

FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA: THEN AND NOW

Gwyneth Boswell, Director, Boswell Research Fellows and Visiting Professor, School of Allied Health Professions, University of East Anglia

Abstract

During autumn 2005, the author led a feasibility study investigating the experiences of 17 Xhosa men and women from the Eastern Cape who had, in some way, fought in the struggle for liberation from apartheid in its early days. The study showed, firstly, that it was possible to identify people who fell into this category with the help of archive collections and local veterans' associations. Secondly it showed that, with the assistance of final year Theology students at the University of Fort Hare, access could be gained to these 'veterans' and in-depth qualitative interviews conducted, with the students providing translation where necessary. Finally, the interviews themselves highlighted a group of people who had sacrificed much for the freedom of their country, some still optimistic, some disillusioned, but nearly all with outstanding health and social care needs. Transitional community justice aspires to a healing and restoration which still eludes many in the post-democracy years.

Key Words: South Africa; justice; apartheid; struggle; veterans; narrative

Introduction

Marcus Motaung to an Afrikaner judge who has just found him guilty of treason:

'I took myself to be a soldier, a freedom fighter,' he says. The judge took him to be a criminal. (Lelyveld, 1986: 334)

Much has been written about the long struggle of black South Africans against the apartheid regime – and much has since been written about the attempts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to promote transitional restorative justice by eschewing vengeance and seeking reconciliation and unity (Boraine & Levy, 1995). The work of the TRC had its passionate advocates and its equally strong detractors (Tutu, 1999) but, once it ended, the continuation of the healing and restoration process became the function of longer-term community justice at a more informal level. Bypassing the

expensive Western culture of turning to the state to resolve problems, bodies such as the township peace committees seek to build peace by addressing generic issues and generating preventive strategies through community consensus (Roche, 2002; Wright, 2004). While they have had some success, they still only operate in around 20 areas and the majority of the country's population does not have access to them. Thus, it remains difficult for many, particularly middle-aged and elderly people, once viewed as criminals, now reconceived as victims, whose generation fought and suffered greatly in the apartheid years, to find a justice 'forum' to resolve their continuing problems and grievances or to have their stories heard.

The ANC Archives at the University of Fort Hare, Eastern Cape, and the Mayibuye Archives at the University of the Western Cape respectively house important historical records and a quantity of taped oral accounts of this 50-year period. However, there appears to be relatively little in the published research domain which examines the post-apartheid trajectory of those who fought the struggle. This is particularly needed in order to bring some understanding to the wider world of what it meant to be labelled a criminal in the apartheid years, and of the extent to which the arrival of democracy in 1994 gave reality to the vision of the freedom for which that sacrifice was made (Bell, 2001).

The piece of pilot research described here originally set out to chronicle the experiences of the so-called 'lost generation' of those who fought the struggle, only to discover that the term means different things to different people in South Africa. Most often it refers to 'the young lions' – the generation of young people who fled into exile or underground following the 1976 Soweto student uprising against Afrikaans-based teaching which was responded to by a Government-led massacre (Morrow, Maaba & Pulumani, 2004). It is also, however, employed to describe the current generation of black youth for many of whom the legacy of apartheid is under-education, unemployment and, in some cases, a life of crime. (Dunlap, 2000). Finally, the term may be applied to the *umgwenya*, the first generation of 'veteran' fighters, some of whom went into exile and some of whom stayed at home and fought the struggle underground. Some of this group, from the banned Pan African Congress [PAC] joined the Azanian People's Liberation Army [APLA] (Mphahlele, 2003). Others from the banned African National Congress [ANC] trained as members of Umkhonto we Siswe, the militant organization otherwise known as MK, 'the Spear of the Nation' (Mandela, 1994).

The politics of the ANC and the PAC do, of course, differ, but it is not the purpose of this paper to analyse this difference. They, and the other individuals in this sample contributed in a whole range of ways to the long-term fight for democracy in South Africa, and their stories deserve to be told and learned from. The African tradition of preserving history is one of story-telling, and this piece of research drew specifically on that narrative strength, through which people may understand their own and others' experiences (Kerby, 1993). As Batchelor (2007) has recently pointed out in this journal, the narrative has much to contribute to community justice through its reflection on the past and contribution to future conciliation and peace-building.

