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FORGETTING APARTHEID: HISTORY, CULTURE AND THE BODY OF A NUN

Leslie J. Bank and Benedict Carton

INTRODUCTION

In June 1952, the African National Congress (ANC) launched the Defiance Campaign, galvanizing opposition to apartheid. Disobeying 'unjust laws' and courting arrest, ANC activists promoted two objectives: inclusive African nationalism and organized civil disobedience.[1] While the Defiance Campaign was promulgated in Durban and promoted in Johannesburg, the fiercest protests buffeted Port Elizabeth and East London. In these two Eastern Cape cities, militant Africans diverged from ANC policy. In October they mustered in Port Elizabeth railway yards and fought armed forces (Lodge 1983: 59).[2] On 9 November, Bantu Square of Duncan Village, one of three East London black townships, became a battlefield.[3] There, police fired on 1,500 ANC congregants at a Sunday afternoon prayer meeting, igniting spontaneous 'riots'.[4] The authorities believed that this crowd intended to rampage – and it did by many accounts, including those presented later by anthropologists and historians (Mayer and Mayer 1971: 82; Mager and Minkley 1993; Lodge 1983: 59–60; Switzer 1993: 309–10). Both an Afrikaner salesman and an Irish nun were killed in the

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[1]The slogan *Mayibuye iAfrica*, 'Bring (or Come) Back Africa', captured the spirit of the time.

[2]Ten Africans and four whites were slain in the Port Elizabeth clashes. In early November, constables killed several African protestors in Kimberley. Defiance Campaign turmoil in the Cape prompted the Minister of Native Affairs to apply 'the Riotous Assemblies Act to a large portion of the Eastern Province, including the Municipal area of East London. This meant that no public gatherings could take place without his consent': Notes of Informal Meeting of City Council East London, 10 Nov. 1952, 29, 13446; Statement Union Minister of Justice, Mayor's Parlour, 11 Nov. 1952, 1; Municipal Folder Town Clerk's Office, Native Riots: East Bank Location, Nov. 1952–Oct. 1954 (hereafter 'Native Riots' TCO), 50/665/3/1, 1343, 3/ELN, Cape Archives Repository (CAR).

[3]The two other townships were West Bank and Cambridge. In 1952, Duncan Village consisted mostly of Xhosa migrants who worked in iMonti, their name for East London (Bank 2011: 12–14).

[4]Municipal authorities permitted the prayer gathering after an 'interview' between an ANC delegation led by Alcott Gwentshe and 'the Chief Magistrate and District Commandant': *Daily Dispatch*, 11 Nov. 1952.

unrest. Rumours circulated that a mob hacked and ate the white woman. A morgue vehicle retrieved the two white corpses early in the evening, as more constables and troops fanned into the township with guns blazing. The apartheid state waged a retaliatory war until midnight. Oral histories from Duncan Village describe a predatory invasion: the vicious clashes, thudding bullets, soldiers fixing bayonets, and whirl of armoured vehicles.[5] Upwards of 200 Africans may have been slain. But the official toll records only nine fatalities with '27 Natives wounded'.[6] Oral sources allude to why the slaughter is not widely known. Township residents secretly transported the dead to ancestral cemeteries in the countryside, not daring to report their losses for fear of being implicated in treasonous combat.[7]

With the advent of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1995, the massacre could have been exhumed, but it was not. Today, the ANC mayor and managers of East London seem content to bury the memory of the incident notoriously dubbed Black Sunday. There is no memorial as yet to those who died on 9 November. Instead, the city commemorates Steve Biko, a struggle hero who grew up in nearby King William's Town and led the 1970s Black Consciousness Movement. He was martyred by security policemen in a Port Elizabeth torture chamber. His statue in downtown East London is located in front of City Hall and gazes across the busy high street. It is as if Black Sunday never happened in a country profoundly aware of apartheid's far-reaching devastation.

