

Book Reviews

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Boekresensies

Winburg in a time of war

John Boje, *An Imperfect Occupation: Enduring the South African War*

University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Chicago and Springfield, 2015

243pp

ISBN 978-0-252-03956-0 (hardcover); 978-0-252-09765-2 (e-book)

\$40.00

Winburg, established in 1842, is the oldest town in South Africa's Free State Province and geographically, a central town in this province and in the country. Originally a Voortrekker town, it was, from 1845 until 1854, under British rule, before becoming part of the newly established Oranje-Vrijstaat (Orange Free State) Boer/Afrikaner republic. When the South African War (also known as the Anglo-Boer War, but here the author chooses to call it the South African War) broke out on 11 October 1899, the large Winburg commando went off to fight on the Natal front, and later in the Orange Free State.

On 5 May 1900, the British Army, advancing northwards from Bloemfontein to Pretoria, occupied Winburg unopposed. The occupied town was initially administered by British military officers, but soon a measure of civilian administration was restored, albeit under military oversight. During the guerrilla phase of the war, from time to time Boer commandos operated in the vicinity of the town, while the town was used by the British Army as a base for some of their drives against the Boer forces.

In his book, *An Imperfect Occupation: Enduring the South African War*, John Boje provides a review and analysis of the Winburg district at the time of the war "and how its residents experienced the tightening grip of British military occupation" (p vii). Over and above the Introduction and Conclusion, the book is structured in terms of seven chapters, which partially chronologically, and partially thematically, provide an overview of events in and around Winburg in the years 1899 to 1902.

In Chapter One, the various phases of the South African War are discussed, as well as the broad impact that events at the war fronts had on Winburg, including its eventual occupation by the British forces. Then, in Chapter Two, "The Failure of Protection" is discussed, including the effect the British martial law regulations and concomitant punitive measures had on Winburg inhabitants.

“From Neutrality to Collaboration” is the topic of Chapter Three. By mid-1900, many Boers had either been captured or had surrendered voluntarily. But those who were no longer on commando were under pressure to re-join the Boer forces. In consequence, approximately 25 percent of the Winburg burghers who had surrendered in terms of the British proclamations (i.e. the so-called “hands-uppers”), re-joined the Boer commandos. On the other hand, some 30 percent of the Winburgers who surrendered chose to collaborate actively with the British forces in due course (i.e. became what were called “joiners”). Some of them had never had any commitment to the republican cause; others simply wanted to evade combat, while economic considerations also came into play. Some hands-uppers joined the peace movement; others joined the British Army and took up arms against their former republican comrades.

In Chapter Four (“War against Women”) the varied responses of Winburg’s women to military occupation are analysed. In this regard, the British scorched-earth policy and attendant concentration camp system is also covered. This theme is continued in Chapter Five (“In Captivity”), and the Winburg internment camp (as concentration camps should be called, according to this reviewer) is discussed, including the camp personnel, medical staff, disease and death, everyday life, and the matter of defiance and compliance.

Chapter Six focuses on the effect the war had on Winburg’s black inhabitants and the role played in the conflict. Black involvement on the side of both the Boers and the British is discussed, as well as black internment/concentration camps. In Chapter Seven, “The Aftermath of War” is analysed, including the trauma caused by the conflict, the reconstruction that took place, the reintegration of the Afrikaner people, the role of the church, and the plight of black people. John Boje’s *An Imperfect Occupation* is a worthy addition to “The History of Military Occupation” series of publications. The book sheds light on, and provides new insight into the agonising choices faced by Winburg residents (town and district; white and black) during the British occupation. In line with the work previously done by Albert Grundlingh, Boje challenges notions of Boer/Afrikaner unity and homogeneity, and he convincingly illustrates the precarious tightrope of resistance, neutrality, and collaboration walked by people on all sides during the war. This multi-dimensional study is indeed an original contribution to the existing knowledge of the South African War/Anglo-Boer War and thus adds significantly to the current historiography of this devastating conflict.

An Imperfect Occupation: Enduring the South African War is based on John Boje’s doctoral thesis, “Winburg’s War: An Appraisal of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902 as it was Experienced by the People of a Free State District”, which was submitted to the University of Pretoria in 2009. Thanks to the University of Illinois Press, the adapted version of this study is now at the disposal of a wider audience. It is a book that indeed deserves a wide readership, and it will hopefully inspire similar studies on other communities in a time of war.

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Opposition politics from Union to democracy

F.A. Mouton, *Iron in the Soul: The Leaders of the Official Parliamentary Opposition in South Africa, 1910–1993*

Protea Book House, Pretoria, 2017

224pp

ISBN 978-1-4853-0550-7

R275.00

The socio-economic roles played by people in various leadership positions in our past society have implications on the citizenry today and thus warrant a serious inquiry, particularly from a historical perspective. Focusing on this standpoint, F.A. Mouton has previously published biographical literature on fundamental role players in works such as *Voices in the Desert: Margaret and William Ballinger, a Biography* (1997); *Voorloper: Die Lewe van Schalk Pienaar* (2002), and *Prophet without Honour, F.S. Malan: Afrikaner, South African and Cape Liberal* (2011).

Following a similar trajectory, Mouton's latest publication, *Iron in the Soul, the Leaders of the Official Parliamentary Opposition in South Africa, 1910–1993*, reflects on the biographies of nine politicians who were active leaders of the opposition in parliamentary proceedings between 1910 and 1993. These include Sir Leander Starr Jameson, 1910–1912; Sir Thomas Smartt, 1912–1920; J.G.N. Strauss, 1950–1956; Sir De Villiers Graaff, 1956–1977; Radclyffe Cadman, 29 June to 30 November 1977; Colin Eglin, 1977–1979; Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert, 1979–1986; Colin Eglin, 1986–1987; and Dr A.P. Treurnicht, 1987–1993.