Research Aim

It was the aim of the study first to research the struggle experiences and achievements of a pilot group of respondents from the 'veterans' and 'young lions' generations'. Secondly, the study sought to gain from this group a sense of their current needs and aspirations in the light of those experiences and achievements. The third aim, as with any pilot study, was to confirm that it was possible to identify and gain agreement to interview relevant individuals, and to ensure that the interview schedule elicited the categories of data required to answer the research questions. In terms of phasing the research, it seemed sensible to lay its chronological foundations by first investigating the experiences of the early freedom fighters. The phase of the pilot study described here, therefore, concentrated on the 1960s veterans.

Research Method

In order best to learn about the respondents' experiences, achievements, needs and aspirations, a semi-structured interview schedule was devised, containing both space for open-ended narrative and a checklist to ensure that key life history factors were covered. The respondents were questioned, and their replies recorded and analysed, under four main headings: their childhood, upbringing and education; their post-school years and continuing or subsequent involvement in the struggle; their current situation in terms of family, employment and standard of living; and their achievements and hopes and fears for the future of South Africa. Although most interviews were conducted in English, there was always someone present who could speak the local language and translate if necessary. The following sections present these findings in turn.

Respondent Characteristics

The research team interviewed 17 respondents from the Eastern Cape, 15 men and 2 women aged between 55-87 years. (Due, largely, to the patriarchal culture of their generation [Bentley, 2004], women 'activists' were harder to identify than men, but this provided pointers for remedy in the subsequent phase of the research). About half of the respondents were randomly selected from groups of volunteers within veterans' associations and about half were purposively selected from their communities by Ministers of Religion who were also final year Theology students at the University of Fort Hare (see Acknowledgements section). The respondents came from 4 diverse areas of the Province and the majority described themselves as 'Xhosa'. Interview lengths ranged from 1 – 3 hours, with the majority taking 1? – 2 hours; these men and women each effectively had a life story to tell.

Childhood, Upbringing and Education

Respondents were asked to describe their earliest experiences in the families and communities in which they were brought up. A minority of 3 recounted relatively happy family memories, though set against a backdrop of extreme poverty, punctuated by existing and new sanctions imposed by the apartheid government. A further 4 had a mixture of

positive and negative memories. The majority of 10 had mainly sad memories of their childhood, many having not known or rarely seen their fathers, some brought up by grandparents, or uncles and aunts, and many having received regular beatings within their family and sometimes at school. Most appreciated their education, but were conscious that it was inferior in quality to that of white children. For this latter reason, some dropped out and took to theft from local white-owned shops to help their families survive; others left school because their families could not afford to go on paying for their education. None was financially able to proceed to higher education, though a minority has done so since that time. The following quotations illustrate something of their experiences. (All names are pseudonyms).

Lindiwe (83 years): My father worked in the mines and my mother was a domestic worker. They divorced when I was 3. I went to live with an aunt and grew up sometimes with her and sometimes with my father. He emotionally abused and beat me, his daughter, so I was not always fit to attend school. He would also beat me for attending school because he said I would sell my parents if I became educated. He forced me to leave school at 13 and work on a farm for R1.50 per month, so that the family would have a place to stay. If it weren't for the apartheid system, this would not have been necessary.

Duma (56 years): Where I grew up, life was very fast and tough. There were a lot of criminals and drug addicts. I was told that I was very friendly and liked to play with other kids. In our family there was my mother and father, 5 brothers and 3 sisters. My father worked on a small farm, trying his best to take care of us. He told us about his boss who treated him very badly and didn't give him enough money. So sometimes we'd go to bed without having had any food. When I was 7, I went to live with my grandfather to help look after his cows and I had no shoes. I still cry when I think about that. My mother had no job but she always showed love to us. She didn't want us to look at suffering as she believed it will pass away sometime. But my brothers and I left school early to try and get jobs to help our family. I worked for a white man as a gardener but he treated me like a dog. I started attending political classes at Fort Hare University with teachers from the School of Theology. Then I began to see the need to fight for freedom.

These quotations from two respondents of different age groups show, even in the case of Duma who came from a loving family, how the poverty and lack of education engendered by decades of the tyranny of apartheid led to disaffection in their early teens which ultimately propelled them into the struggle for liberation.

Post-school Years and Involvement in the Struggle

Four male respondents were unable to obtain employment after leaving school. Two others began lives of petty crime and were known to the Police – but all 6 of these very soon became struggle activists. The 2 women obtained domestic or factory work and then married and had children, but continued to work where they could, since money was always scarce. The other 11 male respondents mostly obtained low-paid employment which included labouring, gardening, bar, farm and factory work, though one of these managed ultimately to set himself up in his own business and another to become a shop manager.