In *Forget Colonialism?*, anthropologist Jennifer Cole explores why there is little remembrance of violent white rule elsewhere in Southern Africa. Her book probes the French massacres of restive peasants in Madagascar during the 1940s. While conducting research, she noted that 'the only topics' her rural informants initially discussed 'were rice, cows and the ancestors', prompting her to 'wonder if colonialism … had ever happened' (Cole 2001). Delving into local responses to bloodshed, Cole identified rituals that healed survivors of lethal oppression by evoking the spiritual power of cattle and ancestors to safeguard communal resilience. During apartheid, no equivalent process occurred in East London. Government crackdowns made it difficult for Duncan Village to mourn Black Sunday. One of the few ANC meetings called in its wake took place in the sea off an Africans-only city beach. Due to banning orders preventing assembly, ANC members arrived separately, waded into the water, and communed while pretending to swim.[8]

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[5]Many oral accounts cited in this article were recorded in author interviews conducted between 2006 and 2015.

[6]District Commandant of Police Major Prinsloo disclosed official casualties: *Daily Dispatch*, 11 Nov. 1952. In a documentary titled *Black Sunday*, Duncan Village filmmaker Koko Qebeyi suggests that 214 people were killed on 9 Nov. 1952; Benedict Carton interviews with Donald Card, East London, 8 May 2012; Koko Qebeyi, Duncan Village, 10 May 2012.

[7]Leslie Bank interviews with Mqonqwana and Tutu, East London, 10 Oct. 2010. The nun's mutilation disturbs hagiographic views of the Defiance Campaign, which purportedly advanced ANC ideals of non-violent nationalism (Breier 2015; Kathrada 2004: 103–6). Isabel Hofmeyr examines such 'nationalist' histories as 'political resource and symbol … [to be] contested' when evaluating oral testimony not 'for its "facts"' but for the 'interpretations … that inform these "facts"' (Hofmeyr 1994: 9).

[8]Bank interview with Malcolm Dyani, Duncan Village, 12 Sep. 2014.

Forget Colonialism? further examines recent political transformations that revived Malagasy recollections of French brutality. A parallel phenomenon occurred in East London during the late 1990s as a newly democratic nation convened inquiries that enabled township residents to bear witness to and be compensated for the abuses of apartheid.[9] These restitution hearings sharpened popular memory of 9 November, kindling long-deferred conversations that raised the issues of concealed casualties and the killing of the nun Elsie Quinlan. Several ceremonies of atonement have honoured her, the first in 2002 on the grounds of St Peter Claver Church in Duncan Village, where she was known as Sister (Sr) Mary Aidan. This 'fiftieth anniversary' involved religious leaders and township spokesmen apologizing to the Catholic diocese. Repentance was again expressed in 2012 when the provincial Department of Arts and Culture sponsored city memorials and invited Professor Njabulo Ndebele to address Sr Aidan's legacy. His public lecture scarcely referenced how she died; he chose to focus on finding love and mercy in random tragedy (Ndebele 2013).

In this paper we consider Sr Aidan's legacy from a different analytical perspective: the context of a forgotten slaughter, an incisive subject of historian Alessandro Portelli (Portelli 2003; 1997). In studying this form of violence he values oral sources, which have 'a different credibility' embedded 'not in … adherence to fact, but … [in] departure from it, as imagination, symbolism and desire' illuminate the meanings of massacre (Portelli 1991: 51). There are constraints to this approach, anthropologist Donald Donham observes. Most researchers do not witness 'the creation of violence', he writes, and therefore '"what happened" in any particular case … is established by after-the-fact narratives … of those affected by the violence who are either willing or chosen to speak … and by agents of the state, such as policemen and judges, who may or may not have agendas of their own'. Anthropologists, for example, 'can conduct their own interviews', although 'these necessarily take place in relation to an … already narrated event'. Donham adds that much evidence underpinning after-the-fact narratives is 'produced by a local cultural and political process quite different from the protocols of social science' deployed by anthropologists and historians, who scaffold past 'events on the basis of "found" data' (all quotes taken from Donham 2006: 27).[10]

Incorporating these methodological concerns and the percolated memories of township residents, this article reconstructs a narrative of 'critical events' that determined the mood in Duncan Village during the months and minutes surrounding the nun's death (Das 1995; Das and Nandy 1986).[11] Their accounts

[9]Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in Duncan Village, 23 Sep. 1996: <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans%5Cduncan/mbengo.htm>; <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans%5Cduncan/fazzie.htm>, accessed 28 Nov. 2015.