Expressing somewhat similar characteristics to the apartheid parliament of later years, the foundation of the book rests firmly on the entrenched belief that opposition leaders (1910–1993) had to have “iron in the soul” to remain focused on the achievement of their political objectives. The personality traits of opposition leaders played pivotal roles in parliamentary proceedings; the book shows that individuals who were of a meek character struggled against political heavyweights of the dominant National Party.

Mouton highlights how Dr A.P. Treurnicht was a sensitive man who often shed tears under stressful situations (p 183). To be in the trenches of the opposition, a leader had to have the charisma, presence and attractiveness of a Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert who was admired by most. In addition, the politics of the time required leadership that was bold and assertive in all political frameworks such as the liberals, conservatives and radicals to ensure that votes swayed in the direction required. Mouton stresses that to be a successful political figure in parliament, one had to be strong, have an “iron will” to avoid losing political debates and being perceived as weak. The classic example attesting to this is the deriding of J.G.N. Strauss's small voice that was drowned by the strident voices of the NP members. Furthermore, parliamentarians critiqued every aspect of the opposition. Strauss's ability to ensure his political wellbeing amidst political reform was solely based on the fact that he was

married to English-speaking Joy Carpenter, and that their children attended English-medium schools.

According to Mouton, although it may be problematic to align ill-health and the early death of parliamentarians to the stressful nature of their deployment, it is without doubt that parliamentarians succumbed to the strains experienced in parliament. Sir Leander Starr Jameson was diagnosed with haemorrhage, gout, gallstones and eczema; he visited Europe frequently for medical reasons. Smartt, on the other hand, was in a bad mental and physical state. In January 1919, he was diagnosed with a heart condition and angina (p 55). Ill health also questioned Strauss's ability to lead the opposition when he was diagnosed with glandular infection and hepatitis; he eventually succumbed to a heart attack in the 1990s. These parliamentarians, including those of the dominant parties, had to make use of survival strategies during their time in parliament.

The lens of the book is focused primarily on the political experiences of the parliamentarians and thus tends to neglect the social support received by parliamentarians from their families, churches and other institutions. The "iron in the soul" may in addition mean family support and being strengthened by social interactions on rugby fields, cattle farming or other social settings. Thus, the presentation of the male figures in the book should have been diversified to include their holistic being. Undeniably, the role played by Helen Suzman alludes to a white female feminist presence in parliamentary proceedings and perhaps she may have had a chapter dedicated to her as a female voice in the male-centred political era. In addition, her experiences in parliamentary proceedings would highlight the capability of women to embody the "iron in the soul" required to succeed in a male dominated political arena.

Iron in the Soul may be somewhat misperceived by some scholars as nationalistic in that it deals with the experiences of white political figures who played detrimental roles in ensuring the subjugation of the black majority. This misperception rests squarely on the way black political experiences seem to be minimally iterated, particularly when legislation was drafted and debated in parliament that had grave implications for black South Africans. Often the parliamentary proceedings, in my opinion, seemed to be disconnected from the reality experienced in the black townships. The source of this inadequacy is, and many will agree, the liberalist presentation of white parliamentarians who possessed questionable knowledge on the struggle experienced by blacks. The other fundamental question that the book has not interrogated convincingly is the efficacy of white liberals in representing other minority groups when they were socio-economically distant from them.

The book's attractiveness would, in my opinion, have been enhanced by a comparative interrogation of parliamentary proceedings in post-democratic South Africa under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. Doing so would have shed light on how parliamentary opposition reshaped themselves in a new dispensation. Furthermore, the new racial and gender composition of parliament are some of the key issues that may have been an interesting read in addition to the content already provided.

All things considered, this book is an excellent and stimulating inquiry into the history of opposition leadership in parliament in a past era and will be of great interest to academics and general readers alike.

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Dawie de Villiers se lewe diplomaties beskryf

Dawie de Villiers met Chris Schoeman, *My Lewensreis: Springbok, Politikus, Diplomaat*

Zebra Press, Kaapstad, 2018

264 pp

ISBN 978-1-77609-242-0

R295.00

Dawie de Villiers het deur die loop van sy lewe groot spore in die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing getrap. Hy het bekendheid verwerf as Springbok rugbyspeler en kaptein in die 1960's en vroeë 1970's, waarna hy die politiek betree het. Na bykans 'n dekade op die Nasionale Party (NP) se banke in die parlement, is hy in 1979 na Londen as Suid-Afrika se ambassadeur daar. Met sy terugkeer na Suid-Afrika was De Villiers 'n sleutelspeler in die onderhandelings vir 'n nuwe, demokratiese Suid-Afrika. Sy outobiografie het dus die potensiaal om diep insigte oor 'n noemenswaardige Suid-Afrikaner se lewe te deel.

Soos die leser met die boek begin, word daar vinnig agtergekom dat dit nie noodwendig 'n moeilike stuk leeswerk gaan wees nie. Die boek is opgedeel in 33 kort hoofstukke, waarvan die langste een maar nege bladsy lank is. Daarby word die styl deurgaans gekenmerk aan kort paragrawe en eenvoudige sinne wat maklik lees. "Op 7 September was ek terug op kantoor. Daar was min dae oor en baie reëlings om te tref vir ons terugkeer na Suid-Afrika. Ons het hierdie taak nie met groot geesdrif aangepak nie." (p 101) Dié skryfstyl is sekerlik die produk van 'n georganiseerde brein.

Buiten die georganiseerde skryfstyl, kompartementaliseer De Villiers sy lewe baie duidelik in sy outobiografie. Die soeklig val onderskeidelik op sy loopbaan in rugby, sy tyd as NP parlamentslid, ambassadeur in Londen, sy betrokkenheid by die onderhandelings vir die nuwe Suid-Afrika, en laastens op sy werksaamheid as adjunk-sekretaris-generaal van die World Tourism Organisation (WTO) van die Verenigde Nasies.

