

MONDAY MONTHLY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN NEWSPAPER

JULY 2015

7 SUBURBS OF
CAPE TOWN
YOU CAN
SEE WHEN
LOOKING FROM
JAMMIE STEPS

1966-2008
42 Martin West's
career at
UCT spanned
42 years

6 000 to 10 000

THE NUMBER OF MILITIAMEN THAT
FRENCH INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE
COMPRISE BOKO HARAM.

1965 Mary Burton's
first Black Sash
protest stand
was in Kalk
Bay in 1965

1379

students graduated
from UCT over four
ceremonies in June 2014

THE NUMB3RS ISSUE

20 years old
when
Sonwabo
Ngcelwane
came to
UCT
see page 12

3 350 in square metres,
the area in the Lake
Chad basin in which
oil was discovered in
2012, according to
the Nigerian National
Petroleum Corporation.

33 honours
degrees



13 000 the "broadly accurate" death toll
(according to Africa Check) in
the conflict between Boko Haram
and the Nigerian state, according
to former President Goodluck
Jonathan in 2014.



editorial



EVOLUTION AND SEASONS

The evolution of seasons on campus between one semester and the next is marked in red, as UCT celebrates the smaller (but by no means lesser) of its two annual graduations.

In June, the red splash of doctoral academic gowns is vivid in the first rows of graduands waiting to be capped in the Jameson Hall.

Postgraduate research is the lifeblood of UCT's academic enterprise, and this year the four June ceremonies marked the end of a rite of passage for 86 new PhD graduates.

We'll be featuring samples of this research in our online news and other media. First up online, look out for Dr Tarryn van Nickerk's study of intimate partner violence and how victims are portrayed in the media; a mirror of a nation's skewed values.

In particular, her thesis examines society's constructions of masculinity, as reflected in media coverage of these crimes: the victims are depicted as 'bad girls', deserving of violence at the hands of their male partners.

Linked, almost serendipitously, is Dr Buhle Zuma's op-ed on what it means to be human. His lens falls on a post-apartheid society, where he sees equality and enfranchisement being linked to economic factors and consumerism rather than metaphysical or spiritual values.

In this edition we also look at the work of GroundUp, a corps of community reporters tackling pressing social issues such as gangsterism and service delivery. They're backed by UCT's Centre for Social Science Research (CSSR) and the Community Media Trust. As the founder and a former CSSR researcher, Nathan Geffen says their work features very few cute pictures of cats and little reportage on the Kardashians.

The themes of evolution and seasons underpin the visual map of the cityscape as seen from upper campus, which traces the histories of place: communities such as Langa, Pinelands, Gugulethu, Khayelitsha and Athlone.

And on history much further north, religious scholar Dr Andrea Brigaglia examines Boko Haram's rise in Nigeria, its shadowy leadership and its backers. In trying to understand the terrorist group, he says, researchers are left with more questions than answers.

Uncertainty is the birthplace of knowledge.

1 379 students graduated from UCT over four ceremonies in June 2014. This figure includes 86 doctoral degrees, 553 master's degrees, 174 MBAs, 113 honours degrees, 197 bachelor's degrees, and 256 diplomas and certificates.

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MONDAY MONTHLY

Monday Monthly started out in 1982 as a weekly staff newsletter. Since then, it's grown into a monthly publication covering a broad variety of campus life – from research, to student initiatives, to human interest. If you have an interesting perspective on the university, or a great story to tell (whether in words, pictures or any other medium), mail us at newsdesk@uct.ac.za. If you're looking to advertise in the classifieds, or subscribe to our mailing list, drop us a line at Ads-MondayPaper@uct.ac.za. For general information, contact Sharifa Martin at 021 650 5816.

Manager, Newsroom and Publications: Chris Mitchell
Head, Newsroom and Publications: Judith Browne
Writers: Helen Swingler, Yusuf Omar, Abigail Calata, Natalie Simon
Photographers: Michael Hammond, Lisa Burnell
Designer: Sean Robertson
Proofreader: Dave Buchanan

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

TITLE: Why not call a spade a spade?
Re: Monday Monthly of May 2015:
How do we transform UCT?
How do we decolonise UCT?

The contributions published on the subject reflect a variance of interpretation of these terms, which, though not surprising, may lead to some confusion when seeking an answer to these questions. Interestingly, when looking these terms up in three dictionaries, the *South African Concise Oxford Dictionary* (2002 p1247) adds to its entry: "a marked change in nature, form or appearance"; (in South Africa): "the post-apartheid process of social and political change to establish democracy and social equality".

Thato Pule writes that decolonisation is a tool for transformation, while Shose Kessi adds on to this that "the change in the discourse from transformation to decolonisation has marked a new and more radical process of change that must continue".

From reading the sometimes rather emotional sociological, political and academic discourse about transforming UCT in this issue of the *Monday Monthly*, I got the impression that many of the contributors are actually talking of Africanisation. Some argue for removing the influence of 'Western' or 'European' thought or knowledge, others for merging this in the aimed-for 'culture' of the university, its structure, curricula, etc.; in particular, in the humanities. Decolonisation is not generally viewed as an appropriate term, except perhaps when it implies removal of inequities considered to have resulted from what is called 'colonial' legacies in a university. In Mbali Matandela's opinion, "Africa must be enlightened for Africans by Africans".

Having read all this and other publications in newspapers about the subject, such as by Professors Xolela Mangcu (in sociology) and Jonathan Jansen, this leads me to conclude that the common thread in all these contributions would suggest that the question at hand should be rephrased to: How do we Africanise the university?, provided of course that universality is not lost. This appears to be the main goal of most of the contributors to the discourse!

In addition, it would perhaps be to the good to adopt the method used in the United States of America, where they classify citizens sociologically; and in future, here in South Africa, start to speak of Afro-Africans, Euro-Africans, Asian-Africans, Eurasian-Africans etc., whenever it is deemed necessary to indicate what is at present called the 'race' of individuals. This would also remove the reigning sensitivity to being classified by colour!

Dr JT Mets MD
(‘Euro-Migrant’)
Retired senior lecturer, Medical School

HE HAD THE
“WISDOM OF SOLOMON”
Tribute to Martin West (1946-2015)

Emeritus Professor Martin West, former deputy vice-chancellor and deputy principal, alumnus and honorary graduate, and a major contributor to the university during his long career, died on 8 July. He was 10 days short of his 69th birthday, a birthday he shared with Nelson Mandela.

Compiled by Helen Swingler
Images from the Monday Monthly archives

West's illustrious UCT career spanned 42 years, 17 of these as a deputy vice-chancellor and deputy principal, during which time he served the administration of four vice-chancellors.

