat literal reading of documentary evidence to be

29. Marable, 'African Nationalist', 183 and iii.

30. Davis, 'John L. Dube', 513 and 527. It may be noted that Davis also surveys a number of works discussing Dube.

31. Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism*, 13. Recent scholars have cautioned against drawing too bold a distinction between what were often tendencies, rather than oppositions, in African American thought: see W.J. Moses, *Creative Conflict in African American Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

32. Marks, 'The Ambiguities of Dependence', 166.

33. *Ibid.*, 167; she drew the concept of 'intercalary leader' from the work of Donovan Williams.

found in both Marable's and Davis's work, she instead presented a complex analysis of Dube's adherence to Washington's philosophy (in particular the need for industrial education), arguing that while this was engrained in his make-up, it was also a 'mask' he employed in order to push the bounds, striking out independently of state control at Ohlange and on *Ilanga lase Natal*. Nowhere was this more evident than in his assumption of the presidency of the South African Native National Congress, when in his acceptance address he spoke with 'two voices to his two different audiences', whites and Africans. To the former, he stressed his adherence to Washington and his cautious approach to change, while to the latter he stressed the urgency of political emancipation.<sup>34</sup>

In her later work, Marks explored further this idea of speaking to different audiences, relating it not only to Dube's politics but to the vested interests of different scholars, as noted above. She also added a further dimension, linking back to Mary Benson's observations: Dube's vacillation between a broadly-based *African* nationalism and a narrowly-based *Zulu* nationalism, a product of the increasingly restrictive policies of the state and his casting-about for modernising allies.<sup>35</sup> Her overall conclusion was that it was the world, rather than the individual, that had changed: Dube straddled two distinct eras of South African history, one rooted in a slow-paced agrarian past and the other in an aggressively industrialising one. Under such circumstances, 'his strategy and ideology were outflanked by the times'.<sup>36</sup> Marks's argument is that the structural ambiguity that Dube exhibited (as well as A.W.G. Champion, Solomon kaDinuzulu and M.G. Buthelezi, her other subjects) is located in society, rather than the individual. One can therefore observe that her concept of ambiguity and Hobsbawm's of 'dialectical dance' both share the sense of a tension between opposing positions – Marks uses the notion of a 'tightrope' to convey this – but with one difference: while Marks tends slightly toward privileging structure over agency, Hobsbawm tends toward privileging agency over structure.

The years from the mid-1980s were a period of considerable deceleration in Africanist scholarship, as the phase of optimism about independence gave way to a more sombre period of reflection on the 'failure of development'. It was also one which saw an intensification of the liberation struggle within South Africa and the onset of negotiations with the exiled ANC; Rassool's observation that 'there is always a struggle for control over the story of a life' holds for any act of biography, but is especially apt for these years, in two respects.<sup>37</sup> First, as Lodge noted, the early 1990s witnessed 'the birth of a new genre of iconographic literature devoted to the lives and achievements of great black South Africans', an important development in view of the fact that (book length) political biography in South Africa up to that point had remained almost exclusively white.<sup>38</sup> Brian Willan's detailed and insightful study of Solomon Plaatje, published in 1984, was then virtually the only exception.<sup>39</sup> Among those subjected to biographical treatment – sometimes only by way

34. Marks, 'The Ambiguities of Dependence', 175.

35. Marks, 'The Ambiguities of Dependence', 68–73.

36. Marks, 'The Ambiguities of Dependence', 165.

37. C.S. Rassool, 'The Individual, Auto/Biography and History in South Africa' (Phd thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2004), 46.

38. T. Lodge, 'Paper Monuments: Political Biography in the New South Africa', *South African Historical Journal*, 28 (1993), 249.

39. B. Willan, *Solomon Plaatje: A Biography* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1984).

of a preface to collected speeches or writings – were Monty Naicker, Yusuf Dadoo, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo. Notably, all were post-World War II leaders of the Congress Alliance: earlier generations of leadership were barely mentioned.

Yet when they were (and this is the second observation on Rassool's point), it was to claim them as emblems of a more recent struggle. In Dube's case, examples included the contributions of Herbert Mnguni and E.S. Reddy. Mnguni drew explicit lessons from Dube's life for the cause of Black Liberation (the need for education in preparation for taking control of the country, the need for a voice in the media, the need to be courageous in the face of oppression)<sup>40</sup>. E.S. Reddy wrote extensively on the role that Indian nationalists had played in the South African struggle. In one article, he argued that a 'close friendship and mutual respect' had developed between Dube and Gandhi during the latter's time in South Africa. He teased out the parallels in their lives, born within a couple of years of each other; travelling abroad to study; founding settlements, newspapers and political movements; and admiring Booker Washington. These parallels, in Reddy's work, supported something more:

There was frequent social contact between the inmates of the Phoenix Settlement and the Ohlange Institute, as well as the mission at Inanda. Zulus and whites used to attend Gandhiji's prayer meetings at Phoenix. He was often seen playing with Indian and Zulu children.<sup>41</sup>

Whatever its historical accuracy, Dube was being called upon as an ally in promoting the nonracialism that was so vital an ideological position at a time when the ANC was embarking on negotiations with the South African government.