Die hoofstukke wat hierdie onderskeie lewensfases beskryf, bevat nie noodwendig soveel detail as wat die leser dalk sou verwag nie. Sy grootwoordjare word maar bondig opgesom. Oor sy rugbyloopbaan word daar oorsigtelik en grootliks met behulp van staaltjies en wedstryd opsommings geskryf. Sy toetrede tot die politiek word ook nie gekontekstualiseer teen 'n agtergrond van 'n ontwikkelende politieke bewussyn oor tyd nie. Dit kom byna as 'n verassing vir die leser:

Voor my terugkeer na Johannesburg van Heathrow-lughawe ontvang ek 'n oproep van Louis Luyt. Hy waarsku my dat die media my op die lughawe gaan inwag en met vrae gaan bestook na aanleiding van gerugte dat ek tot die politiek gaan toetree. Hy adviseer my dat ek nie ja of nee moet antwoord nie (p 66).

Hoe het Dawie de Villiers sy eerste skuiwe in die rigting van die politiek gemaak? Hoe het sy politieke bewussyn tot op hierdie stadium van sy lewe ontwikkel? Wat het agter die skerms gebeur wat gelei het tot die ontstaan van hierdie gerugte waarna hy verwys? Die rigiede indeel van sy lewensverhaal veroorsaak dat daar plek-plek meer vrae as antwoorde is.

Waar die outobiografie ook dalk te kort skiet, is in die hoofstukke oor De Villiers se twee jaar as Suid-Afrikaanse ambassadeur in Londen en sy betrokkenheid by die onderhandelings van die vroeë 1990's. Die besprekings oor sy tyd as ambassadeur (1979–1980) wentel grootendeels rondom sy gesin se leefstyl in Londen. Alhoewel die beskrywings van Highveld, hul woning in Londen, sy sosiale program as ambassadeur, of sy gesin se ski-vakansie in Oostenryk interessant is, soek die leser egter vir 'n bietjie meer vleis aan die spreekwoordelike been. Hoe het hy teweerk gegaan om Suid-Afrika se buitelandse betrekkinge in hierdie belangrike tyd in die land se geskiedenis te handhaaf? Hierdie vraag, wat baie lesers seker sal vra, bly onbeantwoord.

In 1989 het De Villiers die NP se Kaaplandse leier geword, en daarmee saam het 'n sentrale rol in die politieke onderhandelings wat sou volg, gekom. Oor wat sy persoonlike bydraes tot hierdie belangrike tyd in Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis was, verskaf hy ook nie baie duidelikheid nie. In stede daarvan om te vertel hoe presies hy tot die onderhandelingsproses bygedra het en watter rol(le) hy daarin gespeel het, gee De Villiers eerder 'n algemene geskiedkundige oorsig oor die gebeure van die vroeë 1990's. Dat dit 'n deeglike historiese blik met interessante binnestaanders perspektiewe is, is egter nie te betwyfel nie. Dieselfde gebrek aan detail is te sien in sy beskrywing van sy tyd as adjunk-sekretaris-generaal van die WTO van die Verenigde Nasies. Waar die leser dalk meer sou wou lees oor De Villiers se werksaamhede om toerisme wêreldwyd te bevorder, lees jy eerder anekdotiese verhale oor sy leefstyl in Spanje en sy talle internasionale reise terwyl hy dié amp beklee het.

Daar moet melding gemaak word van die feit dat De Villiers in sy outobiografie kennelik oor niks of niemand 'n negatiewe waarde oordeel uitspreek nie. Outobiografieë is so dikwels vir hul outeurs 'n platform waarvandaan hulle húl kant van 'n saak kan stel, wat dan gewoonlik met sterk uitsprake en selfs 'n moddergooiery gepaard gaan. As 'n verwysingspunt: voor ek Dawie de Villiers se outobiografie gelees het, het ek dié van Louis Luyt gelees. Luyt het sonder twyfel sy lewensverhaal gesien as 'n geleentheid om sý kant van verskeie sake te stel, wat gereeld beteken het dat daar sommer met mening onder spesifieke mense ingeklim is. Dawie de Villiers doen geensins dieselfde nie. Hy is 'n diplomaat in wese, en beskryf mense en sake op 'n dienooreenkomstige diplomatieuse wyse. “Nou, ná 'n tydperk van heronderhandeling, is daar baie min in die nuwe Grondwet waaroor ons kan kla dat dit totaal verkeerd en onaanvaarbaar is. In sy geheel is dit 'n baie goeie Grondwet” (p 167). Oor die ANC se eerste jare in die regering is De Villiers ewe diplomatieus: “Een van sy beleidsmaatrëls

is regstellende aksie, waarmee ons saamstem. Al waarmee ons verskil, is die manier hoe dit toegepas word – dat dit nie gedoen moet word op 'n manier dat jy uiteindelik onsekerheid skep onder wit mense en hulle die land laat verlaat nie” (p 167).

Jy mag dalk wil argumenteer dat hierdie outobiografie té oorsigtelik is. Daar moet egter nie sig verloor word van die feit dat Dawie de Villiers 'n diplomaat in wese is nie. Dit is in sy aard om sake op 'n gebalanseerde en neutrale wyse te benader. Om sy eie rol in diepte te beskryf en dan moontlik sig van die groter prentjie te verloor, strook nie met só 'n persoonlikheid se lewensbeskouing nie. Hierdie outobiografie staan dus as 'n weerspieëling van sy outeur se diplomatieuse samestelling.

Wouter de Wet

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The many twists and turns in the life of a cadre

Mandla Mathebula, *The Backroom Boy: Andrew Mlangeni's Story*

Wits University Press, Johannesburg, 2017

220pp

ISBN 978-1-77614-086-2

R320.00

Since the early 1990s there has been a steady rise in the publication of biographies, auto-biographies and memoirs of struggle stalwarts who played a significant role in the liberation struggle in South Africa. These publications have undoubtedly enriched our understanding of the liberation struggle in South Africa and the enormous sacrifices many individuals made to achieve freedom.