West's contributions to the university were reflected in the breadth and depth of his work over these four decades, first as an academic and then as a senior administrator.

Speaking at the 2008 graduation ceremony when West was awarded the Vice-Chancellor's Medal, former vice-chancellor Professor Njabulo Ndebele paid tribute to West's "vast knowledge of university matters and ability to tap into that experience to provide sound advice and guidance".

"As an academic he led his department and contributed to his discipline; as a teacher he touched the lives of many students; as a deputy vice-chancellor he drove many strategic initiatives and provided strong leadership to senior staff. As the deputy principal, he often provided the wisdom of Solomon on complex issues in difficult times."

West will also be remembered for his ambassadorial skills, most notably as founder of the University Science, Humanities, and Engineering Partnerships in Africa (USHEPIA), one of the most successful higher education collaborations in Africa.

And foreseeing that UCT would need an office devoted to international links, West was also instrumental in establishing the International Academic Programmes Office.

In student negotiations he was respected for his fair and insightful deliberations. As a deputy vice-chancellor, he had a particularly close marriage to the student affairs portfolio. When he relinquished the student affairs portfolio in 2003 (after 11 years), student leaders gathered in the Baxter Theatre Centre to pay tribute to his contribution to student affairs.

But for West there were two major highlights of this tenure: the transformation of the student body and the residences, and the shift to a system of co-operative governance.

Our condolences go to his wife, Val, children Paula and Adam and their families.



1 Generations: Family portrait, taken at West's farewell dinner at UCT on 13 June 2008. (From left, back) Greg Eden, Peter and Andrea Russell, Dr Adam West and his wife, Shela Patrickson. (Front) Paula Walter, Val and Martin West, and Cathy Eden. (Grandson Alexander snoozes in his pram).

2 Photographed at his farewell dinner, hosted in Smuts Hall, a gathering of many friends and colleagues who recalled special times over West's 42-year-long association with UCT. Left in picture is former vice-chancellor Dr Stuart Saunders.

3 West's exhibition, Amabandla Ama-Afrika: The independent churches of Soweto, 1969-71, opened in the Centre for African Studies in 2011. He took the pictures while conducting fieldwork for his PhD in social anthropology. This research culminated in his book, Bishops and Prophets in a Black City, published in the 1970s.

4 Grand company: With grandson Alexander Walter at the 2008 farewell.

Martin West milestones

- 1946** Born in Cape Town on 18 July
- 1963** Matriculates first-class from Bishops
- 1966** Graduates BA
- 1967** Honours in social anthropology
- 1969** MA (distinction)
- 1971** Starts lecturing in the Department of Social Anthropology

- 1972** PhD awarded in social anthropology, his thesis on the African Independent Churches in Soweto
- 1976** Ad hominem promotion to senior lecturer
- 1978** Aged 30, appointed Professor of Social Anthropology and takes up the Chair of Social Anthropology, the youngest academic ever to hold a chair

- 1980** Director of the Centre for African Studies
- 1991** Officiates at first graduation
- 1995** Found the University Science, Humanities and Engineering Partnerships in Africa (USHEPIA)
- 2003** Relinquishes student affairs portfolio.

- 2008** Retires from UCT after a 42-year-long-association with the university. In the same year he received the Vice-Chancellor's Medal for his services to UCT
- 2011** Awarded an honorary doctorate (right). His exhibition, Amabandla Ama-Afrika: The independent churches of Soweto, 1969-71, opens in the Centre for African Studies



WHO IS BOKO HARAM?

Story by Yusuf Omar

How does a fringe Islamist insurgent group, scorned by most Nigerians and controlling an area half the size of KwaZulu-Natal, manage to sow terror among a 170-million-strong population? UCT religious studies expert Dr Andrea Brigaglia tackled such perplexing questions in an 8 June lecture. Here are some of his key points.

Not everyone is aware that the name Boko Haram is actually taken from the Hausa language, widely spoken in Nigeria, and an expression of the disdain in which the group is held in large parts of the country.

The group's official designation is *Ahl al-Sunna li'l-Da'wa wal-Jihad 'ala Minhaj al-Salaf* (Arabic for the 'Association of the People of the Sunna for the Missionary Call and the Armed Struggle, according to the method of Salaf'). AS DJ, as the name is sometimes contracted, was spawned when Mohammed Yusuf, a Salafi activist, issued a *fatwa* (or edict) in 2002.

He declared it impermissible (*haram*) for Muslims to attend public school (*boko*) or to work for the government. This led to Nigerian Muslims mockingly dubbing the group Boko Haram.

"Global Western media translate this to 'Western education is a sin', or 'Western education is *haram*', but I would rather translate it as 'no to public school', because I want to stress the political significance of the *fatwa*, the religious ruling that is the root of this nickname," Brigaglia said.

From its beginning as a nickname to satirise a movement which Muslims perceived to be a fringe and insignificant voice in the public arena of Islam in the country, he added, it was taken up in a complex way in the non-Muslim Nigerian public arena as a symbol of what Islam stood for.

This (mis)appropriation of the name Boko Haram served to reinforce notions of Islam

being 'backward' in some sectors of the Nigerian public, said Brigaglia.

"For Muslims, it was a way of creating distance from the movement. For non-Muslims, it was a way of labelling Islam, and that's what made the nickname so popular."

This distance continues today. Declaring one's allegiance to Boko Haram in Nigerian Muslim circles is akin to signing one's own death warrant, Brigaglia said.

THE REAL GENESIS OF BOKO HARAM

Boko Haram appeared between 2002 and 2009 as a fringe Islamist movement in Borno State in Nigeria. It was part of a broader network of Islamist movements, and broke off from a mainstream Salafi sect in 2002.

"We use the term 'Islamist' as a synonym for 'political Islam', those movements that are making statements in the public sphere for an increased application of Islamic law and increasing participation of Islamic movements in politics," Brigaglia explained.

Brigaglia said he preferred the term 'phenomenon' to 'movement', because the group's evolution was so riddled with inconsistencies and counter-narratives that scholars were struggling to pin down a linear creation story.

Between 2002 and 2004, Muhammad Yusuf broke away from mainstream Salafi leadership and declared it impossible to have Shari'ah courts

in a non-Islamic state. "It is here that we have the real genesis of what we call Boko Haram as an independent movement," Brigaglia said.