Such political claims did not go uncontested. As the struggle between the United Democratic Front and Chief Gatsha Buthelezi's Inkatha movement intensified through the 1980s, especially in Natal, so Inkatha too made concerted efforts to claim Dube (and other early ANC leaders) as an ally. In many of his speeches, Buthelezi used Dube's life and achievements as a measure of his own, simultaneously claiming the 'old ANC' as Inkatha's forerunner. Nowhere was this clearer than on the occasion of Inkatha assuming ownership of *Ilanga* in 1987:

[*Ilanga's*] founder was the Revered Dr John Dube . . . The Black heroes of those times came together, and in 1912 established the African National Congress . . . Our John Dube was elected President in that historical event.

Right from the outset of Black politics in modern South Africa the heroes of our past set their eyes on gaining a rightful place for the sons and daughters of Africa in the land of their birth. The old ANC drew everybody together and committed itself to waging the struggle for liberation on every possible front . . . We must take that struggle everywhere, to every point. Black newspapers must follow that struggle wherever it goes. I struggle in the KwaZulu Legislative Assembly. I struggle in the KwaZulu/Natal Indaba. I struggle in the white universities. I struggle against the captains of industry . . .<sup>42</sup>

40. H.M. Mnguni, 'Dr John Langalibalele Dube', *Matatu*, 3/4, 2 (1988), 149–156.

41. E.S. Reddy, 'Mahatma Gandhi and John Dube', *The Leader*, 5 June 1992, and then as chapter 4 of E.S. Reddy, *Gandhiji's Vision of a Free South Africa* (New Delhi: Sanchar Publishing House, 1995).

42. 'A Few Remarks Announcing Inkatha's take-over of *Ilanga*', address by Mangosuthu G. Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu, President of Inkatha and Chairman, The South African Black Alliance, 15 April 1987. University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban: Natal Collection. A larger-scale attempt to situate Dube in a



## Images of Dube after 1994

As the party of which he was the inaugural president swept to power in 1994, Dube's reputation was bound to grow, alongside his visibility. In the historic elections of that year, Nelson Mandela chose to vote at Ohlange, a moment inscribed in his autobiography:

I voted at Ohlange High School in Inanda, a green and hilly township just north of Durban, for it was there that John Dube, the first president of the ANC, was buried. This African patriot had helped found the organisation in 1912, and casting my vote near his graveside brought history full circle, for the mission he began eighty-two years before was about to be achieved.

As I stood over his grave, on a rise above the small school below, I thought not of the present but of the past...<sup>43</sup>

John Dube's name began appearing everywhere: in speeches (for election victories, for Youth Day, at the inauguration of the African Union, in commemorations of the 90th anniversary of the ANC),<sup>44</sup> in the press<sup>45</sup> and as it mushroomed exponentially, on the internet. His cyber-presence became firmly established on sites as diverse as Wikipedia (where we are still thoughtfully warned that 'this article may require clean up...'), the ANC's John Dube page, Oberlin University (where a project was run to publicise this suddenly-famous alumnus), the Dictionary of African Christian Biography, South African History Online, the New African Movement and KwaZulu-Natal Literary Tourism, as he was brought into service to promote the development of a new form of cultural/heritage

tradition leading up to Inkatha can be found in E.D. Gasa, 'John L. Dube, his *Ilanga lase Natali* and the Natal African Administration, 1903–1910' (Phd thesis, University of Zululand, 1999). Gasa, who had earlier tried unsuccessfully to submit his work to the University of Natal, asserted that Dube was 'very instrumental in resuscitation by the Zulu royal family of traditional forms and active collaboration by all educated Africans in traditional and cultural activities, to which many present entities including Zulu Cultural Council or Inkatha owe their origin' (323). This contest to claim a legitimate pedigree of nationalist history for Inkatha was part of a wider one: see S. Klopper, "'He Is My King, but He Is Also My Child': Inkatha, the African National Congress and the Struggle for Control of Zulu Cultural Symbols', *Oxford Art Journal*, 19, 1 (1996), 53–66.