[10]In scrutinizing the anthropology of violence, Donham underlines the limits of participant observation, citing Nancy Scheper-Hughes (2004) and Philippe Bourgeois (2004), whose fieldwork was hindered by local threats.

[11]Veena Das' anthropological studies of communal bloodshed in India illuminate how victims recall the 'critical events' of Partition in deeply personal ways (Das 1995; Das and Nandy 1986). South African scholarship examines Das' themes (Reynolds 2000; Denis 2008). Our interviews probing Black Sunday elicited narrowly autobiographical memories, yet we did not dismiss

have been walled behind her monumental demise, which remains the proverbial structure that dams the flow of evidence (Breier 2015).[12] Fixated on chaos and cannibalism, the story of Sr Aidan's murder dominates histories of the East London Defiance Campaign. As a consequence, her ghost haunts the experiences of township people who still recall fierce encounters with a symbolic (white person) and ubiquitous (militarized police) enemy on Black Sunday. Their observations, recorded in oral interviews and archival repositories, contradict a common perception of the '1952 riots'. Indeed, they reject the notion that an aimless 'riot' occurred, instead reflecting on cultural enactments of purposeful violence. As Blok's research into the Mafia suggests, there is no such thing as 'senseless' homicide.[13] Similar to theatrical performances, lethal action makes figurative statements about power, vengeance and solidarity. The morality of murder, Blok argues in *Honour and Violence*, resides in its time and place of execution, and in the meanings of self-protection ascribed to dehumanizing the victim through mutilation (Blok 2000). Similarly, the fatal attack on Sr Aidan affirmed Xhosa customs of defensive retribution and resistance. Conceptual questions about bodily mutilation likewise shape Jonathan Glassman's investigation of racial violence in Zanzibar. Like him, we contest the idea that disfiguring 'enemy' corpses simply represented 'senseless violence'. Rather, this 'spectacular' act expressed symbolic messages of 'revenge and … warning', which generated distinctly problematic historical memories and recollections. In analogous ways we reassess Black Sunday by tracing how historical memories of the nun's murder 'transformed into remembered memories' of a hidden massacre (Glassman 2011: 19–20).

RACIAL NATIONALISM: THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN REVISITED

Scholarship on the Defiance Campaign highlights how the 'politics of inclusion', inspired by the ANC 1949 Programme of Action and by Indian Gandhism, persuaded African masses in the Cape to embrace civil disobedience (Kuper 1965; Gerhart 1978: 134, 136–7; Lodge 1983: 61).[14] This non-confrontational strategy in the struggle for equal rights was supposed to turn wayward youths, even hardened delinquents (male *tsotsi* and female *tsotsikazi*), into disciplined activists. Yet an aberrant outcome unfolded. 'Riots' instigated by 'fringe' youth derailed

such testimonies. On the contrary, they helped us verify, assign and explain violent consequences. Portelli reminds the oral historian not to reject subjective sources as 'interference' because they usefully diversify data (Portelli 1997: 80). Portelli is renowned for his interviews with people who dealt with forgotten massacres involving murdered clergy (Portelli 2003). We thank Alison Landsberg for her insights here.

[12]The fact that the nun dominates the history of the '1952 riots' can also be attributed to clergy such as Reverend Nicolas Bengu of Duncan Village, who begged whites not to avenge her death for the sins of his neighbours: *Daily Dispatch*, 15 Nov. 1952.

[13]Burgess and Burton urge scholars 'to understand … the social origins of … violence, and to resist the slur of "senseless" violence often imputed on African societies' (2010: 4).

[14]The politics of inclusion was an ideal that ANC strategists such as Ahmed Kathrada struggled to uphold. He proclaimed anti-white slogans during the Defiance Campaign (Kathrada 2004: 103; Kuper 1957: 120, 245–6).

the Defiance Campaign (Mager and Minkley 1993: 241; Lodge 1983: 60).[15] ANC leaders publicized this opinion soon after the 'indiscriminate shooting' in Bantu Square, stating that 'law-abiding Africans resent and deprecate the action of the irresponsible element'.[16] But what if Black Sunday was not simply stoked by transgressive mobs?[17] More specifically, what if ANC-leaning groups in the Eastern Cape promoted racial reprisals? In the summary below, an alternative interpretation of urban mobilization traces anti-white sentiment from the eve of the Defiance Campaign to Black Sunday.