Boko Haram had been involved in sporadic shoot-outs with police, and attacked beer parlours and brothels after 2002; but 2007 witnessed their first real high-profile action. This was the murder of the most popular Islamist leader in Nigeria, Ja'afar Mahmud Adam, during morning prayers, after he had spoken at length against the *fatwa* around schools and government work and questioned its motives and backing. It was now widely accepted that Mohammed Yusuf ordered the murder to be carried out, by a machine-gun-toting commando.

"It really shocked the Nigerian public," said Brigaglia, explaining that this was the first time a religious leader had been killed in a mosque while leading prayer.

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

Boko Haram was crushed by the Nigerian state during 2009's Operation Flush, under then-president Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. Not only was the movement forced into operating as underground militias, but its leader, Mohammed Yusuf, was executed – not in fighting, but in police custody; as was his close ally, Alhaji Buji Foy.

"Why? Was there an attempt to silence him because he had information about what was behind the genesis of his movement?" Brigaglia asked. "It's a question Nigerians have been asking since 2009." In 2010, Boko Haram reappeared, this time as a terrorist network with a modus operandi that relied heavily on bombings.

"In 2010, the supposed second-in-command of the founder of the movement now reappears with some videos in which he threatens Nigeria, which nobody takes seriously at first," Brigaglia said. "These threats realised themselves when they attacked, first, the UN headquarters, in 2010; and there were a series of attacks in 2010, including attacks on churches and others."

"For Muslims, it was a way of creating distance from the movement. For non-Muslims, it was a way of labelling Islam, and that's what made the nickname so popular."



Roscoe Jacobs (black cap), a UCT student, organised a petition themed #BringBackOurGirls in May 2014, to urge the SA government to assist their Nigerian counterparts after Boko Haram kidnapped more than 200 girls from school in Chibok, north-eastern Nigeria. Photo by Michael Hammond

So by now, it was an underground network of people operating their centres from Cameroon, from the remains of what used to be Boko Haram.

Boko Haram began murdering civilians and kidnapping children en masse in 2014, which attracted widespread public condemnation. Girls were kidnapped to become sex slaves, and boys were kidnapped to be trained as militiamen, Brigaglia said.

A horrific yet telling development was that most of the suicide bombers Boko Haram have used were young girls. This gruesome anomaly showed that even 12 years later, the movement was still struggling to infiltrate the psyche of its most logical 'target market': young men.

Since March 2015, Boko Haram appears to have retreated from the Sambisa Forest, one of its strongholds.

His report mentioned two sources of funding: Ali Modu Sheriff, Borno State governor from 2003, and Paul Dike, Nigeria's Chief of the Defence Staff from 2008 to 2010.

There was no concrete evidence linking these two, Brigaglia stressed, but added that Nigerians were frightened by the thought that Boko Haram might have had support from within political structures. To add a touch of paradox, Yusuf – whose original edict outlawed working for the government – had strong ties to Sheriff during his tenure as governor. So close was their relationship that Sheriff had appointed Alhaji Buji Foy as Commissioner for Religious Affairs and Water Resources.

THE MYSTERIES DEEPEN

Brigaglia noted two recent coincidences about the timing of Boko Haram's apparent retreat in 2015. One was that it preceded the Nigerian presidential elections, in which Muhammad Buhari was voted into office. It also coincided with talks between

the Nigerian and Chad governments over oil, which began in August 2014.

Oil had oozed into the picture earlier, too, said Brigaglia. Shortly before Boko Haram started operating as a forest-based militia, a massive oil reserve was discovered in Borno State. This deposit was shared by neighbouring states Cameroon, Chad and Niger. This anomaly should flag the possibility of the other forces operating in the area, said Brigaglia.

Such geo-political uncertainties also arose from US AFRICOM's launch in 2006. This was a massive military operation, with the US setting up bases across the Sahel. Unlike its neighbours, Nigeria resisted advances for a US military base within its borders.

"I'm not saying that Boko Haram is a creation of foreign intelligence. I'm pointing to the idea that there is something going on geo-politically. It might be the US; it might be the US's enemies that are interested in putting their foot in the country. It's not very clear what's happening," he added.

THE SHEKAU FILES

The road to unmasking Boko Haram is potholed with discontinuities, said Brigaglia, pointing to a number of examples where conspiracy theories about the group's inner workings and relationships with local and global geopolitics, had been allowed to take root.

Because Boko Haram was such a "mysterious object", it was often difficult to dislodge these conspiracy theories from the psyche of Nigerians. The death of Abubakar Shekau, the man who assumed Boko Haram leadership after Muhammad Yusuf's death, was fertile ground for such conspiracies.

"Nigerian intelligence claimed to have killed Abubakar Shekau in August 2013," said Brigaglia, yet credible videos of Shekau appeared after August 2013; and in videos ostensibly featuring him, between 2010 and 2013, he was clearly portrayed by two different men.

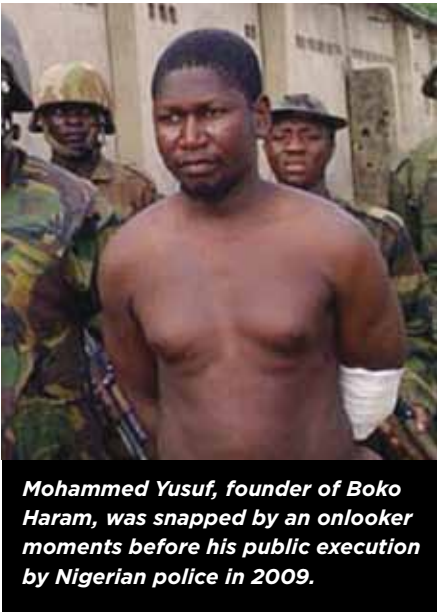
"So, who is the leader of Boko Haram since 2013? What has been happening to the leadership of 2013? And who are the different hands that have started to manipulate [the situation]?"

LAST WORD

When studying the genesis and evolution of Boko Haram, one is left with perplexity rather than certainty, Brigaglia concluded. "The history of Boko Haram over the last 13 years ... would suggest that the pattern here is not of radicalisation, but rather a pattern of gradual penetration in Nigeria of a very complex, multi-layered set of regional and global interests."

DID YOU KNOW?

Dr Andrea Brigaglia - who grew up in Naples - originally tried his hand at a singing career before academia beckoned. In fact, the Boko Haram lecture he delivered in June as part of UCT's Summer School Extension programme was the first time in about 20 years that people had paid to hear his voice.



Mohammed Yusuf, founder of Boko Haram, was snapped by an onlooker moments before his public execution by Nigerian police in 2009.



Political cartoonist Zapiro alluded to growing interconnectedness between global terror networks in this 2013 piece.