43. N. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (Johannesburg: Macdonald Purnell, 1994), 610.

44. See for example Mandela's Election Victory Speech, 4 May 1994, at [http://www.sas.upenn.edu/african\\_Studies/Articles\\_Gen/Election\\_Victory\\_15727.html](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/african_Studies/Articles_Gen/Election_Victory_15727.html); 'Letter from the President: African Union will see the Dawning of a Brighter Day', ANC Today 5 July 2002, at <http://lists.anc.org.za/pipermail/ancoday/2002/000056.html>; 'Speech by Popo Molefe on Youth Day' Issued by NorthWest Communication Service at <http://polity.org.za/html/govdocs/speeches/1995/sp0616a.html>; Pallo Jordan, 'How an oak tree grew from a tiny acorn planted early last century (ANC 90th anniversary)', *Sunday Times* online edition, 6 January 2002 at <http://www.suntimes.co.za/2002/01/06/anc/anc01.asp>; all accessed 23 June 2003. (Of course over the period since 2003, internet addresses have changed and material has been rearranged or has disappeared. I have printouts as evidence for these examples.)

45. See for example T. Lodge, 'John Langalibalele Dube, a Pioneer Visionary', *Financial Mail Millennium Issue*, 17 December 1999, at <http://secure.financialmail.co.za/report/millennium/cc.htm>, accessed 21 January 2012; T. Masemola, 'The Man who "woke up" a Nation', *Natal Witness Archive*, at [http://www.pmb.history.co.za/portal/witnesshistory/custom\\_modules/TheWayWeWere/The%20man%20who%20'woke%20up'%20a%20nation.pdf](http://www.pmb.history.co.za/portal/witnesshistory/custom_modules/TheWayWeWere/The%20man%20who%20'woke%20up'%20a%20nation.pdf), accessed 21 January 2012. Profile: John Dube. *Metrobeat*, 49 (2003), 20.

tourism.<sup>46</sup> With the notable exception of the Oberlin material (which uses primary sources and relies heavily on Marable), the content of these sites is heavily derivative and makes little attempt at evaluation, preferring to present the ‘factual’ outlines of Dube’s life.

The new government also set about the task of creating its own canon of ‘great and good’ by instituting an awards system which included the Order of Luthuli, for contributions to the achievement of ‘democracy, human rights, nation building, justice and peace, and resolution of conflict’. In 2005, in the third batch of annual awards, Dube was posthumously awarded the Order of Luthuli in Gold.<sup>47</sup> His reinstatement as the heroic nation-builder seemed complete.

One scholarly treatment that appeared in 2001 paid no attention to any of this new-found celebrity status, choosing instead to focus on one incident in Dube’s life before he was famous: his attempt to become pastor of the Inanda Congregational Church in 1895, despite the fact that he was not ordained. Its intent was to show that alliances and divisions at Inanda were far more complex than along the expected ‘Christian-traditionalist’ lines; Dube had the backing of the local chief in his attempts to assert his authority, while his rival favoured the maintenance of white mission control.<sup>48</sup>

Whether treating Dube as a biographical subject or as a historical one (that is, as a representative of a class and/or race and an age), the writers and speakers discussed thus far have focused more or less exclusively on Dube’s public record. Yet Tom Lodge’s observation in the preface to his *Mandela: A Critical Life*, that ‘Mandela’s domestic or private life cannot easily be separated or compartmentalised from his political or public career’<sup>49</sup> surely has wider application than to this most charismatic of leaders; it certainly has particular relevance in the case of John Dube. However, it also masks the point that conventions in biography-writing have changed. (Marable, for example, noted certain details of Dube’s private life but dismissed them as entirely unimportant.) Lodge’s statement could only have been made in more recent times, as Hamilton makes clear:

In Western multicultural societies embracing new technologies such as the Internet, biographical curiosity and information drove or accompanied every advance in the 1990s, humanizing portraiture to an extent inconceivable a century before, when prominent people were depicted as matchstick men.<sup>50</sup>