If these respondents had not already been recruited to the struggle by the time they had left school, then they became politically active in their late teens or early 20s. Like Duma, several were influenced or directly recruited by the South African Students' Organisation – which was very active at the University of Fort Hare and Lovedale College in Alice – or by the Black Consciousness Movement formed in the late 1960s, and famously represented by Steve Biko, later murdered when held in custody by the apartheid regime (Woods, 1978). Two more respondents describe their entry into activism:

Sam (63 years): I used to attend the meetings of the Fort Hare and Lovedale students. I was recruited to MK in 1962 by Andrew Masondo, one of their lecturers, who was also an ANC leader. At the time we were being squeezed off our traditional lands in the Eastern Cape into smaller areas. Masondo taught us the history of all this and showed us the Freedom Charter. Once I understood all this, I was not afraid and I committed myself to the cause. I was very fit and I destroyed fences, cut telephone wires, and kept on doing this after they were repaired. But Fort Hare and Lovedale were known by the Security Forces as a hot-bed of activists, and one of the Fort Hare lecturers was an informer. As a result, Masondo, I and others were arrested and tortured. We were sentenced in Grahamstown: I got 8 years and Masondo got 12 years. We both ended up in Robben Island, serving our sentences alongside Mandela and the other ANC and PAC leaders.

Mongi (83 years) In 1960, political parties were formed. I was one of those involved in forming MK. In the early days we didn't have firearms, so we used sticks, petrol bombs, and we cut telephone poles. I was in the first group to receive proper training in 1961 in Lesotho. But in 1963, I was arrested and sentenced without trial to 7 years imprisonment. In 1964, I was sent to Robben Island, where there were 52 of us. Life there was not easy. We were in chains and not allowed to talk to one another. After I got out of prison, I was again arrested several times for recruiting soldiers to MK. I was an MK Commander inside South Africa, organizing MK in the border region. I had a wife and 6 children. Four of the children died of hunger because I could not be there to provide for them.

Present at Mongi's interview was his son, aged 51, who took up his father's story:

After my father came out of prison, our family became targeted by the Police. I was always being stopped and, eventually, the only thing for me to do was to go into exile. This was the time of the 1976 uprisings. I was 22 then and I joined MK, transporting weaponry between Zambia and Angola. Out there, my health suffered because I spent so much time sleeping rough under trees and hedges, and I caught malaria. I have my own family now – wife and 4 children – but I'm not fit enough to work and we have great difficulty making ends meet.

Mongi's son was one of the 'young lions' respondents but this quotation is included here as an illustration of the link between the two generations of those who fought the struggle.

Five respondents went into exile with MK – three of them for 30 years. Delase (aged 70) lived and trained as a member of APLA in 5 different African countries. Another APLA member, Solomon (aged 87) stayed most of the time in Lesotho, married and had 5 children there. The British governed Lesotho at the time, and frequently colluded with the apartheid government, as a consequence of which his wife and children were more than once imprisoned and tortured for harbouring other freedom fighters. The third respondent, Desmond (aged 78) did not specify the number of countries he had been in as an MK member, but he had left behind a wife and 2 children in South Africa, and said that his wife 'deserted' him during his years in exile.

Two respondents stayed in South Africa, working underground, without ever being arrested or detained. Bafana (65 years) organized workers to fight for their rights in the workplace, forming underground Trades Unions, and was ultimately expelled from his employment by the Security Branch for being 'an undesirable element'. Ten other respondents also remained in South Africa, but were ultimately arrested and detained. One explained that 'the exiles worked through us' and that he was responsible for setting fire to non-ANC houses. Another was a woman whose husband served 5 years on Robben Island and was herself detained in prison for several months for helping young people to leave the country.

The second of the two women respondents also had a husband who served 11 years on Robben Island. She, too, was involved in the struggle, joining underground meetings, burning schools, and helping young people, including her own son, to leave the country. She subsequently became involved in the setting up of women's self-help projects and in organizing a branch of the Women's League of the ANC.

The general hardships endured by these respondents and their families, did not, however, end after imprisonment or exile, as the next section demonstrates.