CAPE CITYSCAPE: PAST AND PRESENT

When looking at the suburbs of Cape Town from Jammie steps towards the Cape Flats, one sees – in widening, concentric semi-circles – suburbs of high value (in terms of desirability and property prices) giving way to suburbs of lower value, says historian Prof Vivian Bickford-Smith.

Curated by Abigail Calata
Photos by Michael Hammond

DID YOU KNOW?

Langa was named after Langalibalele (‘the sun is boiling hot’ in his native tongue), king of the amaHlubi, a tribe from modern-day KwaZulu-Natal . He was jailed at Robben Island in 1875 for leading a rebellion against the Natal government.



Explore UCT
UCT's newsroom and publications department is keen to explore campus and its surrounds from different viewpoints – through the eyes of history, memory, science or art. If you have a story to tell or an interesting perspective that could make for a good walking tour or map, get in touch with us at newsdesk@uct.ac.za, using 'Explore UCT' in the subject line.

The land values of areas closer to the mountain were determined as far back as the 19th century, with these areas considered more desirable because there was less wind, and they were cooler in summer and less prone to flooding in winter. Proximity to the road from Cape Town to Simon's Town (which served as winter anchorage for the Dutch East Indian as well as the British fleets) earmarked this area early on for suburban development.

The Cape Flats, on the other hand, is home to the majority of Cape Town's working class. Development here was driven by social engineering and industry; industrial areas were pushed to what were known formerly as the outer reaches of the city, and through the Group Areas Act, people deemed 'undesirable' followed, thus giving industry access to a readily available workforce. This racial aspect to development is a distinguishing feature of South African cities, and therefore it is no wonder that it is so evident in Cape Town today, considered by many to be one of the most segregated cities in the country.

Monday Monthly explores the history of some of the suburbs visible from Jammie steps, to uncover how the city came to look the way it does now.

Sources:
Cape Town in the Twentieth Century, by Vivian Bickford-Smith, Elizabeth van Heyningen & Nigel Worden
SA History Online: www.sahistory.org.za



1 NDABENI
Ndabeni was Cape Town's first planned township, and according to Bickford-Smith, "the first occurrence of the forced removal of Africans from the city", in 1901. The bubonic plague was the reason given for this action, which saw the building of large dormitories to accommodate 500 men, as well as 615 corrugated-iron huts that housed eight people each.
Its name is derived from Xhosa, and means 'place of debate'. By 1920, African inhabitants of Cape Town were no longer restricted to Ndabeni, with many taking up residence in District Six. In 1927 Langa, a new township, was built to replace Ndabeni; its inhabitants were moved to Langa, and Ndabeni became the industrial area it is today.



2 PINELANDS
Cape Town's first 'garden city', Pinelands, has the further distinction of being the first attempt at town planning in South Africa. Town planning became important in the aftermath of the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic, in which over 6 000 inhabitants died. Overcrowding is believed to have contributed significantly to the spread of the disease; and the hope was that with planning, a repeat of this phenomenon could be avoided.
Pinelands began as a forest station named Uitslucht, which had thousands of pine trees in it – hence the name. The Garden City Trust (established under the instigation of businessman and politician Richard Stuttaford) acquired the land, and the first house – at 3 Mead Way – was occupied in February 1922. In 1948 Pinelands converted to a municipality, and in 1996 it merged with the City of Cape Town. Like Fish Hoek, Pinelands was one of the few areas in Cape Town where the sale of alcohol was prohibited.
The foundation stone for Pinelands Central Square (above) was laid by Jan Smuts in 1923, a year after the first house in Pinelands was occupied.



3 LANGA
Meaning 'sun' in Xhosa, Langa was constructed next to Cape Town's sewage works. The name is the shortened form of Langalibalele, the name of the Hlubi rebel who was imprisoned on Robben Island in 1875 for leading an uprising against the Natal government.
Like Ndabeni, Langa was a planned township, with authorities attempting to exert as much control as possible over its residents. Trading was prohibited in the location. Visitors had to report to the police superintendent; and gatherings, including dances and tea parties, could only take place with permission from the superintendent.
Langa provided the starting point for a historic march led by Philip Kgosana, then a UCT student affiliated with the Pan Africanist Congress. The march, on 30 March 1960, saw a crowd of between 30 000 and 50 000 protesters from Langa and Nyanga marching to police headquarters in the city centre to hand themselves over for not carrying their passes. This act was considered by many to be a turning point in South Africa's struggle history.



4 NYANGA AND GUGULETHU
Nyanga and Gugulethu (‘moon’ and ‘our pride’ in Xhosa) were established because Langa was becoming overcrowded. The first phase of Nyanga was completed in 1948, while the second phase, consisting of 350 units for 700 families, was ready for occupation in 1953.
In 1958, Gugs (as Gugulethu is often called) started out as Nyanga West, with prefabricated galvanised-iron sheds housing four families each. Residents included Africans who had been forcibly removed from Windermere (near Kensington) when it was declared a coloured area according to the Group Areas Act.
A memorial in honour of the Gugulethu Seven (above) was unveiled on Steve Biko Drive in 2005. The Gugulethu Seven were young members of uMkhonto weSizwe, aged between 16 and 23, who on 3 March 1986 were ambushed and killed by security forces, led by the notorious Vlakplaas unit.



5 ATHLONE & KEW TOWN
This suburb was named after Alexander Cambridge, the first Earl of Athlone, who was the governor-general of the Union of South Africa from 1924 to 1930. Mainly residential, the suburb includes industrial as well as commercial zones. It is home to the Athlone stadium, and was the site of the Trojan Horse incident on 15 October 1985, when police ambushed anti-apartheid protesters, killing three (aged 11, 16 and 21 years) and wounding 15. A memorial (above) marks the spot in Belgravia Road where the incident took place, and includes the message 'Stop State Violence'.
In contrast to today, at its establishment Q-Town (later Kew Town) was considered one of the best of Cape Town's early housing schemes. "Wide boulevards and open spaces are characteristic of this new city (Q-Town) on the Cape Flats, where slum life will be forgotten", claimed the *Cape Times* in 1941. Costs and rentals as well as residents would be carefully controlled by women, specially trained in housing management, who had the task of supervising tenants.



6 HEIDEVELD
"Heideveld was developed in 1962, on a former dairy farm. Accommodation ranged from five-roomed detached houses on sizeable plots, through three-roomed flats in three-storey buildings, to two-roomed 'sub-economic' dwellings. The Epping, Elsie's River and Bellville South industrial areas were conveniently close at hand.
"According to a UCT study conducted in 1968, more than half the residents questioned – including Group Areas victims – thought living conditions were better than those experienced by their parents; only 10% thought the opposite. The main complaints were inadequate public transport, the absence of shops and parks, and distance from work – most respondents were still employed in the city centre." – excerpt from *Cape Town in the Twentieth Century*.