46. For Wikipedia, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Langalibalele\\_Dube](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Langalibalele_Dube); for Oberlin, see <http://www.oberlin.edu/external/EOG/Dube/Dube.htm>; for the entry in the Dictionary of African Christian Biography, see [http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/dube\\_john.html](http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/dube_john.html); for the ANC’s John Dube Page, see <http://www.anc.org.za/showpeople.php?p=31>; for Dube at The New African Movement, see Miranda Perry at <http://pzacad.pitzer.edu/NAM/general/student-essays/perry.htm>, and for KwaZulu-Natal Literary Tourism see [http://www.literarytourism.co.za/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=55:john-dube&catid=13:authors&Itemid=28](http://www.literarytourism.co.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=55:john-dube&catid=13:authors&Itemid=28). All of these were accessed 12 January 2012. (As above, internet addresses have changed and material has been rearranged or has disappeared; while I have printouts as evidence for these examples, the most recent addresses are given here.)
47. On the Order of Luthuli, see <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/pebble.asp?relid=774>, accessed 17 January 2012; Dube’s full citation is at [http://dev.absol.co.za/Presidency/orders\\_list.asp?show=489](http://dev.absol.co.za/Presidency/orders_list.asp?show=489), accessed 17 December 2011.
48. H. Hughes, ‘Doubly Elite: Exploring the Life of John Langalibalele Dube’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 27, 3 (2001), 445–458.
49. T. Lodge, *Mandela: A Critical Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), xi.
50. N. Hamilton, *Biography, a Brief History*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 237–238.



This trend began before the 1990s, reflecting a change in our attitudes to privacy, and perhaps a more sceptical attitude to authority, so that biography ceased to perform the function of instructing others as to how to live their lives. It would not be far wrong to claim that it is now *de rigueur* in biography-writing to present subjects' private lives as well as their public achievements for scrutiny: failure to do so leaves a sense of a task incompletely done.

In Dube's case, connecting public and private lives has particular significance, a proposition that is at the centre of the new biography, *First President*.<sup>51</sup> It argues that many of his public achievements rested on significant aspects of his personal life, to the extent that it would not be possible to tell the story of the one without referring to the other. An early example is his conversion to Christianity, a pivotal moment. It was already well established that he had been born into a second-generation Christian family in Inanda; his father James was one of the earliest ordained African Congregational ministers. Yet in that church, great emphasis was placed on personal commitment, not merely on background. Conversion thus took on very profound importance. Mokoena shows clearly in her study of Magera Fuze<sup>52</sup> that conversion was an intellectual as well as a religious turning point: it changed one's entire orientation. Dube's conversion occurred before he had even left high school years; they are in consequence recounted in some detail in *First President*.<sup>53</sup>

Most of the scholarly literature on the history of African Christian communities still conveys the impression that they were very largely cut off from traditionalist society. Again, John Dube's own family history questions this interpretation. His father James was known by another name (Ukakonina) because he was related to the Qadi chief, Mqhawe, and accepted as a leading member of the chiefly inner circle. Moreover, John Dube's elder brother, the first-born of the family, dropped out of school and reverted to traditionalism, establishing a homestead at Inanda and in time became an *induna* of Mqhawe's successor, Mandlakayise. Prophetically perhaps, his name was Africa. *First President* argues that the relationship between the brothers was critical at the time of the Bhambatha Rebellion in 1906. The old chief Mqhawe showed strong signs of supporting the rebellion; even though Dube sympathised with the rebels, he knew that if Mqhawe did come out in support, his new school and his new newspaper would be doomed. He and Africa together helped to persuade Mqhawe to pull back.<sup>54</sup> It has often been claimed that the Dube family was the exception that proved the rule about Christians and traditionalists. It is more likely to be the case that this family is (currently) better-documented, and that if our gaze is directed to both domestic as well as public evidence in the historical record, many more such instances will be discovered.

There is a further example from *First President* that is probably of greater significance. The ending of Dube's period of office as Congress president in 1917 has been always been surrounded by a certain puzzlement in the literature, whether he was ousted or resigned, and over precisely what issue, organisational laxity or supposed support for the principle of

51. H. Hughes, *First President. A Life of John L. Dube, Founding President of the ANC* (Johannesburg: Jacana Press, 2011).
52. H. Mokoena, *Magera Fuze, the Making of a Kholwa Intellectual* (Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011).
53. Hughes, *First President*, 31–40.
54. *Ibid.*, 124–125.

segregation. *First President* attempts a different explanation, positing a combination of public failure (the costly and fruitless delegation that Dube had led to Britain in 1914, followed by three years of inactivity caused largely by Congress's undertaking that it would cease agitation for rights while the war was on) and personal disgrace. He and his wife Nokutela (whose contribution to the 'redemptive mission' represented by Ohlange and Ilanga is told here for the first time) had been unable to have children; the pressures of social and private expectation proved too great for Dube, who caused a local scandal by making a school girl pregnant. While the baby died and Dube was absolved of any wrongdoing by a school investigative committee, it meant the end of the Dube's marriage. Nokutela Dube lived out her remaining days in the Eastern Transvaal, until her death in early 1917. The argument in *First President* is that she had been well known and liked in Congress circles, and her death crystallised a great deal of dissatisfaction with Dube (not least a lingering distaste for his moral lapse, which of course at that time would not have been aired in public, but of which his colleagues would have been well aware). Thus, at the critical Congress meeting in February 1917, he was given no option other than to resign, and not necessarily for reasons to do with his stance on segregation, which was consistent with what it had been and remained all his life: he rejected it, unless South Africa could be split into two equal halves (which he knew to be impossible).<sup>55</sup>