Up until *The Backroom Boy: Andrew Mlangeni's Story* by Mandla Mathebula, Mlangeni's contribution to the struggle for liberation has remained largely unknown. This is partly because Mlangeni himself has been reluctant to share his experiences and brushed aside requests to write his story by saying: “my organization, the African National Congress, has not yet released me to tell its secrets” (p xiii). What consideration has been given in other publications about him is merely superficial and very little attention has been paid to who he is; what influenced his early political consciousness; and how he rose through the structures of the ANC to the High Command of uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the ANC's military wing. Nelson Mandela, in his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994), (pp 334–364) and Elinor Sisulu's *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In our Lifetime* (2002), (p 216 and pp 418–419) for example, introduce Mlangeni to the story of the struggle for liberation when he was 36 years old in 1961, which is rather later than most written about struggle icons.

Mathebula, a public servant and a historian who has published on Tsonga history, has produced a remarkable 218-page book, packaged into 12 chapters about the life and contribution of Mlangeni to freedom in South Africa. Each chapter deals with a distinct episode in Mlangeni's life. Mathebula lets us in on Mlangeni's early childhood on the farm

called Mynhartfontein situated in Bethlehem, in the then Orange Free State – a predominantly Afrikaner region. We learn that Mlangeni was born in 1925 and that he went to town for the first time when he was nine years old, and only began his schooling when he was 12 years old in Kroonstad where he stayed with relatives because “on the farm he had never heard of a thing called a ‘school’” (p 63). Mlangeni was forced to return to the farm and continued with his schooling in Bethlehem. While living on the farm, he observed how his father, mother and some of his siblings had to work for the white farmer to secure accommodation on the farm for the family.

For Mathebula, Mlangeni’s introduction to politics can be traced to his move to Johannesburg in 1943. This is the period when many black people were drifting to urban areas in search of employment in the expanding industrial sector caused by the eruption of the Second World War. In Johannesburg, Mathebula lived with his older brother in Skom (Pimville), where he continued his schooling. The following year, he enrolled at St. Peter’s in Rosettenville where he was taught by Oliver Tambo until he completed Form 3 (today’s Grade 10). Mathebula argues that Mlangeni’s early political conscientisation was influenced by community issues in Pimville, where people lived in squatter settlements which lacked basic services.

In 1944, the year the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) was formally established, Mlangeni, together with Victor Moorosi, formed the Pimville Students and Ex-students’ League which was known for engaging the youth on local politics. According to Mathebula, it was during this period that Mlangeni also joined the Young Communist League (YCL) in Pimville and the ANCYL respectively. It is disappointing that Mathebula does not elaborate and explain the reason/s why Mlangeni joined both the YCL and the ANCYL in the same year – this despite the fact that the majority of the leaders of the ANCYL at this time were anti-Indian and anti-Communist. Mathebula also reveals that Mlangeni, although he was a member of the ANCYL in 1947, was not yet actively involved in the organisation. Mathebula again, alas, does not explain the reason for this.

Remarkably, Mathebula details Mlangeni’s involvement in the MK and his training abroad as one of the first recruits of the organisation outside the High Command. He then received his military training in China from 1961 to 1962, where he met Mao Tse Tung and learnt a great deal about the revolutionary history of the Chinese people. His mathematical skills saw him, together with Steven Naidoo, being separated from the rest of the MK group and sent to the She-Yon Military Academy in Liaoning Province, in the north of China, to receive their practical training on guerrilla warfare. By the time he returned to South Africa, the ANC had been banned for three years and Mlangeni began working underground as an ANC operative using the name Reverend Mokete Mokoena. His responsibilities included visiting regions across the country to revive ANC activities and to recruit new members for MK. It would have been fascinating to learn more about his achievements, if there were any, in these activities. Eventually, his work drew the attention of the security police and he was arrested on 24 June 1963 and tried in the historic Rivonia trial, together with Mandela, Sisulu and others. Mlangeni was found guilty and sentenced to life

imprisonment. He served 18 years of the sentence on Robben Island and the remainder at Pollsmoor prison before he was released in 1989.

Mathebula follows a pattern similar to that used in other biographies and auto-biographies of former political prisoners in South Africa when writing about Mlangeni's period of incarceration. However, with great skill he has managed to introduce a human factor into the narrative. The reader can feel Mlangeni's pain and emotions. Drawing mainly on the letters between Mlangeni, his wife June and some of the family members, we learn about the financial difficulties the Mlangeni family, particularly June, experienced because of his incarceration. To survive, Andrew and June's children were adopted by other families. Similarly, Mathebula describes the brutality of the apartheid system. For example, he writes that Mlangeni met his daughter, Sylvia, whom he had not seen since she was a child of 12 years old, when she was 27 years old. And even then, because of the stringent prison regulations, Mlangeni was still not allowed to hug or kiss his daughter; he spoke to her through the glass partition which separated them. Yet again, Mlangeni only saw his other daughter, Maureen, after 22 years of incarceration. Despite all these challenges, Mlangeni was able to continue with his studies in prison, completing his matric and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and Public Administration.

In the final three chapters of the book, Mathebula writes about Mlangeni's time in Pollsmoor prison; his release after 26 years; being able to vote for the first time in a democratic South Africa; and being sworn in as a Member of Parliament in 1994 under the presidency of Mandela. Mathebula has crafted the story of Mlangeni's life from childhood to post-independence South Africa with consummate skill. He has demonstrated Mlangeni's steady involvement in politics and shows that despite his preference at times to work behind the scenes, was able to rise to the occasion to assume leadership positions in the ANC. Through this narrative, Mlangeni's contribution to the liberation struggle is clear.