7 KHAYELITSHA
The second-biggest black township after Soweto, Khayelitsha (‘new home’ in Xhosa) was established in 1983, to accommodate shack dwellers, Black Africans who were considered 'legal' residents in Cape Town (meaning they had lived in the city for 10 or more years) were to be housed in this newly purpose-built and easily controlled township. The initial plan was to create four towns, each with 30 000 residents in brick houses, a portion of which were to be privately owned.
According to the 2011 census, Khayelitsha now has a population of almost 400 000, of whom 99% are black African. More than a third of residents aged 20 years or older have completed Grade 12 or higher, with 74% of households surviving on a monthly income of R3 200 or less.

REPORTING THE NEWS FROM THE GROUND UP

Story by Yusuf Omar
Photos by Masixole Feni
for GroundUp

News agency GroundUp employs reporters mainly from vulnerable communities, to shed light on critical failures of the social system that are often invisible to mainstream media and middle-class audiences – and thrust them into the public domain.

In June, Cape Town-based news agency GroundUp published a story about talks between residents of the Joe Slovo informal settlement in Cape Town and city officials over the installation of new taps in the area.

The story began by describing how people needed to queue for hours to collect water from communal taps, and noted that the water supply was often turned off, sometimes for days at a time, according to residents. The first person quoted in the story was 19-year-old resident Mpumelo Genu, who said she had to fill a “big bucket” of water three times a day to cater for the needs of the seven people living at home.

This approach to news is typical of GroundUp, a fairly recent addition to the South African media landscape, having launched in 2012.

It employs and trains young reporters, mainly from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, to find and report on stories from within poor communities, whose voices are often drowned out in the mainstream cacophony.

“I’d been involved in the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) through the 2000s,” says Nathan Geffen, a GroundUp founder and editor. “One of the things that concerned me was that although the media was quite partial towards the TAC and supportive of what we were demanding – namely, treatment for people with HIV – the quality and quantity of news reporting on the epidemic was poor.”

And the same was generally true for other social-justice struggles as well: Geffen felt the issues raised by NGOs such as Equal Education and the Social Justice Coalition (both founded in 2008) were simply not getting the type of media coverage they deserved.

“The idea was to start a media project basically staffed with predominantly working-class reporters, often from activist backgrounds; to train them, and basically to get their copy to the point to where it was publishable, and get those stories published in the mainstream media,” said Geffen. “And that’s exactly what GroundUp is.”

“Without publicity, issues like these rarely get resolved.” **NATHAN GEFFEN**



Residents of Joe Slovo queue for water at one of the communal taps in the Langa informal settlement. Photos from GroundUp.org.za

PUBLIC AWARENESS: FIRST STEP TO RESOLUTION

This speaks to Geffen’s philosophy that making the public aware of critical social issues is the first step to resolving them. With the backing of UCT’s Centre for Social Science Research (CSSR), where Geffen was a researcher, and the Community Media Trust (CMT), GroundUp was born.

The slight irony that the news outlet’s main medium is a website – in a country where the digital divide is still wide – is not lost on Geffen. While the website is an important channel for their stories, GroundUp wants its stories republished in other media, and by and large succeeds in getting this done. Also, more than half of GroundUp’s traffic is from mobile phones, suggesting that it is reaching a wider audience than the few with access to ADSL.

“There isn’t a hell of a lot of media being published in working-class areas like Khayelitsha, so that’s one of the issues,” says Geffen.

SUCCESS STORIES?

If one of the aims is to ignite public interest in failures of the social system that are often invisible to the middle class, there have been instances of success.

For instance, journalist Pharie Sefali ran a story based on interviews with gangsters in Nyanga that got a lot of public-interest traction, says Geffen.

Another GroundUp story that drew widespread interest was about a girl who used a sock as a sanitary pad when she went to school. That story resulted in many people asking GroundUp if there was a way to help, and the news agency decided to have concerned readers drop off sanitary pads at the office that would be donated to people in need.

“Before we knew it, we had boxes and boxes of sanitary pads at the office that we didn’t know what to do with. We managed to find a way to distribute them, though,” reports Geffen.

That kind of story has a lot of traction, he adds. GroundUp published a story in May about two children who had been orphaned. The older brother had dropped out of school to support his younger sibling.

The response from readers was “amazing”, with people keen to donate and help the two kids, says Geffen. Without publicity, he adds, issues like these rarely get resolved.

GroundUp now has six full-time writers and an in-house photographer.

As much as GroundUp sees their news as being in the public interest, the funding model is a bit different to some mainstream media.

“It’s never going to be as sexy and exciting as what the Kardashians are doing. We can’t do what BuzzFeed does; we don’t have lots of pictures of cute cats and things like that, so we’re never going to be able to compete on advertising and traffic,” Geffen conceded. “But I think many would agree that the kinds of news articles we’re publishing are of greater public value, nevertheless.”

“WE NEED TO BE FAIR”

So, back to the residents of Joe Slovo and their quest for reliable running water. While