Thus, key political moments in Dube's career (or at least it is argued in *First President*) can be explained not so much in terms of a dialectical dance between contending political positions as between public and private constraints and possibilities. Ohlange was in many ways a casualty of Dube's transgression and by the time he married Angelina Khumalo in 1920, he knew that he would have to relinquish control of the school, a defining moment of bitterness for him. Yet even through the long 'post' period of his life (post-president, post-head of Ohlange) which is most usually thought of as his 'conservative' period (participation in state-sponsored structures and in the Joint Councils; acceptance of an honorary PhD from UNISA), Dube was unwavering in his calls for a colour-blind franchise – not for different, racially exclusive organs of government but for the House of Assembly and the Senate of South Africa. Conversely, even from his younger, supposedly 'radical' years, one can find somewhat conservative views, on women's 'place' and on racial mixing, for example. What thus emerges is a 'mix of defiance and compliance, radicalism and moderation, broadness and narrowness of vision'<sup>56</sup> throughout his life. E.P. Thompson's observation on Thomas Carlyle seems particularly appropriate to Dube: 'it was within the social dialectic of this time that progressive human feelings might keep company in the same man with reactionary thought'.<sup>57</sup> This was a complex dance indeed.

## Conclusion

A figure like John Dube himself represents a critical part of the process by which biography becomes possible in southern Africa: the spread of literacy (he was a newspaper editor as well as a highly respected author), the teachings of missionaries (he was an ordained

55. *Ibid.*, 189–197.

56. *Ibid.*, 259.

57. E.P. Thompson, *William Morris, Romantic to Revolutionary* (New York: Pantheon, 1976), 30.

minister), the very disaggregation of societies into 'individual beings' (he was a biographer himself, producing the first life of Isaiah Shembe, not long after the appearance of the Skota's *Register*).<sup>58</sup> As subject himself of 'biographical work', Dube became a figure of heroic proportion in his lifetime. The critical scholarship after 1946 sometimes portrayed him as either flawed hero or even anti-hero, although much of it was more intent on analysing how history had made him, rather than the other way around. Even before 1994, however, his memory was once more being put to political use, culminating in his full reinstatement as nation-builder in the New South Africa.

What does *First President* add to all this? In attempting to present a fuller view of Dube's life, perhaps what it does is to show 'the capacity of even a flawed man to struggle nobly against the misfortunes of life'<sup>59</sup> – for arguably that is what Dube was, and that is what he did. Yet in appearing to add to our understanding by including the dimension of the private life, biography can also appear 'to be omitting nothing [and yet] has emerged from a process of choices'.<sup>60</sup> The point is that in reality, biography is always provisional, and for that reason, Dube's reputation will go on being made and remade.

58. J. Dube, *uShembe* (Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter, 1936).

59. Richard Holmes's comment on what he considered Samuel Johnson's central purpose of biography to be. R. Holmes, *Dr Johnson and Mr Savage* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), 194.

60. Lee, *Biography*, 10.

# **‘A Member of the Race’: Dr Modiri Molema’s Intellectual Engagement with the Popular History of South Africa, 1912–1921**

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## **Abstract**

This paper offers a prelude to the reconsideration of the writing life and contribution of an African intellectual and nationalist who, studiously and courageously, subjected the concepts of race, culture and nationalism to critical evaluation. Molema’s engagement with popular politics began after his return from years of studying medicine at Glasgow University. However, from 1912 to 1921, he engaged with the history of South Africa intellectually, only later producing essays and speeches for more popular audiences. His study of black South Africans, *The Bantu Past and Present* (1920) challenged racist interpretations of the past, while also taking subtle aim at racism in Scotland during and after World War I. The text is multi-layered, moving from first- to third-person narration, which suggests that the author’s own identity was subtly entangled with this project. In the Preface, the young writer defines his writing identity, revealing that the book’s purpose is historical, ethnographical and, implicitly, nationalist. This paper examines the Preface’s crucial role in defining the author’s writing identity as nationalist and intellectual. Molema used his standpoint knowledge as ‘a member of the race’ whose story he ‘unfold[ed] to the world’ to begin the task of carefully reclaiming black history from the margins of South African cultural life.