Following the formation of the ANC Youth League (ANCYL) in 1949, three men from Duncan Village – Alcott 'Skei' Gwentshe, Cornelius Fazzie and Joel Lengisi – emerged as staunch adversaries of apartheid. The triumvirate drew insights from an architect of the Programme of Action, A. P. Mda, who lived in Herschel District north of the city. Another ANC activist, Robert Sobukwe, came from nearby University of Fort Hare to create a Youth League branch in East London (Gerhart 1978: 127–35).[18] Mda and Sobukwe envisaged the urban area as an ideal site for testing radical ideologies. After religious services and social gatherings in Duncan Village, Youth Leaguers held weekend political education meetings that challenged the go-slow approach of local ANC elders R. H. Godlo, chair of the National Native Urban Representative Council, and Clements Kadalie, Location Advisory Board member and labour unionist (Rich 1984: 71, 105; Bradford 1988). Godlo and Kadalie advocated trusteeship through 'non-European councils' nominated by white chairmen who facilitated the 'consultative' participation of a few disenfranchised elites in municipal matters (Mayer and Mayer 1971: 52).[19] Championing boycotts and non-cooperation, Mda and Sobukwe repudiated any scheme to collaborate with the state, regardless of the liberal agenda.[20]

In 1951, ANCYL leaders hoped to sideline the trusteeship faction, seizing their chance when the city council sought to pay for township road, lighting and sanitation upgrades by imposing a 2-shilling levy on residents of Duncan Village. This new financial burden was deeply resented. High rents already required lodgers to devote a third of their income to accommodation in crammed houses. Adding

[15]White liberals such as J. Rheinhalt Jones of the South African Institute of Race Relations blamed Defiance Campaign violence on the '*tsotsi* menace', concluding that 'the riots in East London, Port Elizabeth and Kimberley were an outburst of criminal and disorderly elements in the African urban areas': *Daily Dispatch*, 12 Dec. 1952. Lodge writes that during the riots '[w]hite lives and white property were symbolic targets chosen spontaneously in the mood of collective irresponsibility generated by police violence', which incited the 'disproportionate role' of youths who attacked without 'moral restraint' (Lodge 1983: 60).

[16]This statement by ANCYL leader Alcott Gwentshe was published on 11 Nov. 1952 in the *Daily Dispatch*.

[17]Beinart offers a valuable survey of modes of African violence in white-ruled South Africa (Beinart 1992).

[18]At the time, there were Youth League branches at Fort Hare, led by Godfrey Pitje, and in Mda's Herschel District. The ANC believed that neither location encouraged mass action. The mentor of Mda and Pitje, Anton Lembede, advocated '[n]ationalism of an oppressed people' without 'racial hatred … [for] we only hate … . white domination, and not the white people themselves' (Edgar and Msumza 1996: 31–2).

[19]Kadalie's East London career is examined by Beinart and Bundy (1987: 270–320).

[20]The ANC split affected Duncan Village as feuding camps clashed over a worker stay-away in 1950.

FIGURE 1 March of lodgers along Oxford Street led by ANCYL leaders, April 1951.

insult to injury, the municipality decided to collect the levy before it was legal to do so.[21] This scheme provoked the Youth League, in April, to organize a march of poor families, youth and single women eager to protest against the ill-treating 'white man'.[22] The procession travelled along Oxford Street to City Hall and climaxed with a presentation of grievances by Skei Gwentshe, a musician, sportsman and activist who rented one room in Duncan Village for himself, his wife and four children (Figure 1).

The mayor ignored this petition, prompting the ANCYL to take the municipality to court. The charismatic Gwentshe was selected to argue the brief, justifying why township residents refused the levy. During the proceedings, his supporters congregated outside the magistracy expecting victory, but the city prevailed. While the lodgers were found guilty of non-payment, press coverage of the case exposed the inequity of the levy. It became clear that government should have

[21]Bank interview with Mr Nginza, Duncan Village, 11 Oct. 2010. Employed by the council, Nginza discovered that it planned to collect the levy before it was official to do so. He promptly reported this information to the ANCYL in 1951.