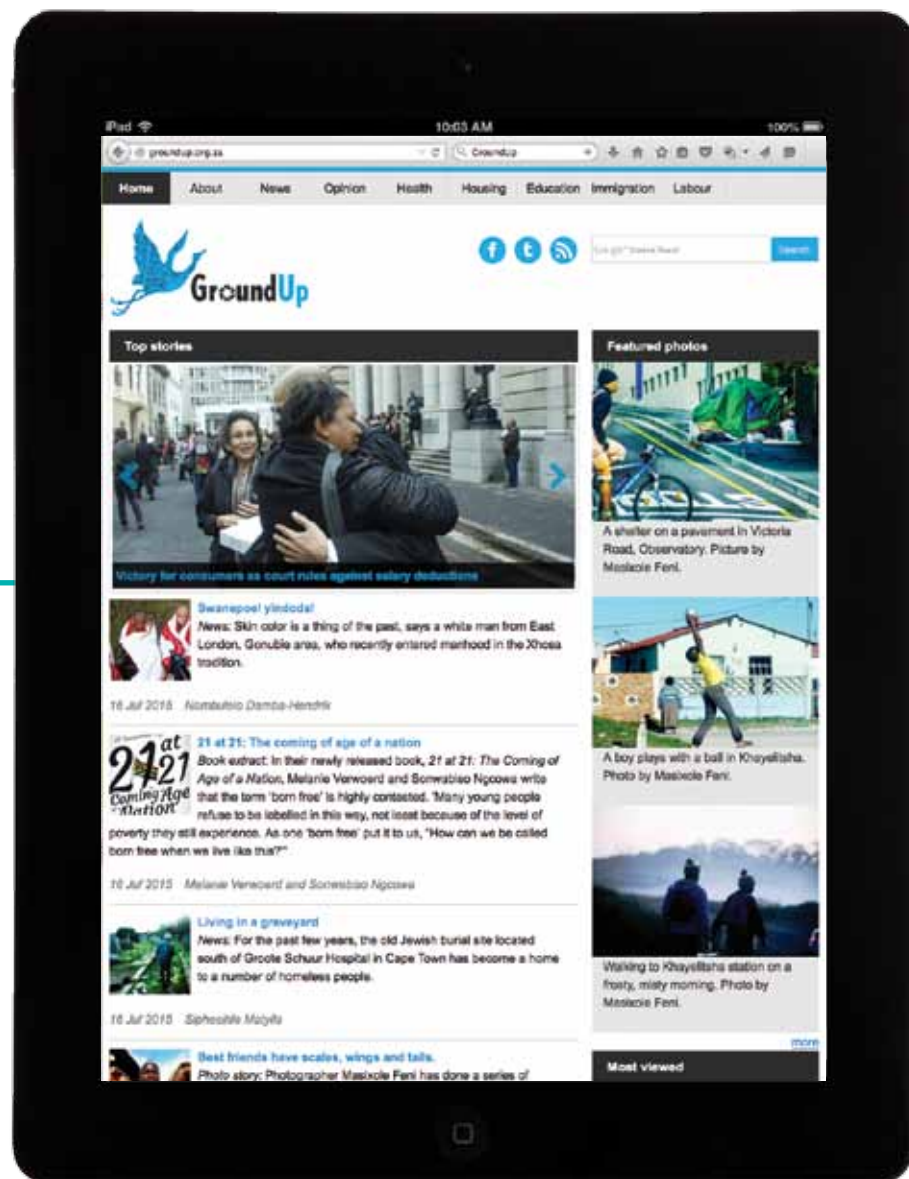
GroundUp’s stated raison d’être is to shed light on social-justice issues, Geffen maintains that they do no special favours for anybody.

“We’re quite strict about the need to follow the rules of journalism. We get comments from the city, from the province, and we encourage the province and the city to publish opinion pieces if they wish. We need to be fair to both sides and let them do the talking,” he said, lamenting what he sees as too much editorialising in mainstream South African media.

Indeed, the Joe Slovo story contained comments from residents, the Housing Development Agency, and the City’s Mayoral Committee Member for Utility Services.

DID YOU KNOW?

GroundUp’s editor and associate editor – Nathan Geffen and Alide Dasnois (former Cape Times editor) – are both UCT alumni. Geffen holds a master’s degree in computer science, while Dasnois completed her bachelor’s degree in economics.



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN?

BEYOND THE POLITICS OF THE RAINBOW NATION,
TOWARDS THE POETICS OF FREEDOM



What does it mean to be human? The question can be raised at the metaphysical or spiritual level; and doing so, Dr Buhle Zuma believes, would be an insightful corrective to our often overly materialist and evolutionary-biology conceptions of the human figure. Alternatively, the question can be raised within the space-time envelope of history and lived human experience. In this article, he explores the latter path.

Photos by: Michael Hammond

The dawn of western modernity (some scholars argue) begins with the year 1492, when Christopher Columbus voyaged to what he believed was India. The encounter between Columbus and the native Carib and Arawak ‘Indians’ of America soon led to a debate in Europe about whether the Indians were human or not.

In this debate, the Indians were caught in a double-bind. If they were considered to be human – even if of a lower order than the Europeans – then they needed to be converted to Christianity, with its accompanying civilising processes. If, on the other hand, they were deemed not to be humans, then they could be enslaved and exploited, and all their forms of life would be deemed disposable.

Another moment (and not the only other one) in which the question of the human emerges is the trans-Atlantic slave trade between the 16th and 19th century. Here, the Africans who experienced the brutality of the trade of human beings within the global capitalist labour market raised two intimately related questions: What does it mean to be human? And what is freedom?

It is these two questions, it seems to me, that confront us in various iterations in this post-apartheid moment or condition.

The reiteration of these questions includes continually increasing inequality that is still racially marked; the no-less-increasing community protests for basic needs such as sanitation and housing; the spatial and structurally unchanged architecture of apartheid; state violence against miners in Marikana; the epidemic state of everyday forms of violence in the lives of

poor black people in the townships; the recent student activism at UCT under the banner of the Rhodes Must Fall movement; the 2008 and 2015 killings of other African peoples in South Africa; and so forth.

Among other things, what these events point to is the unfinished business of freedom that was ‘promised’ during the legal and political collapse of apartheid. The mistake we made was to take the democratic changes that swept across South Africa as the dawn of freedom.

1994 represented a critical moment of political emancipation, which is the first step towards rearranging colonial/apartheid inhumanity articulated in unethical social relations and institutions of society. Twenty years later, we have not earnestly begun to undertake the work that would set us on a path to creating a humane society in which to live.

We are seriously lagging behind in this regard; partly because we have mistaken the image of South Africa as a ‘Rainbow Nation’ to be something that exists, rather than a social formation that *might* exist if we worked towards creating it.

We have mistaken the symbol for a state of being.

The events I cited above call upon us to abandon the dangerous myth of a ‘Rainbow’ South Africa, which is also a form of denial. One of the key features of colonialism/apartheid was to produce out of black people (I use ‘black’ as a political rather than a racial identity) a category of humans who essentially are ‘an absence of human beings’, on the one hand. On the other hand, colonialism/apartheid sought to

produce white people as a category of ‘supreme or absolute beings’, who are the standard of humanity and all its glorious achievements.

Both are a lie, and both mask the possibilities of a humane human co-existence. We therefore cannot afford to speak of ‘post’-apartheid if we have not addressed the question of what it means to be human in South Africa after centuries of dehumanising black people and mythologising white people as gods.

Since we want to believe that we live in a post-colonial/apartheid social formation, we downplay the continuing historical currents of violence and nihilism, especially in the lives of those who are poor and disposable as dysfunctional humans. Poor or otherwise politically and economically marginalised (outside the black political and business elite networks) people are treated as dysfunctional, and pawns in a politico-economic game of party politics.