## **The position of the writer and the possibility of new engagements after 1910**

In 1920, Modiri Molema, a Motswana<sup>1</sup> doctor from Mafikeng, a small town on the outskirts of the British Empire, once site of a memorable siege in the South African War, began his first book with these words: ‘[t]his work is no production of art. It purports to be

1. This aspect of Dr Molema’s ethnic identity is important to this account. The linguistic and cultural group to which he belonged at Mafikeng was the Barolong boo RaTshidi [henceforth, Tshidi Rolong] speakers of a dialect of Setswana: Serolong. For more on Setswana and the Serolong variant, respectively, see D. Jones, *Selected Works*, vol. 7, ed. B. Collins and I. Mees (London: Routledge, 2002), 47 and 61.

a simple portrayal of the life of the Bantu (or Native Peoples of South Africa).<sup>2</sup> Using terminology a little in advance of the official parlance of the day, he called it *The Bantu Past and Present*.<sup>3</sup> This humble statement belied the narrative complexity of the 400-page work it prefaced. *The Bantu* (henceforth) is a work of remarkable vision and design, through which Molema sought entry into two highly problematic discourses that represented Africans to the world – history and ethnography. He also hoped that his work would serve as a popular account of African history and culture. However, while he imagined a coherent historical account of black South Africans, and suggested ways in which the segregated nature of the post-Union state might be challenged and changed, his thinking was powerfully infiltrated and shaped by European notions of Enlightenment, democracy, race and civilisation.

In the white-dominated power dispensation that the shapers of the Union of South Africa created, black intellectuals struggled to write and then publish their views, whether in financially besieged newspapers or in texts that sought entry into established intellectual disciplines. However, the circumstances in which black intellectuals in South Africa endeavoured to develop their thinking were severely limited by the dialectics of nation, time, language and space, as this article shows. Interestingly, in the early twentieth century, writing *about* the ‘nation’ often occurred – or at least began – *outside* that nation. Several black intellectuals elaborated their ideas during periods of temporary exile, but their writing was deeply influenced by the double liminality of their position: firstly, being away from, yet belonging to, the people being described and, secondly, being *of* the people included within the geographical boundaries of the (incipient) ‘nation’, yet deliberately excluded from its body politic. The grounds of exclusion overlapped with that intransigent boundary between colonist and colonised.<sup>4</sup>

One of the first published texts in which a black author presents a discursive treatment of history, culture, self and community, *The Bantu* is an important articulation of the difficulties that black intellectuals encountered in attempting to analyse the position of black people in the state imagined by white South Africans and British colonial powers. In the ensuing decade, Glasgow-educated Dr Seetsele Modiri Molema began a remarkable alternative career as historian, ethnographer and biographer, fully realising that these

2. S.M. Molema, *The Bantu Past and Present* (Edinburgh: W.E. Green & Son, 1920 & 1963), vii. (*The Bantu*, henceforth.) For his account of the Siege, see S.M. Molema, ‘Fifty Years Ago’ [1949] (Draft), 6. Unisa Archives, ACC142, Molema Varia, Essays: ‘[o]n the 17th May 1900 the relieving force arrived. Col Mahon with a flying column of 1,000 men from Kimberley joined Col Plumer with his force from the north [...] forced the besiegers to withdraw eastward from whence they had come. Thus ended the siege which [...] was celebrated in London with untrammelled enthusiasm which added the word ‘mafficking’ to the English language’.
3. In official and popular terminology, African South Africans were termed ‘Natives’ during this period.
4. Few Cape black property owners could vote (until 1936), among them Dr Molema, his father and uncle. Ironically, however, the Representation of Natives Act (1936) *removed* African voters from the Voters’ Roll. Molema attended the formation of the All Africa Convention (Bloemfontein, 1935), an organisation formed to protest against the increasing marginalisation of Africans from public life. See W. Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 118, and P. Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa* (Johannesburg: A.D. Donker, 1970 and 1987), 111–118, 128.

forms of representing the past were – largely – the preserve of white colonial writers.<sup>5</sup> They were colonial in belonging either to the country's white settler community or to the assemblage of historians and ethnographers who traversed Africa, helping to define its boundaries and indigenous peoples and, thereby, to entrench ethnic and racial differences in the early twentieth-century world. Molema had not only to 'write the histories of suppressed groups', but also to 'construct a narrative of a group or class that [had] not left its own [written] sources'.<sup>6</sup>

Entangled as he was in the cultures of African and colonial societies in South Africa and later in Scotland, where he studied medicine, Molema ostensibly set out to tackle the ways in which existing historical and ethnographical writings represented black people. However, the problematic, not to say troubling, relationship of the author to his text should give us pause. That relationship is broached in the Preface, a two-page paratext that establishes the generic complexity of *The Bantu*.