[22]In the 1950s, anthropologists Philip and Iona Mayer conducted research in East London townships, chronicling the 'deep resentment' towards the 'White man'. One informant told the Mayers: 'A father has to take to his heels on the approach of the police, if his lodger's permit has not been renewed: "Run tata, run!" his children shout' (Mayer and Mayer 1971: 50).

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raised revenue from better-off homeowners rather than poorer tenants. In November, the council dropped the 2-shilling charge on renters in favour of a 15-shilling tax on landlords, a constituency of the ANC old guard.[23] This was a major win for the Youth League, which, in the span of six months, discredited trusteeship, attracted a larger following, and showed the power of African nationalism to achieve key objectives (Mager and Minkley 1993: 232–4).[24] The mayor feared this development, linking it to South Africa's paramount menace, communism, and '[i]f we take a charitable view, and omit the charge of communism, we could say it is nationalism, that is inspiring them. Whatever it is, it constitutes an extreme threat to European civilisation in South Africa … The future of the white man is at stake.'[25]

In early 1952, the ANCYL seized another opportunity to contest apartheid law when the state announced national commemorations for the 'founder' of white South Africa, Jan van Riebeeck.[26] In *Apartheid's Festival*, Leslie Witz shows that 'the three hundredth anniversary of Jan van Riebeeck's landing in 1952' enabled the National Party 'to construct a history and identity of whites as whites', with the Dutch founder portrayed as the father of Afrikanerdom, 'the initiator of farming in South Africa, the bearer of Christianity to the sub-continent, and the [British] colonial founder' (Witz 2003: 15). Between March and April, the municipality prepared for this high-profile tercentennial. The ANC responded with an appeal to embargo the celebration and stop Africans (offered city transport at no cost) from going to the dedicatory events.[27] To broadcast the boycott, Youth League orators regaled audiences in Bantu Square during April and May with tales of heroic frontier wars and kings Hintsa, Macoma and Makana killing white invaders in defence of Xhosa sovereignty. Prominent activists at the time remembered these fiery speeches establishing 'the first phase of politicisation and nationalism … [by] defin[ing] the enemy' and introducing township youths to a dramatic history of primary resistance to settler oppression.[28]

When the Defiance Campaign began in June 1952, township residents were primed to play their part and get arrested.[29] Youth League activists contested racial injustice in the heart of East London.[30] Detained marchers were thrashed by warders in the downtown Fort Glamorgan gaol. The ANC complained about this harsh treatment. After incarcerated protestors were released from jail, they reported their beatings to crowds at Bantu Square, embittering

[23]A fraction of the estimated windfall from the levy was collected in 1951.

[24]In 1951, the *Daily Dispatch* devoted coverage to the Youth League's political ascension.

[25]Opposition to Motion of Enquiry to Location Riots, 3, 'Native Riots' TCO, 50/665/3/1; Statement Union Minister of Justice, East London, 11 Nov. 1952, 2; 1343, 3/ELN, CAR.

[26]Leslie Witz adds that van Riebeeck was 'suited to be the figure around which' South Africa came together as 'two white races', Briton and Boer (Witz 2003: 15, 25–9, 36–8).

[27]Duncan Village residents were given free train passage to van Riebeeck celebrations at Jan Smuts Stadium in East London: *Daily Dispatch*, 5 April 1952. The ANCYL blocked township residents from boarding these trains at Panmure station.

[28]Bank interviews with Mqonqwana and Tutu, 10 Oct. 2010.

[29]Witz states that the ANC chose 6 April, the day and month of van Riebeeck's Cape landing in 1652, 'to publicly launch its campaign of defiance against apartheid laws' (Witz 2003: 5).

[30]Groups of Defiance Campaign volunteers, guided by a leader with a loudhailer, coordinated curfew violations.