The Current Situation of the Freedom Fighters

Although their most active days in the struggle are past, all these 17 respondents are proud, determined people who consider that there can be no complacency about the fact that political democracy has come to South Africa and, thus, still regard themselves as freedom fighters within their current communities. They were asked to describe the effect of apartheid and their involvement in fighting it on the situation they and their families find themselves in today. Most notably, their answers clustered around the following elements: their employment and financial positions; their health; their housing; their families' education opportunities and general well-being. Although not all the respondents' answers were entirely clear on this point, it appeared that those struggle activists who had either been in exile or served long terms of imprisonment during the apartheid regime were later compensated by the ANC Government in the form of a grant to build themselves a house, and a Special Pension of 140 Rand (about £15) per month. These respondents (including the two widows of activists) were appreciative of their houses but most were still finding it a challenge to keep themselves and their families financially. Mainly they were not in employment and those under 65 not eligible for any further Government allowance or pension. The following quotation is illustrative:

Delase (70 years): I was in exile from 1964-1992 and never entered South Africa in that time. I was not married when I left and have no wife or children now. Because I was over 35 in 1996, and had contributed to the liberation struggle in exile, I qualified for a special grant so I could build a brick house – though many people did not get this. But when I came home in 1992, East London where I had lived had been moved to Mdantsane (a new township near East London – see Dauda, 2006). My parents were dead, I had no friends and nowhere to stay until 1996. I was a stranger. Now I am sick and have to use my pension money to travel to hospital and pay for regular treatment. After 28 years in exile, this is not palatable; not how I expected it to be after independence. There is still high unemployment and people are still living in shacks, not decent houses. People are poverty-stricken and dying of hunger, while there is land to plough, because the economy is still in the hands of the white people.

A fellow respondent who had served a long prison sentence had similar concerns for those living in poverty though he, in contrast, occupied a reasonably stable financial position, in compensation for the privations of imprisonment which he describes below. His health, however, had probably been irrevocably damaged by the experience.

lungisi (60 years): I had served 11 years in Robben Island for sabotage of power stations and army barracks. Life there was very hard, they treated us as unhuman, tried to demoralise us, cut out our spirit; but we refused to let it happen. We were never given proper food – it was porridge in the morning and mealies in the afternoon. We disciplined ourselves, taught ourselves and kept our minds fresh. I taught accountancy, encouraging others, though we

were not allowed books and, for something to write on, had to use the brown paper taken from around the bags of cement we worked with.

Now I think there is corruption among people in Parliament who are misusing Government funds. Those funds never reach the people. And even though I'm not poor, I have had severe health problems (including TB) since leaving prison. Many people who were on Robben Island in 1964 were given an injection to 'acclimatise' us. But this is now believed to have been a slow poison and many people from Robben Island are now dying of cancer.

Those who had fought the struggle on the home front had not fared well either:

Mpilo (60 years): I worked as a PAC Commander underground, sending comrades into exile and educating young people about the importance of freedom and not allowing us to go back into oppression. But my standard of living is not good. My first wife died and I have 2 children with my second wife. We have a small house which does not accommodate all of us and nothing to live on except a small amount of pension money. My children cannot proceed with education because I do not have the money. I am unemployed, sick, a crock.

Mary (69 years): My Uncle used to tell me that we must fight for the country that was taken by the whites. When I met my husband he was already involved in the struggle and that influenced me. He was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment which he served on Robben Island, but I was also in jail for 4 months, and the children had nothing to eat and no father or mother to look after them. After detention, I went to work to support our efforts to help young people leave the country. Soon after my husband was released, he was arrested again. Eventually he died and one of our 3 children died. Now my family is only myself and my 2 grandchildren and sometimes we do not have enough to live on. The only thing I have is R780 per month pension. I have started a self-help project with 3 other women, looking after pre-school children, but at present we have no funds for this. I am still involved in the struggle because the struggle continues; there is no time to sleep. We are teaching young people about the history of this country and the importance of guarding our freedom.

As the above accounts from those who fought the liberation struggle in a range of ways demonstrate, the post-democracy situation for them and their fellow black citizens was not one which, 12 years on, was seen to be making sufficient inroads into the legacy of apartheid. The Eastern Cape remains one of the poorest provinces in South Africa due, largely, to extreme poverty in the former homelands, where subsistence agriculture predominates. (Lemon, 2004) The responses of these sample members strongly suggest that there is still an economic struggle to be fought, for others if not for themselves.

Hopes and Fears for the Future of South Africa

As the foregoing account shows, this group of people, most of whom engaged in courageous resistance for several decades before seeing the ANC Government come into power in 1994, has suffered much and learned much in the process. For this reason, this final section of the research investigation sought to capture that learning by asking them to reflect on what they had achieved through their struggle activity and, in the light of this, to set out their hopes and fears for the future of South Africa and its next generation. Their answers are summarized in Tables 1- 3, as depicted and described below:

Respondents' self-description in newspaper headline format

For simple comparison purposes, the respondents were asked how a newspaper headline might have described them in their younger days and how it might describe them now. Four of the group did not feel able to answer this question. However, the answers of the other 13 sample members showed that most of them saw themselves in a range of freedom fighter roles in their younger days, but were now firmly re-embedded in their communities and trying very constructively to use their skills and pass on their knowledge for the benefit of the younger generation.