### The prefatorial revelations of Molema

Although Molema entitled the first part of *The Bantu* 'A Revelation', it was the Preface that would prove most self-revelatory. A preface, according to Gérard Genette, consists of 'a discourse produced on the subject of the text that follows or precedes it', yet identifying the 'sender' of a preface may be more difficult.<sup>7</sup> Were Molema's text an autobiography, one might term his Preface 'actorial', where the 'author of the preface may be one of the characters in the action'.<sup>8</sup> However, Molema's liminal position as author of a text that is *autoethnographic* makes his prefatory claim to write as 'a member of the race' challenge the reader to question the narrative personae he creates to narrate both preface (first-person) and main text (pp. 1–388 and appendices).

This article proposes that part of the difficulty that readers and critics have encountered with *The Bantu* lies in the underexplored relationship between its author and his text, which, he claims, is *his* history as well as that of his people. His race, the Preface emphasises, is vital: it authenticates his account of the people whose history he writes because he is one of them. Race is not the sole focus of his work; he is concerned, *as* a writer, with the act of writing and with the construction of the disciplines in which he writes. Layering the history of his people from past to future has personal meaning for him, as the allegorical four-part structure of the main text reveals. It is implicitly divided into two 'testaments'. Parts I and II ('The Revelation' and 'The Past') form an 'Old Testament', chiefly concerned with migration and the establishment of well-developed (if

5. Jack Goody cogently discusses the 'take-over of history by the west' in *The Theft of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1. Conceptions of time, space and periodisation have been profoundly influenced by western models.
6. D. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2008), 98. Molema held strong views on the importance of written history. See S.M. Molema, *Chief Moroka: His Life, His Times, His Country and His People* (Cape Town: Acacia, 1951), 188–189.
7. G. Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987 and 1997), 161, 194.
8. *Ibid.*, 179.



Figure 1. Dr S.M. Molema – frontispiece to *Montshiwa* (Johannesburg: Struik, 1966).

conflicting and competing) settled cultures in southern Africa. His New Testament (Parts III, ‘The Present’, and IV, ‘Possibilities and Impossibilities’) hailed the new faith which, he ardently believed, transcended the subcontinent’s old ways. He celebrated what he saw as the benefits of European culture: the arrival of missionaries, literacy, humanism, modernity and – more cautiously – industrialisation in southern Africa, and the futures that black South Africans might enjoy if not prevented by governments and racism (Europe’s harmful bequests).

The chronicling of time occupied his mind and, Genette reminds us, time is important in determining the nature of the preface and the attitude its writer (‘sender’) conveys in it.<sup>9</sup> Molema states that the time at which he wrote was significant at least in part because he was a young black South African seeking to explain the participation of black troops from the colonies in the armies of both ‘sides’, ‘but particularly on the Allied side’.<sup>10</sup> Also significant, but not described in this ‘incipit’,<sup>11</sup> is the intense period during which he wrote *The Bantu*, when, temporarily exiled from home, he studied medicine in Glasgow and Dublin. The details of his experience are largely sublimated in the main text, with very few references to self after the Preface and opening chapter. Instead, his argument about the need for an explanatory text such as his moves from the particular (self) to the general (community):

9. *Ibid.*, 174 ff.

10. Molema, *The Bantu*, vii. The footnote on p. vii states that he had written the book by 1917 and that his publishers had wanted to publish it the following year, but that wartime paper shortages prevented them. He revised it before its publication in 1920.

11. Genette, *Paratexts*, 168.



## PREFACE<sup>1</sup>

THIS work is no production of art. It purports to be a simple portrayal of the life of the Bantu (or Native Peoples of South Africa).

The Great War is quoted to explain everything. It may be quoted as a reason for this work also. There are black races participating on both sides, but particularly on the Allied side. Among these latter are the Bantu, on behalf of Great Britain. So I have hoped that my presenting to the public some facts about my people, the Bantu, would not be out of place, and that it might increase the public interest in them.

To the scientist, inquiry into the life and usages of backward races affords a vivid illustration of the primitive conditions of the more advanced races, and of the ascent of nations from this condition. It explains also some of those apparently arbitrary customs that persist even in the most highly-civilised peoples.