This is possible partly because freedom has come to be defined by capitalism and consumerism as the ‘freedom of the individual consumer’. One is human insofar as one has the financial capability to consume, and the financial power to consume becomes the definition of freedom. This is an ethically bankrupt mode/genre of being human that follows from the logic of globalisation as a new form of empire and neoliberalism as a way of life – an ‘operating system’ installed into our collective consciousness. This is as much true in South Africa as in many parts of the world today.

What about the human and freedom?

It occurs to me that the current state of affairs in South Africa is unsustainable; and

like all forms of subjugation, must necessarily collapse in some form or other. We can hasten the collapse by small but significant courageous acts of radically imagining what freedom might look like for all of us living in South Africa today.

If we conceived of freedom as everyday practices (individual, collective and institutional) in which we live our lives as an infinite rehearsal of ethical social relations and various forms of equality, what might that look like?

In the process of such poetics of freedom, what kind of human figure might emerge, and what kind of future might such a human figure have?

BUHLE ZUMA

Buhle Zuma’s current research, reading, thinking and writing is broadly located in Afro-Caribbean social, political and psychology thought. More specifically, his developing intellectual project can be labelled Psycho-political Thought on Black Existence. He sees his work as interdisciplinary, as the movement of his thought transgresses various disciplinary boundaries such as sociology, philosophical anthropology, political and economic history, literature and poetry, creative arts, post-colonial psychology, Africana philosophy and cultural studies.



THE SILENT SISTERHOOD THAT HAUNTED A GOVERNMENT

Story by Helen Swingler

Mary Burton's first Black Sash protest stand was in Kalk Bay on a fine day in 1965, after the government had threatened to proclaim the historic fishing village 'white' under the Group Areas Act. Poster in hand, Burton and a group of women stood silently alongside the main road, black sashes draped across their bodies, the target of jeers – and the occasional murmur of encouragement.

She recalls how the background sound of the waves and the cries of fishermen bringing in their catch had underscored the “cruelty and stupidity” of breaking up the lives of those who depended on the sea for their livelihood.

Raised in Argentina, Burton joined the Black Sash barely four years after arriving here in 1961, the year South Africa left the Commonwealth. She was newly married to South African Geoffrey Burton, whom she had met while studying in London.

She recalls how hard it was for her to process the apartheid system. Although she worked at the Service Dining Rooms' soup kitchen for indigent people, she realised far more was needed. But it was the magnitude and significance of the Group Areas Act in particular that galvanised her into joining the Black Sash.

“In later years, protest stands and marches were restricted and prohibited, and breaking the rules led to attacks and arrests for many,” she said. “Black Sash women stood in all parts of the country in lone vigil, holding their posters, using the last bit of legal space left to them.

“And even when those single stands were legal, the women were often subjected to abuse and intimidation.”

NEW BOOK ON BLACK SASH

Fifty years after joining the organisation, Burton is about to publish *The Black Sash* (Jacana Media), a book on the organisation's history and contribution to democracy. Its release will coincide with activities around Women's Day on 9 August.

It's a neat intersection.

Generations of women have been the backbone of an organisation Nelson Mandela once called “the conscience of white South Africa”.



“Black Sash women stood in all parts of the country in lone vigil, holding their posters, using the last bit of legal space left to them.”
MARY BURTON

Writing on the Sash's 60th anniversary, *Daily Maverick* journalist Marianne Thamm recounts the organisation's beginnings in 1955 “over a cup of tea by six middle-class white women outraged by the then-government's attempts to remove 'coloured' citizens from the voter's roll”.

These women launched the Black Sash's forerunner, the Women's Defence of the Constitution League. Their key strategies were “silent sisterhood” and “blacksashing” (wearing a black sash) during silent protest vigils. (The name 'Black Sash' was adopted as a reference to the sashes they wore or draped over a replica of the 1910 constitution, which robbed the majority of South Africans of the right to vote.)

This silent protest included “haunting” cabinet ministers; standing at the entrances of places they were expected to appear – railway stations, airports, or official functions. In Parliament's public gallery, the women were forced to remove the sashes, but devised ways of replacing them – for instance, by wearing long black gloves – infuriating National Party members when they glanced up. Outside Parliament, others stood with bent heads, holding placards protesting against unjust laws.

HANDS-ON ACTIVISTS

The group was also hands-on, grappling with the actualities of racial segregation, influx control, migrant labour, censorship, detention without trial, and the states of emergency.

For Burton, three areas stand out.

First, the Sash advice offices worked to meet the daily needs of thousands of people, initially under the pass laws and later under the burden of poverty and deprivation.

Second, the protest and advocacy work helped keep alive the public voice of opposition to injustice.

“For decades, this had demonstrated in a tangible way the view of white people who were prepared to stand against apartheid.”

And third, the group was determined to spotlight how poverty and violence affected women's lives.

During the 1970s there was growing interest in Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement, and many white liberals were concerned about the dangers of nationalism, whether black or white, says Burton.

“Yet Black Sash members worked with Steve Biko and the Black Community Programmes, and saw in the movement the value of developing independence and self-worth in the quest for liberation.”



“Joining the Black Sash influenced the course of my life.” – Mary Burton, author of *The Black Sash* (due for release in August). She was photographed in the Special Collections section of UCT Libraries, where she researched parts of the book.

Photo by: Michael Hammond

PERSONAL STORY

The publisher's blurb describes the book as “a story of hard work and dedication, of small victories won little by little against the odds, of personal courage in the face of injustice and repression, of vision, compassion and caring. It is a uniquely South African story”.

Burton's personal story is closely entwined.

“Joining the Black Sash influenced the course of my life.”

For one, it brought her to UCT in 1979 as a mature student (she was 39).

“One of the most important realisations was that I did not know enough about South African history and political theory.”

She took four majors: political science, comparative African law, social anthropology – and English, “for the sheer love of it”.

“I went back to the Black Sash much better equipped to play my part in it.”

She was its national president in the tumultuous years between 1986 and 1990. The State of Emergency was in force; the ANC had put out the call to make the townships ungovernable, and there were rolling national school boycotts.

“The Black Sash found itself swept up in the mounting pressure for an end to apartheid, and played its part in protesting, monitoring and recording the drastic response from the authorities,” Burton commented.

“In the increasing violence, the Sash longed for peace, but understood that this meant working for justice. A new generation of members joined the older ones, but numbers remained small.”

As the work of the advice offices continued to grow, new outreaches carried their work into the wider field, opposing the forced removals

of settled communities; even those far from the urban areas.

REDEFINED ROLE AFTER 1994

In the year after South Africa's watershed elections, Burton took on a new role: one of 17 commissioners on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, serving on its Human Rights Committee.