This book could have benefited greatly if the author had spent rather more time explaining some of the decisions which Mlangeni took. For example, Mlangeni's role in the Communist Youth League is not clearly spelt out in the book. Similarly, the reason why he was appointed as a "functionary" for the Party is unknown. This is left to the reader's imagination. Further, Mathebula makes an unsubstantiated claim that Robert Sobukwe attended the memorial service organised on Robben Island to mourn the death of Albert Luthuli (p 138). Mandela, who was present at this service, does not mention Sobukwe in his biography (pp 425–426). Moreover, Benjamin Progrund, the author of Sobukwe's biography, *How Can Man Die Better?* (1990) stresses that Sobukwe was isolated and was not allowed to interact with other prisoners. It is highly unlikely that the prison authorities would have allowed him to attend a memorial service for Luthuli. Despite these few limitations, I recommend Mathebula's book to a wide readership.

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A remarkable account of a woman activist

Fatima Meer, *Memories of Love and Struggle*

Kwela Books, Cape Town, 2017

258pp

ISBN 978-0-7957-0788-9

R301.00

The role of women continues to be neglected in the documenting of historical events, as it has been ever since the dawn of historiography. According to Winnie Mandela in the foreword of this book, South Africa is “still a patriarchal society, in which men are more recognised than women” (p 13). The life of Fatima Meer (1928–2010) is a case in point. Born to a newspaper editor father; literacy, education and justice formed the bedrock of Meer’s life but it is for her political activism that she is best remembered. Yet, despite the influential role she played in political activism, Meer is not a political figure who is often remembered and recognised. However, she was a prolific author, with some sources ascribing more than 40 books to her pen in addition to her work as a sociology academic. According to Shamim in the introduction of this book, Meer began to draft her autobiography in the year 2000 while compiling a book on her late husband Ismail Meer. Despite suffering a stroke in 2002 which confined Fatima to a wheelchair for the last 7 years of her life, she continued to work on her autobiography although it was only in 2017 that the book was finally published.

Although *Memories of Love and Struggle* spans the whole life of Meer, the latter part of her life from 1970 to 2010 is discussed very briefly. It was during this quiet period of her life in 1988, when she published the biography *Higher than Hope*, the first biography ever published on Nelson Mandela, that gained international recognition. *Memories of Love and Struggle* is divided into four sections, with the first two sections documenting Meer’s family ancestry, her childhood and her youth. Meer was born to European and Indian parents, Rachael Farrel and Moosa Meer, who met in 1926 in Kimberley where Moosa was working as a shop assistant in his uncle’s shop. The growing relationship between Rachael and Moosa caused a stir and the couple eventually left Kimberley by taxi and travelled to the nearby town of Christiana. From there, they travelled by train to Johannesburg. Rachael Farrel converted to Islam and took the name of Amina, eventually marrying Moosa Meer who had been married previously.

Initially, Fatima Meer began her tertiary education at the University of the Witwatersrand but she completed the rest of her studies at the University of Natal, at a time when non-European students were trained off the main campus. She eventually took up the position of sociologist at the University of Natal in 1956 where she faced discrimination “as a black member ... in a white university” (p 169). The academic career of Meer is however not documented in detail, which does leave the reader with a bit of a gap.

In section three of the autobiography, the focus shifts towards Meer’s marriage, career and her political activism. Meer’s husband, Ismail, was a lawyer and

due to the family's political activism, they were often the target of police harassment and banning orders. Of particular interest, is a chapter on the role of the family in the 1956 Treason Trial where Ismail was arrested along with 156 other political activists. While most of Meer's narrative is constructed from memory, it is also expanded with letters that were written between herself and Ismail. Section four of the autobiography sets off with a note indicating that the section was dictated by Meer from her wheelchair, and is therefore not very comprehensive. The chapters in this section include a visit to India by Meer in 1970, which is the original homeland of the family. The section also explores the passing of Meer's mother and the political activism of Meer's own children during the 1976 uprisings. In this period, Meer was banned and later incarcerated where she kept a "prison diary" of which excerpts are also included as a welcome addition to the text. Also detailed, is an assassination attempt in December 1977 which was made on Meer. The Meer family were long-time friends of the Mandela family and the relationship between them is also explored in this section of the book.

Although *Memories of Love and Struggle* is not a comprehensive on the life of Fatima Meer, it is a valuable addition to the existing literature. The book is provided with numerous photographs, all in black and white, some of which could perhaps have been contextualised better. There is a table of contents, but there is no index, which would have been a welcome addition for an important book such as this. A comprehensive study on the life of Fatima Meer still needs to be written and should be undertaken by an independent scholar with a critical eye. However, this publication fills an important gap and as it is an autobiography, will attract a wide audience.

Barend van der Merwe

Khotso Flatela Northern Cape Provincial Archives

Understanding shared histories and culture

Anna Tietze, A History of the Iziko South African National Gallery: Reflections on Art and National Identity

UCT Press, Cape Town, 2017

236pp

ISBN 978-1-77582-216-5

R290.00

Anna Tietze, a cultural historian and research associate of the Iziko South African National Gallery which is also the country's national gallery, published the first full-length history of this gallery that dates back to 1875. *A History of the Iziko South African National Gallery: Reflections on Art and National Identity*, provides a fresh academic perspective on its history. As there has been no large-scale historical inquiry into Isiko, this publication definitely fills this gap.

As a cultural and art historian with an interest in past and present conceptions of art, academic art history and the art museum, in combination with her extensive

curatorial experience with the Iziko South African National Gallery, Tietze is the perfect author to write this book on the gallery and its artistic and cultural identity from the late 19th century to the present day. Tietze has documented this history through a study of archival sources on the gallery's administration, collections, and exhibitions over the last 142 years. In the introduction, Tietze explains her view on two important issues: First, what counts as "art" and what as "good" art? And secondly, what is implied by the word "national" in a national art collection, when the debate over colonialism, anti-colonialism and post-colonialism is raging fiercely in our country? To add to this, she explores how the gallery has changed its function and its public, first as the chief gallery of the Cape Colony, and (from 1930) as a "national gallery". This publication questions the kinds of objects a national gallery should collect and exhibit by placing it in the context of national galleries worldwide, as well as focusing on its relationship to a new post-colonial nation.