To members of the governing race, some knowledge of the governed race, their mind and manners, seems necessary. For, knowing with whom one has to deal often decides how to deal. Much of the misunderstanding and contempt between nationalities, too, is largely due to want of acquaintance with each other. In such cases, of course, the weaker nation suffers.

This, then, is a story designed for the average English-speaking person, without any great acquaintance with South African people and affairs.

To members of the Bantu race I hope this small book may be an incentive to many to collect and record the history of their people.

<sup>1</sup> This book was written in 1917 and was actually in the press in the early part of 1918, but its publication was stopped by the paper difficulties arising from the war. It has been brought up to date.

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Figure 2. S.M. Molema, Preface to *The Bantu Past and Present* (1920) (Johannesburg: Struik, 1963).



So I have hoped that my presenting to the public some facts about my people, the Bantu, would not be out of place, and that it might increase the public interest in them.<sup>12</sup>

Artless as this may sound, his complex narrative strategy revealed the way in which the young intellectual, who later managed three careers (doctor, writer and politician) simultaneously, offered the reading public an account, at once popular and academic, of past, present and future. Before considering other implications of the Preface, we should consider not only the time at which Molema wrote it, but also the place of his book in the history of South African writing.

*The Bantu* marks an important stage in the history of the book, as one of the earliest discursive texts by a black South African intellectual, also remarkable for being published outside the country of its author's birth, by W.E. Green & Son, Edinburgh, in 1920. Four years earlier, P.S. King (London) published his mentor, Sol Plaatje's *Native Life in South Africa*,<sup>13</sup> and a year later, W.E.B. du Bois's newspaper, *The Crisis* would republish *Native Life* in America.<sup>14</sup> Both texts have, over the years, enjoyed somewhat more public exposure than the cultural writing of Eastern Cape minister of religion, journalist and politician, Walter Benson Rubusana: *Zemk' Inkomo Magwalandini* ('There go your Cattle, you cowards' [1906 and 1911]), a collection of Xhosa writings and 'a peerless collection of praise poems'.<sup>15</sup> It seems that his period in London overseeing the publication of the Xhosa Bible may have afforded him time to write a book concerned with the preservation of historical culture.<sup>16</sup> Conserving popular memory was the intention of all three writers.<sup>17</sup>

Each of these three writers may have conceived his work in South Africa, but took time to write it while in temporary exile. While, on 20 June 1913, the 'South African Native' had awakened to find himself 'not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth', the period of enforced exile that Plaatje spent in London from 1914 to 1916 gave him the freedom to protest this fact with rhetorical cogency.<sup>18</sup> How much longer was Molema's temporary exile in Glasgow from April 1914 to early 1921, a period of fascinated engagement with his medical studies and passionate longing for home, as letters to his

12. Molema, *The Bantu*, vii.

13. Green received Molema's book proposal on 24 September 1917 and expressed their interest in a reply on 26 September, University of the Witwatersrand, Historical Papers, *Silas T. Molema and Solomon T. Plaatje Papers* (henceforth MPP), A979, Ad4, 26 Sep 1917, C.E. Green, Edinburgh, to S.M.M., Glasgow.

14. N. Parsons, 'Introduction', *Native Life in South Africa* [electronic text] (University of Botswana, 1999) <http://www.thuto.org/ubh/text/nlisa/nl-np.htm>, accessed 10 May 2011.

15. The dating this source provides seems unreliable. Potgieter asserts that Rubusana accompanied King Dalindyebo to Edward VII's coronation in 1904, whereas this event took place on 9 August 1902! D.J. Potgieter *et al.*, eds, *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa*, vol. 3 (NASOU: Cape Town, 1971), 620. S. Lee, *King Edward VII: A Biography, Part 2* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 1925), 158. However, Opland states more reliably that Rubusana printed his anthology independently in 1906: J. Opland, 'The Image of the Book in Xhosa Oral Poetry', in D. Brown, ed., *Oral Literature and Performance in Southern Africa* (London: James Currey, 1999), 64. Lovedale Press reissued *Zemk' Inkomo Magwalandini* in 1964 and New Africa Books' newer edition appeared in 2002, edited by Professor Sizwe Satyo.

16. See B.W. Andrzejewski, S. Pilaszewicz, and W. Tyloch, *Literature in African Languages: Theoretical Issues and Sample Surveys* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 603.

17. See S.T. Plaatje, *Sechuana Proverbs with Literal translations and their European Equivalents* (London: Routledge, 1916), 1: '[t]he object of this book is save from oblivion... the proverbial expressions of the Bechuana people...'.  
 18. S.T. Plaatje, *Native Life in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1916 and 1982), 21.