It was then that she began thinking about writing a history of the Sash; many NGOs were redefining their roles in a changing society.

She had a vast collection of documents and newspapers that she augmented with records from the UCT and Wits archives, and recorded interviews with Black Sash members around the country.

In 2008, thanks to Professor Brenda Cooper, Burton became an honorary research associate in the Centre for African Studies (CAS), first under Cooper's directorship and then under Professor Harry Garuba.

“This allowed me to deal with the mass of my accumulated papers, and to benefit from the contact with staff and students of the CAS.”

But the book is not only a chronicle. Burton saw that the Sash's metamorphosis over six decades could serve as a model for other NGOs.

“I thought it would be useful to describe the often agonising process the Black Sash went through in 1994, resulting in the closure in 1995 of the membership-driven, broad-focus movement, and its replacement by a tighter, professionally managed advice office and advocacy organisation.

“I still think it is amazing that the process worked – and that the Black Sash continues its work today.”

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CONVERSATIONS IN COMMUNITY

In the second in our new series of interviews getting to know the people of UCT, Helen Swingler spoke with Sonwabo Ngcelwane, alumnus and member of the Social Responsiveness Unit (SRU) in the Institutional Planning Department.

Story by Helen Swingler

Photo by Michael Hammond



Sonwabo Ngcelwane fondly remembers his arrival at UCT as a Xhosa initiate almost 20 years ago and how his clothes in line with Xhosa tradition attracted the attention of a “gorgeous young English girl”.

I like what he writes

When Sonwabo Ngcelwane came to UCT in 1987 it was during the State of Emergency imposed the year before, and police incursions onto campuses were common.

He was a young Xhosa initiate, fresh from the circumcision school (*ukwaluka*) at Keiskammahoek in the former Ciskei. Following tradition, he wore khaki clothes – a jacket, an initiate’s cap – and carried *umngqayi* (a knobkerrie), which protects initiates and gives them strength.

At UCT, in the scorching heat of February, the initiate’s dress attracted “weird stares”, but it also attracted the attention of a “gorgeous young English girl”.

Ngcelwane was studying politics, history and African languages, and they shared a political science class. One day, class was interrupted by a police raid. In the mayhem, as teargas infiltrated lecture rooms, they took cover together.

“We ran into the library and hid behind a stack of unshelved books. Trembling with fear, we clutched each other tightly – and from that day we became inseparable.”

Twenty-eight years on, in his office in Bremner Building where he works as a senior planning officer in the SRU, and seated against a backdrop of books, Ngcelwane remembers those days, his noticeboard a patchwork of pictures: his children, his Two Oceans Ultra Marathon photos – and images of Steve Biko, Chris Hani and Oliver Tambo.

It’s not really done for activists to talk about hard times; everyone suffered, he says.

But when the call came for members of the community to recall their memories of campus, it became an opportunity to reflect.

ACTIVISM BORN FROM BOARDING SCHOOL

In 1987, Ngcelwane was one of fewer than 500 black students on campus.

“But we knew each other very well. That helped us to draw strength from one another; to understand our own contexts, and just find ways of coping.”

Like him, many of the black students registered had lost two years of schooling during the school boycotts. He was 20 when he came to UCT, an activist with political nous and streetwise, after several stints in Pollsmoor for ‘public violence’ as a high-school student.

“Politically we were very old, matured; we’d witnessed the military invasion of our townships, and as high-school students we were at the forefront of activities during the State of Emergency. Those were hard times; but also the best of times.”

He’d wanted to study law, but his Afrikaans was poor; and Latin, still compulsory for law, wasn’t available at Fezeka High in Gugulethu where the Ngcelwane family moved after being evicted from District Six in October 1963.

Although he knew his father, the man was not part of his upbringing. Bringing up a son on her own was hard for his mother, Nompumelelo Ngcelwane. She worked for

a family in Oranjezicht, but as children weren’t permitted to live in the servants’ quarters, five-year-old Ngcelwane was sent to a Catholic boarding school in Libode, Pondoland.

Ngcelwane was excited by rural Pondoland and being in the company of so many children his age. He still has a photo of his buddies Ntsikelelo, Samkelo and Toto somewhere at home.

Boarding school also sensitised him to political realities at an early age.

The turbulent 1980s had prepared them well for what they would face on campus. Most of his peers were members of the Black Students’ Society.

“We didn’t notice the Cecil John Rhodes statue. Even if we had, we would have connected it to the structural inequalities of the time, and not isolated it as an antagonist. We were more concerned about broader society. Our struggles were for radical change, a total overhaul of racial capitalism.”

BIKO OPENED THE DOOR TO DIGNITY

Another turning point was discovering the writings of Steve Biko, particularly *I Write What I Like*. Biko had been killed in detention in 1977. But the impact on Ngcelwane’s sense of self a decade later was marked.

“Biko said, Africa can give the world ‘a more human face’.”

Which is what Biko did for him.

“For the first time I found a black person who was writing eloquently and in a humane way about me. Through his writing I found my own voice. I could stand up in a crowd without fear that my language was not proper... he affirmed my humanity; it affirmed my dignity... that’s what he gave me.

“It’s not easy in a country like ours. When I need to anchor myself, when I feel vulnerable, even here at work, I turn to his writings about where I am, what I am and what I bring to the world.”

Ngcelwane didn’t come to UCT straight after graduating. He did his BED at UWC, taught at a school in Khayelitsha for 10 years; and then resigned.

“I felt I’d done enough. There were other challenges.”

After working for the Western Cape Education Department and then Eduloan, he joined UCT in 2008.

In many senses, the young school activist has come full circle, to a place where knowledge has a community face.

And he’s still running (“I don’t do it for a six-pack or a great body – I’m too old for that!”); it centres him.

A LASTING CONNECTION

I ask him to go back to that to moment in the library in 1987, amid police tear gas.

“Ja... though we were in the same politics class, she was in second year. She loved my outfit. She was really curious to know about it, and why I had to wear it for six months. She challenged me to do better in my studies, and I really enjoyed her company.

Although they became constant companions after the police raid, their worlds separated after graduation. Ngcelwane didn’t see his friend again until 2010.

It was early one morning, before the start of a marathon. Ngcelwane was running; she was there with her two children, to support her husband.

“We recognised each other immediately. We hugged. We talked. But we were very clear that life had moved on. It would have been clumsy to exchange details.”

His personal story has been enlarged and enriched by these memories.

“When I need to anchor myself, when I feel vulnerable, even here at work, I turn to [Biko’s] writings about where I am, what I am and what I bring to the world.”

SONWABO NGCELWANE