Defiance Campaign volunteers and eroding their loyalty to civil disobedience. Township youths started hurling rocks at police vehicles. They relentlessly stoned one constable walking the beat, forcing him to seek safety in the Duncan Village charge office.[31] In October, the press and its white readers increasingly feared 'Mau Mau' subversion, which was then beginning to imperil colonial Kenya as the Kikuyu Land and Freedom Army fought for territory taken by British settlers who claimed it was the 'white man's burden' to develop Africa.[32] East London whites had grounds to worry: some Duncan Village activists believed that their Mau Mau moment had arrived.[33] The official preparations for the van Riebeeck festival merely sparked African anger. As the municipality touted the tercentennial, township people remembered their long oppression. Anti-colonial sentiment, refurbished for the Defiance Campaign, was intensifying. By the end of 1952, the liberation song on everyone's lips in Duncan Village had come from the musical oeuvre of Port Elizabeth dockworker Vuyisile Mini, a gifted ANCYL organizer and composer.[34]

Thina Sizwe se-Afrika	We the African nation
Sikhalela Izwe Lethu	are crying out for our land
Elathathwa Ngabamhlophe	which was taken by the white man
Mabameyek' Umhlaba Wethu.	they must leave our land alone.[35]

In lyrics and movements, the script of anti-apartheid violence was being written with a big production in mind.

THE ANATOMY OF VIOLENCE

In an essay titled 'Reaping the whirlwind', Anne Mager and Gary Minkley explore the 1952 riots as a pivotal moment of East London social history at the dawn of apartheid, focusing particularly on the 'modern, urban phenomenon' of '*tsotsi*sm' (youth criminality). In addition, they link the radicalization of

[31]Police in Duncan Village found it nearly impossible to perform surveillance.

[32]British rulers in Kenya had just declared a state of emergency to protect settlers who seized the fertile Kikuyu highlands in the name of 'civilized' development (Maloba 1998: 1; Kanogo 1987: 1–68). In the early 1950s, whites in Kenya, South Africa and Rhodesia desired a settler federation (Anderson 2005: 3, 79–80, 83).

[33]The ANC pleaded with Duncan Village youth to stop 'being mau mau': *Daily Dispatch*, 25 Nov. 1952.

[34]Sentenced to death for his anti-apartheid activism, Mini went to the gallows in 1964 singing 'Thina sizwe se-Africa' and other songs he composed, including 'Bhasobha nans' indond' emnyama (we) Verwoerd/Strijdom', meaning 'Look out, Verwoerd/Strijdom, here is/comes the Black Man' (Turok 1969). In 1952, Hendrik Verwoerd was Minister for Native Affairs while Johannes Strijdom became Prime Minister two years later.

[35]Bank interview with Hamilton Keke, Duncan Village, 14 April 2012. 'They must leave our land alone' connoted the threat 'or else'.

Africans in the East Bank, the other name for Duncan Village, to youth disorder and government–ANC embroilments during the Defiance Campaign (Mager and Minkley 1993). Their path-breaking scholarship is corroborated by archival and oral sources that reveal the mindset of municipal authorities and township dissidents on 9 November. Expecting strife from activists and gangsters alike, city leaders had summoned army personnel and called in constables from Natal.[36] Influential Youth Leaguers Gwentshe, Fazzie and Lengisi were also banned 'by the Minister of Justice from attending any meetings'.[37] The reinforced security forces that initially stormed the township encountered youths with home-made weapons. When Captain Pohl and his police unit arrived in Bantu Square at around 4 p.m., he commanded the 1,500 worshippers to disband; young activists responded by hurling rocks (Figure 2).[38] Next, Pohl ordered his baton-wielding policemen, a Zulu unit from Natal, to rush the crowd. Once more stones rained down on the captain and his men. A second baton charge ensued. The protestors absorbed the blow and stood defiant. Then Pohl gave the order to use live ammunition. An observer at the scene, Afrika Mahashe, summarized the sequence of violence: 'black people called *amatshaka*' (meaning Shaka Zulu's warriors) brandished 'sticks' while 'the white guys … just started firing bullets at us'. Ronnie Meine, an onlooker in the confrontation, recalled that 'people were beaten and charged, then shot. I remember … mamas with big legs where the bullet went in on the back side of the leg as she was running away and it made a tiny little hole but on the front there was [a] terrible hole with blood.'[39] The barrage killed six people and injured scores more. No ambulances assisted the victims. Private vehicles removed the casualties, an eyewitness, Busisiwe Mohapi, remembered, for '[e]veryone who had been shot would be thrown inside a van. I was also thrown inside that van and I was covered with blood.'[40] Some wounded Africans ended up in Frere Hospital surgery, where by '6 p.m. two theatres were being used to operate … [and by] 7 p.m. five theatres were being used', with oxygen supplies dwindling.[41]