Table 1: Respondents' self-description in newspaper headline format

Respondent (in descending age order)	In their younger days	In their present situation
Solomon (87)	Innocent young man who's done no wrong	Man who appreciates co-operation, constructiveness and goodness
Lindiwe (83)	A woman who dedicates her life to the freedom of the oppressed	A woman of the soil
Mongi (83)	A terrorist	A hero
Desmond(78)	The Young Lions have gone out to learn to defend their country against the colonist	The warriors have come back: the veterans are at home again
Mary (69)	Woman fights for the liberation of her country	Woman leads projects for the community
Bafana (65)	Home-conscious boy	Preacher-evangelist
Thskedi (64)	A freedom fighter	A poor South African
Sam (63)	Without the ANC cause, this man could have been a criminal	Honest and emotional man advises young people 'Try, try, and be there!'
Mbuleo (62)	Distributor of banned literature	Distributor of knowledge to young people
Mpilo (60)	The prisoner who became a teacher in prison	ANC veteran teaches young people
Duma (56)	A killer or a criminal	A hero
Zeph (55)	Terrorist trapped at last	Freedom fighter hero
Joshua (55)	The iron man	From terrorist to man of God

Respondents' achievements and associated learning for others

Table 2 below shows that the majority of the sample clearly saw their main achievement in life as fighting for the liberation of their country, in the wide range of settings in which they found themselves. Seven members of the sample also referred to their achievements in relation to family stability and the education of others. In terms of potential learning by others from their achievements, the main emphasis was on the importance of holding on to the freedom which had been so hard-won. The overall message from these respondents is that understanding of the nature of oppression, tenacity in resisting it and continuing love and respect for family and community are the key to retaining freedom.

Table 2: Respondents' achievements and associated learning for others

Respondent (in descending age order)	Stated achievements	What others could learn from these achievements
Solomon (87)	Fought for many long years in exile	Respect the freedom we fought so hard for
Lindiwe (83)	Respect, passion, love	Respect & don't kill one another
Mongi (83)	Freedom. The local hall is named after me!	Discipline
Desmond(78)	Fighting for freedom in exile for 30 years.	Don't be doubtful about your cause; be resilient, focused and not easily dissuaded
Delase (70)	Entering exile to fight for freedom	Hold tight to the freedom
Mary (69)	Taking part in the liberation of my country	Stop killing; love one another; do things for yourself
Bafana (65)	Having a family that loves me, even up to the present day	Perseverance
Herbert (65)	Educated others to understand politics	Never run away from a problem; fight for your own rights
Thskedi (64)	Freedom, family & knowledge of God	Love others; fear God; be loyal; work hard for what you want
Sam (63)	A contribution to democracy	As Marx says, a person may be born under oppression but they'll never stay that way.
Mbuleo (62)	Freedom & democracy	Perseverance; love one another
Mlungisi(60)	To have helped to gain our freedom	Respect the hard-won freedom & don't misuse it
Mpilo (60)	The strength to fight for the liberation of my country	Love others & God; respect parents; conflict resolution skills
Zuku (60)	Conscientising local people to understand oppression	Be aware how oppression works & resist it
Duma (56)	Freedom and managing to take care of my son, who is 15 now	Never run away from the problem - always face it. Believe in yourself and your people
Zeph (55)	Seeing our people free. They can vote and say what they like	Think of others. Love other people
Joshua (55)	Because I fought the freedom struggle, my children could achieve in education	Black Consciousness taught us we should love each other, whatever our race

Respondents' hopes and fears for the future of South Africa

The findings represented in Tables 1 and 2 above have shown how important it is for the older generation that the freedom for which they fought so hard should be firmly maintained. Most of them are continuing to work for the retention of freedom in their current community settings, but they are conscious that this mantle has to pass to younger generations. Their hopes and fears for the future of South Africa, depicted in Table 3 below explain why this is so important.