Tietze not only presents a comprehensive overview of the gallery's administration, collection and exhibition practices, but also looks at the private donations, works purchased, exhibited and sold by Iziko, as well as – more recently – negative public response to the exhibitions. In the introduction, Tietze states some research questions and gives an overview of the aims and scope of a national gallery in general. In chapter 1, she provides an outline of the activities and purpose of the institution between 1875 and 1930, followed by an analysis of the acquisitions; the colonial identity; the gallery's funding limitations; the influence of Max Michaelis, and the integration of the Michaelis School of Fine Arts under the same roof. She then examines the gallery's collections in the 1930s and 1940s in Chapter 2, providing an interpretation the functions of the gallery and the collections during the period of rising Afrikaner nationalism. The chapter also includes a discussion on the annual Contemporary Art Exhibitions; the National Portrait Gallery scheme; initiatives to link the gallery to the international museum world; the call of the Carnegie Trust to reach out to the poor, the uneducated and the children in South Africa; and the gift collections received from Lady Michaelis, Sir Edmund and Lady Davis, and Sir Abe Bailey.

Tietze gives information on the appointment of the first full-time professional director, John Paris, in Chapter 3. The post-war years of the 1950s, with South Africa still connected to the international art world, including London's Tate Gallery, the inclusion of art works by the then contemporary South African school (Walter Battiss, Irma Stern and Moses Kotler), craftworks as well as prehistoric, primitive and indigenous art are well highlighted in this chapter. Chapter 4 then briefly records the impact of international boycotts; the political crisis and museum policy linked with the protest years 1973–1989; the effect of funding shortages and rising art prices on the gallery; collecting African art and crafts in the 1980s; and the educational programmes presented at the gallery. Chapter Five gives an overview on the radical changes of the 1990s; the redress and transformation of the institution, which includes the implementation of inclusiveness and public consultation in the conceptualisation of the exhibitions to represent all the peoples of the country; post-apartheid funding problems; "reconceptualising" Iziko museums; and the hopes for the future.

In her concluding remarks Tietze answers the question on the Isiko Gallery's social responsibility over the past 24 years. She discusses the policy regarding future exhibitions and acquisitions and gives her view on the future of the gallery itself. Tietze further indicates the present challenges: the first official calls for Iziko Museums to promote a view of (black) African heritage (that currently makes up only a fraction of the institution's total acquisitions) and secondly, the competition represented by the nearby Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art Africa with plentiful funding. I agree fully with her suggestion (p 208) to open the permanent collection of the gallery to the public, to be viewed as a valuable archive for both aesthetic and socio-political interest. Further to this, the space in the gallery (for exhibitions) is open to the public but does not feature in the public sphere. This means that the public can choose to visit it or to avoid it. To add to this, the recently installed comments board, which invites public reaction and engages with the public in dialogue, is an excellent idea to desensitise anger and protest.

Generally speaking, the book is well researched and constitutes an important contribution to the South African history. This is evidenced in the detailed footnotes provided. The publication also includes 33 figures, 21 colour plates, and a comprehensive bibliography, making it an invaluable tool for any future historian wishing to research the history of the Iziko South African National Gallery. The book is also indexed, ensuring ease of access to researchers and readers. It is further evident that the gallery has embraced and accepted the concept of a shared culture, and has "redress(ed)" exhibitions and policy to represent a changed South African national cultural identity (p 167). This is especially important in twenty-first century South Africa in which the status, purpose and nature of colonial or European art, education and culture are intensely contested. The author also makes a notable contribution to the historiography of South African Art History, firstly by investigating original archival sources (private papers) and supplementing them with a range of published material. Secondly, she pursues a curator focus with attention to the history of the Iziko permanent collections; and thirdly, by focusing on the need that a national art gallery in twenty-first century South Africa should celebrate the African continent through the cultural identity of the day. *A History of the Iziko South African National Gallery: Reflections on Art and National Identity* provides valuable reading and research material – not only for students and historians of South African art history, but also for the general public.

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National and international youth struggles of the recent past

Susan Booyesen, *Fees Must Fall: Student Revolt, Decolonisation, and Governance in South Africa*

350pp

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R350.00

The repercussions of the student revolts of 2015 have had far reaching consequences on policy and governance, *Fees Must Fall: Student Revolt, Decolonisation, and Governance in South Africa* incorporates an academic analysis of the Fees Must Fall movement (#FMF) of 2015–2016 through the voices, perspectives and narratives of the students and workers who were at the forefront of the movement. In Part One, Booyesen looks at the trajectory of the two weeks in November when the Fees Must Fall movements intensified and the repercussions thereof, especially regarding policy and governance. The Fees Must Fall Movement (FMF) stems from the Rhodes Must Fall movement (RMF) which gave way to “Fallism” culture, which had a concerted effort towards bringing to the fore the intersectional nature of systemic exclusion within South African universities.

Part Two of the book details the events that led up to the students’ revolts as well as the consequences of these upheavals through the voices of the students and workers who were involved. Their experiences are steered by the analysis of activist-academics, who nuance the experiences of the students and the workers. Chapter 2 begins with an account by Rekgotsofetse Chikane under the academic guidance of Gillian Godsell. In this chapter, the relationship between the students and workers within the university is highlighted by showing how the #FMF movement synchronised with the plight of the outsourced university workers. Students involved in #FMF related closely with the struggle of workers, because they saw in the workers, the plight of their parents.