Within an hour of Pohl's onslaught, Sr Aidan drove her car along Bantu Street, her route skirting the site of the rally. She was a doctor at Mater Dei Hospital in East London and at a clinic in St Peter Claver Church, where she knew her patients from Duncan Village. Dispersed protestors stopped the nun in front of a house owned by Mr Ntoni. Her windscreen was broken; she was repeatedly hit and stabbed. She cried for help, dropped down, and was seen praying. Afrika Mahashe went to Sr Aidan's aid but was thrown aside. A mob set her car alight while people allegedly sliced the nun's body. A police patrol passed by, according to Duncan Village resident Jim Bente.[42] He also recalled youths

[36]Carton interview with Card, 8 May 2012; *Daily Dispatch*, 11 Nov. 1952.
[37]*Daily Dispatch*, 11 Nov. 1952.
[38]Letter H. Driffield, Town Clerk East London, Cape, to M. Houte, Ladysmith, Natal, 30 Sep. 1954; this correspondence contained the Town Clerk's summary of a *Daily Dispatch* report: 'Native Riots' TCO, 50/665/3/1, 1343, 3/ELN, CAR.
[39]Qebeyi interview with Afrika Mahashe, Duncan Village, 12 June 2006; Carton interview with Lawrence Tutu, Duncan Village, 10 May 2012.
[40]Bank interview with Busisiwe Joyce Mohapi, Duncan Village, 20 June 2011.
[41]*Daily Dispatch*, 11 Nov. 1952.
[42]Qebeyi interviews with Mahashe, 12 June 2006; Jim Bente, Duncan Village, 12 June 2006.

FIGURE 2 Bantu Square, Duncan Village, 1950.

'stok[ing] the flames' of the car. At around 6 p.m., the authorities found the vehicle tipped on its side with the burned victim next to it; her limbs had been hacked and pieces of flesh carved off. Investigating officers heard from onlookers that the fat from her thighs had melted into the gutter. The images below were taken by a police photographer; debris and ashes outlined Sr Aidan's body (Figures 3 and 4).

In Thulandeville section on the far side of Duncan Village, police discovered the first white corpse at 5.30 p.m. It was the insurance salesman Barend Vorster. The widowed breadwinner of his family, Vorster had ignored police warnings to leave the township and continued collecting premiums door to door.[43] Shortly after the shootings in Bantu Square, he was spotted by a group of men who chased him through the streets. Vorster detoured into the home of an African minister, pleading to be spared. The preacher in turn implored the pursuers to desist. They pushed him away, then clubbed and stabbed the salesman to death. There was no evidence that flesh was taken from his body. Vorster was loaded into a morgue vehicle, half an hour before the authorities retrieved Sr Aidan's corpse.

Near these scenes, teenagers razed local businesses and municipal facilities, including the Model Dairy as well as St Peter Claver mission and church.[44] The incendiary crowd exclaimed: 'Burn the Romans! We must kill the Romans because

[43]The forty-eight-year-old Vorster had children. His daughter was a nurse at Frere Hospital where Bantu Square casualties arrived for treatment: Memo, Town Clerk to Mayor, East London, 10 Nov. 1952, 'Native Riots' TCO, 50/665/3/1, 1343, 3/ELN, CAR; *Daily Dispatch*, 11 Nov. 1952.

[44]Before St Peter Claver was set alight, police escorted the priest, 'European and Native nuns' from Duncan Village: *Daily Dispatch*, 11 Nov. 1952.

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FIGURE 3 Sister Aidan's car, front view, observed by the police (left) on Bantu Street, November 1952.

they are Dutch!' (Mager and Minkley 1993: 230). Youths engaged in running battles with the police that lasted until midnight.[45] Soldiers stabbed their adversaries with bayonets; police holstered revolvers for high-calibre rifles. The wounds to the victims were said by one victim to be horrendous (Figures 5 and 6).[46]

The next morning the government announced that nine people, including two murdered whites, had perished in 'riots'. Hastening to apprehend the culprits, the police formed a dragnet and detained 178 Africans on charges of public violence, arson and murder; many of the suspects ranged in age 'between 14 and 21', with 'opinion, both white and black', deeming them 'tsotsis' (Mager and Minkley 1993: 3). With the Minister of Justice's approval, the mayor declared 'we will not tolerate lawlessness by irresponsible native youths' whose 'burning, pillage and murder is something which must be handled'.[47] Meanwhile, labour migrants in Duncan Village streamed back to their homesteads in search of 'country refuge "till the troubles in town should be over"' (Mayer and Mayer 1971: 82–3).