Table 3: Respondents' hopes and fears for the future of South Africa

Respondent (in descending age order)	Hopes	Fears
Solomon (87)	Dejected - I have no hope. My fight for freedom was in vain	The rulers won't act against the whites having all the money
Lindiwe (83)	Employment & free education	Corruption, drugs & alcohol
Mongi (83)	Full employment	Higher crime rate
Desmond(78)	No hopes - seen no changes	Those with destructive agendas
Delase (70)	A free South Africa with the economy in the hands of indigenous people	The economy will stay in the hands of the white people; black rulers will lose their identity
Mary (69)	Happy living; positive thinking; nation-building	Corruption; same sex marriages
Bafana (65)	Creation of work infrastructure	Government will be overthrown
Herbert (65)	People to be 'true Africans'; the economy under black people	HIV/AIDS; poverty; lack of education; return to white rule
Thskedi (64)	Black & white live in peace; end of same sex marriages and legalized abortion	Youth dying of AIDS; country will be ruled by whites as those who have vote are dying
Sam (63)	South Africa will change the world through its human rights and multi-racial society. The ANC will fight till they die.	Mafia, professional, politically aware criminals, involved in drug-trafficking, who don't care about human rights & respect
Mbuleo (62)	Free education, technikons, computers	Crime, corruption, HIV/AIDS, abortion, homosexuality
Mlungisi(60)	We'll be a true Rainbow Nation	No work for youth; drugs; crime
Mpilo (60)	S. Africa can help bring peace in other places, through NEPAD & African Renaissance	Corruption from Government Ministers; same sex marriages; whites returning to power
Zuku (60)	Government good; provincial government corrupt.	Unemployment - youth left to roam the streets
Duma (56)	People working together – black and white	The black people will not be able to benefit from the economy of this country - land and industry still in hands of white minority
Zeph (55)	People caring for one another. In future everything will be available for everyone	People will not be aware enough of what apartheid did – South Africa will become like the USA
Joshua (55)	For the country to stay together as brothers and sisters	Civil war – black against black (Zulu against Xhosa)

It is apparent from Table 3 above that 2 of the oldest members of the sample, Solomon (87) and Desmond (78) felt that their struggle had been to no avail and that no real changes had taken place. In essence, this appeared to be because the distribution of wealth in their eyes had not shifted in favour of black people in the 11 years since the ANC had been in government. They were pessimistic about the future. They were pessimistic about the future.

However, apart from a respondent who considered that the provincial government was corrupt, all the remaining respondents were hopeful for the future of the country. Their visions of the economy, including education and employment were positive ones. Some also believed that South Africa could take an international lead in the arena of human rights, peace and democracy. They nevertheless harboured fears about current high-profile problems in the country: crime; drug and alcohol abuse; the disengagement of youth; unemployment; poverty; HIV/AIDS. One or two had moralistic concerns about matters such as same-sex marriages and abortion. A handful also worried about the country again being taken over by white people, though, given the racial demography of the country, this would appear most unlikely. One predicted tribal warfare. Finally, a concern was expressed that the next generation of leaders will fail because they have not fully experienced apartheid and are not aware of how easily oppression can rise to the surface if its constituents are not understood and vigilance against it maintained.

Conclusion

This paper has presented the findings of the first phase of a pilot research study into the experiences, needs, achievements and aspirations of a group of black South Africans who were involved in a range of ways in the struggle for freedom from apartheid. The majority of this group pointed to the ways in which the struggle can and does continue for their own and successive generations. The study showed that it is feasible to engage such a group in the research process and to gain the categories of data which were being sought.

Overall, the findings have highlighted the experiences and concerns of a generation who as children suffered greatly, along with their families, from the oppressive effects of apartheid, and who sacrificed and endured much in their late teens and adulthood to fight personally to bring that regime to an end. A minority is despondent about the outcome, but most are proud of the contribution they made to bringing democracy to their country and, despite in some cases having outstanding financial needs themselves, they are optimistic that things will continue to improve. Nevertheless, a number of serious moral and material concerns remain and these surround the ability, awareness and willingness of younger generations to remain vigilant in guarding the liberty so hard-won by their elders. This is a high expectation to place upon young black people many of whom have been poorly educated and whose elders' beliefs, cultures and basic tribal identities were dented by apartheid, with the effect that this is a generation having to forge its own identity in the new South Africa. Thus, finding ways to engage them in the continuing community-based restorative peace and justice process is crucial. The preservation and cross-generational communication of the narratives of these veterans presented here is,

therefore, of the essence, if President Thabo Mbeki's call for 'an African Renaissance' (Bongmba, 2004) which brings socio-economic restoration and political renewal is fully to be realized in South Africa.

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