Chapter Three is an account by Sizwe Mpofo-Walsh who looks at how #FMF made its way to institutions in Euro-America and the changes that it impacted. Mpofo-Walsh explores fallism from a unique vantage point that is outside South Africa, and looks at how the movement moved from #RMFUCT to Rhodes Must Fall Oxford (#RMFO). This chapter provides a particular look at how #FMF propelled itself into a global movement from an outside lens, which brings into perspective the magnitude of #FMF and the reach that it generated. Chapter Four is an account by two outsourced workers, Richard Ndebele and Virginia Monageng, (told in conversation with Omhle Ntshingila under the guidance of Susan Booyesen) who were deployed to work at Wits. They tell of the exploitation they have faced by being outsourced. This chapter is a good follow up from Chapter Two, as it gives a real voice into the impacts of outsourcing from real people who are affected by it. Godsell, Lepere, Mafoko and Nase give an account of the documentation utilised during #FMF, both formal (Memorandum of Understanding and the court documents by University management) and informal (social media) in Chapter Five. They show the important role of social media as a prolific mode of communication used by students to tell their own stories. Documenting the protest

shows how each side, students and management, exercised maximum utility of the resources at their disposal as a means to an end.

In Part Three, #FMF is viewed through a broader historical perspective of student movements in Africa. Chapter 6 takes a look at the youth from the past and present and the lessons that could be learnt by the youth of the 2015 fallist movements. Given that the youth usually bears the brunt of society's ills, they are usually at the forefront of liberation movements. However, youth movements run the risk of being hijacked by the agendas of outside institutions and political parties. The youth of 2015 avoided this trap by being the sole owners of their own movement, the impetus is now on the youth to keep control of their own movement by defining it, and helping it grow from strength to strength.

Lynn Hewlett looks at the chronological and historical account of colonial epistemic legacies and the implications on policy, politics and governance. With the assistance of Koffi Kouakou, Nomagugu Mukadah and Horacio Zandamela, Chapter 7 looks at the trajectory of the colonial hegemonic legacy from the Lusaphone, Anglophone and Francophone colonies. Hewlett looks at three difference eras of epistemic development on the continent: the pre-independence and colonial phase (1900–1960); the nationalist post-independence phase (1960–1980); and the democratic period (2000 to the present), where the rise of globalisation and pluralism of political parties has given impetus to broader-based inclusive participation of members of society. In Chapter 8, William Gumede brings the North African uprising into conversation with the South African revolts of 2015 by looking at the social, political and economic factors that led to the North African uprising. Spurred by the intersectionality of oppression, the North African uprising pushed local governments into creating more democratic institutions of governance, a lesson which can be learnt by the South African youth movements to hold their governments accountable until change is implemented.

Part Four of the book examines the financial implications of #FMF, especially in relation to outsourcing of workers, and explores how free education could be feasible. In Chapter Nine, Patrick Bond gives alternatives to financial streams for funding free education and proposes abandoning state run fossil-based projects such the state subsidised Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission (PICC) set on spending R1 trillion for fossil exports in a market that is deteriorating in demand, and suggests investing that money instead into South Africa's human capital. Vishwas Satgar brings class back into the conversation of #FMF in Chapter 10 and demonstrates how the intersectionalities of race, gender and class created a mutual solidarity amongst students, outsourced workers and academics. Satgar highlights how universities have become more business oriented rather than being public institutions, and with that came the drive to save costs by any means, which included the retrenchment and exploitation of lower-level workers.

Patrick FitzGerald and Oliver Seale lend a sympathetic ear to the struggles facing management and leadership in universities and the pressure #FMF has placed on management to find alternative sources of income. In this chapter, FitzGerald and

Seale outline the different streams of income that university managements have at their disposal and the challenges faced by university vice-chancellors to maintain order and security whilst also encouraging universities to be beacons of self-expression. FitzGerald and Seale suggest that there needs to be a more supportive structure to assist management to deal with conflicts and for there to be a greater understanding of the financial implications of free education. In Chapter 12, Pundy Pillay offers alternative modes of funding that could be used to fund tertiary education, offering three proposals whilst also emphasising the greater need to fund lower-level education to prepare students for the rigorous demands of university. The first proposal is the indirect taxation of higher income homes to pay higher fees; the second proposal is to convert NFSAS loans into grants at historically disadvantaged universities; and the third is for measures to be put in place to ensure effective use of state funding. The financial implications and potential solutions presented in Part Four are both grim and hopeful, in the sense that it is evident that #FMF has a long way to go in attaining the end goal of free education – but this task is not out of reach.

Part Five is an analysis of identity and justice from Darlene Miller and Thaddeus Metz. Miller speaks for the voices of older radical feminists in conversation with the younger generation of #FMF feminism. She provides a space for the often-times neglected voice of coloured women who have been marginalised by #FMF and provides the new generation of feminists and LGBTIAQ+ activists advice from the older generation to help the younger generation own their narrative. Metz provides a moral look into the use of violence from #RMF to #FMF, using just war theory. Metz employs the use of five principles to establish whether or not the at times violent means used during #FMF justified the ends. The first principle asks whether the cause is just; the second determines whether or not the means are likely to succeed in overcoming injustice; the third determines whether the means used are proportional to the ends; the fourth principle states that force must only be used as a last resort when all other means have been exhausted; and finally, force must not be applied indiscriminately even to those who are not the cause of injustice.

Fees Must Fall: Student Revolt, Decolonisation, and Governance in South Africa provides a well-rounded look into the events of the 2015 #FMF movement from the perspective of the students, workers, and academics, to the financial and moral implications of the movement. However, the book over emphasises the experience of a very particular set of students i.e. students from historically white institutions (HWI) and neglects to incorporate the experience and voices of those from historically black institutions (HBI) whom, it can be argued are the founders of the movement having been protesting for affordable education before #FMF began trending. The voices of student from HBI's are particularly important, because they the voices of not only impoverished youth, but also the voices of historically disadvantaged institutions.

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Remembering Dulcie September and other arms-related atrocities

Hennie van Vuuren, *Apartheid Guns and Money: A Tale of Profit*

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Hennie van Vuuren's book, *Apartheid Guns and Money: A Tale of Profit*, is an astonishing 514-page masterclass in the wheeling and dealing of apartheid South Africa's arms programme. It sets out to demonstrate how "networks of deep state actors operate in subverting the rule of law" (p 503). In an era of democratic South African politics where the games of political spin, blame, secrets and lies run rampant, this book is a telling reminder that history influences and creates the present. The multibillion-dollar arms deal in the late 1990s has shaped South Africa's political landscape over the past 20 years, but as Van Vuuren contends, "the arms deal did not happen in a vacuum". The past matters.

The quote proffered in the beginning pages of the book, attributed to TV's Detective Lester Freamon, is a rather apt, and useful summative description of what unfolds in the next thirteen chapters. The book goes about dispelling seven myths that have created a "misleading narrative about the nature of apartheid and economic crime" (p 11). The first myth dispelled is that corruption is race-based. Van Vuuren provides compelling evidence in the chapters that follow that "money does know colour, as shown by the profile who assisted with arms sanctions-busting activities" (p 12). A second myth dismissed is that 1994 heralded a new dawn of governance with politicians unwilling to continue in unsavoury dealings with apartheid-era corporations. Instead what unfolded, however oddly, was "business as usual" (p 506), especially under Thabo Mbeki's tenure as president. A third myth was that thanks to the tireless efforts of anti-apartheid activists, communities and organisations across the globe, the minority government was subject to a tightening net of isolationism. The inevitable problem with such an undertaking is that it relies on complete buy-in from those actors who the continued survival of an intended target relies so fully upon. In this case, according to Van Vuuren's findings, "in reality, the apartheid state walked through open doors around the world, and had direct diplomatic and economic links behind closed doors" (p 14). If anything, the apartheid state "embraced its outsider status" (p 452). On pp 450–451, Van Vuuren offers a succinctly useful and interesting circular figure summarising South Africa's relations with, among others, Chile, Argentina, Seychelles, Comoros, Israel and Switzerland in relation to covert arms, intelligence, finance, oil or commercial goods exchanges.

The fourth myth scattered to the four winds in this book is that apartheid was a self-sufficient arms producer. Adding to the growing list of crimes against humanity, the apartheid state became proficient in smuggling technology and expertise into the country and fuelling a war economy by importing substantive numbers of sought after weapons. Coming to light in declassified South African Defence Force documents are the names of the two French contractors who supplied helicopters to South Africa

under Project Adenia in the mid-1980s in “one of the most lucrative sanctions-busting deals undertaken” (p 492). This deal revealed “the porousness of the arms blockade ... the deep complicity of European banks, defence corporations, military officials and politicians enabling the embargo to be broken” (p 492).

Myth number five which suggests that none was able to profit financially from apartheid, is simply a falsehood. Big business profited and continues to do so post-apartheid. Myth six would have us believe that apartheid South Africa was reaching its breaking point by the late 1980s, early 1990s, and could no longer survive in an unfriendly and harsh political-economic straightjacket; it was en route to implosion. However, although the apartheid struggle had placed the minority regime under immense internal and external pressure, it is possible that “the regime could have lasted for another ten or 20 years” (p 15) thanks to its “clandestine supply chain of weapons” (p 15) and its powerful military machinery.

Although eye-opening and depressing in equal measure, the book does offer up a dismissal of the seventh myth that says, “we cannot undo” past wrongs. Indeed, the opposite is true. In Chapter 13 Van Vuuren offers three ways in which “the narrative of apartheid economic crime should be dealt with” (p 502) including freeing secrets by challenging lies, “in an era of fake news” (p 503) and digging deep in South Africa’s archives which hold “a wealth of material” (p 503). Van Vuuren describes Armscor’s archives as “like an item of inheritance that nobody wants, but does not have the heart or the legal right to destroy” (p 44). He further suggests that greater and more effective policing of the “deep state” at a global level too is a necessity. After all, despite United Nations Resolution 418, which imposed a mandatory arms embargo on South Africa in November 1977, it was the United Nations Permanent Five: China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States that “actively broke [the embargo] when it was in their interests to do so” (p 504). See Chapters 6 through 10 for in-depth reviews of these relations. As a third way forward, van Vuuren argues that impunity must be challenged; in a rather poignant phrase, he says “the ghosts of our tortured past will continue to haunt us until they are exorcised fully and publicly” (p 506). A discussion of the murder of sanctions-busting investigator, Dulcie September, in the African National Congress office in Paris on 29 March 1988, humanises the global, faceless, mesh of covert operations that is illicit arms dealing (see pp 209–216). Van Vuuren is hopeful that the simple issue of justice is possible, this is in addition to the necessary remedies of transitional justice processes among others, and demands that “impunity for gross violations of human rights” cannot be tolerated (p 508).

This book is highly detailed, well-evidenced, well-written and is an engrossing read for avid observers of the arms deal, and its related machinations, and for laypeople alike. Van Vuuren deftly interweaves deep research; astonishing nuggets of information (see page 258 and the sunken ship *Pia Vesta* and code words spoken by Jacob Zuma on page 216 in relation to French arms company Thales) with wit and titles such as “the loony lobby” (p 303), which details author David W. Balsiger’s National Citizens Action Committee proposal to counter sanctions – and entertained by Pik Botha, with the result that the chapters fly over with thought-provoking and insightful narratives. Van Vuuren states that had this book been written 20 years ago

“it would have ended with a well-worn argument that history should not be allowed to repeat itself. But history has done so” (p 501). It is only fitting that van Vuuren is left with the last word on this subject on page 510: “we must open the secrets that reveal new evidence, organise as citizens along non-sectarian lines, and seek to hold those who profited from injustice to account”.

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