A 2014 documentary of the Bantu Square violence by Koko Qebeyi disputes the death toll of Black Sunday. After consulting dozens of eyewitnesses in East London, among them township elders and retired policemen, Qebeyi calculated that there were more than 200 African fatalities.[48] The former activist Meine

[45]Property compensation claims were handled by the city council: Extract Minutes Public Health & Non-European Affairs, 21 August 1953, 15488; Minutes Ordinary Meeting, 31 August 1953, 15563, Proposed payment of compensation to Ranger S. G. Egerton; 'Native Riots' TCO, 50/665/3/1, 1343, 3/ELN, CAR.

[46]Carton interview with anonymous combatant who fought police in Bantu Square on 9 Nov. 1952, Duncan Village, 10 May 2012.

[47]Opposition to Motion of Enquiry to Location Riots, 4; Notes from Mayor's Parlour Meeting, 11 Nov. 1952; 'Native Riots' TCO, 50/665/3/1, 1343, 3/ELN, CAR.

[48]While Malcolm Dyani, a child witness to Black Sunday, considered the official toll a gross underestimation, he believed Qebeyi inflated the number of fatalities: Bank interview with Dyani, 12 Sep. 2014.

FIGURE 4 Sister Aidan's car, side view, Bantu Street, November 1952.

FIGURE 5 Combatant who faced the police in Bantu Square, with wounds.[49]

confirmed this figure. 'These people were shot and loaded into cars,' he said, as 'there were no ambulances' and thus no corresponding hospital or clinic statistics.[50] With regard to the nine official casualties, the mayor told his council that District Commandant of Police Major Prinsloo would not hand 'the bodies of

[49]Photograph taken by Benedict Carton in Duncan Village, 10 May 2012.

[50]Bank interview with Ronnie Meine, East London, 10 June 2008. Also: Letter H. Driffield, Town Clerk East London, Cape, to M. Houte, Ladysmith, Natal, 30 Sep. 1954; this correspondence contained the Town Clerk's summary of a 10 Nov. 1952 *Daily Dispatch* report: 'Native Riots' TCO, 50/665/3/1, 1343, 3/ELN, CAR.

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FIGURE 6 Combatant who faced the police in Bantu Square, with wounds.[51]

the non-Europeans killed in the location rioting, to the A.N.C.', instructing the Native Administration on the 'disposal of the unclaimed bodies … [and] any pauper burials … [which] should be done as anonymously as possible'.[52] Oral sources detail other recovery efforts. A wagon with bodies was seen going to King William's Town; other makeshift morgue vehicles crossed the Kei River to reach rural grave sites.[53] It was alleged that the police covertly tracked these casualties in an exercise book.[54] Now lost, this log was never made public. If the

[51]Photograph taken by Benedict Carton in Duncan Village, 10 May 2012.

[52]The mayor worried that packed African funerals would trigger violence against the state: Report on the Special Committee on Rioting in the Location, 12 Nov. 1952; Minutes Special Council, 11 Nov. 1952, 48, 13478; 'Native Riots' TCO, 50/665/3/1, 1343, 3/ELN, CAR.

[53]Carton interview with Card, 8 May 2012. Card said:

> inquests are held when people die unnaturally and people normally go to the mortuary and the doctor certifies the cause of death. None of these people [African victims of Bantu Square violence] were certified. They were just taken and buried because everybody was scared that if they were associated with the riots they would be arrested. Because a relative is shot, the family are going to be accused of being involved in the riots, so they get rid of a body without saying a word to anybody.

See also Bank interview with Meine, 10 June 2008.

[54]Duncan Village residents were seen to 'evacuate' the township 'up the main road to King William's Town': *Daily Dispatch*, 11 Nov. 1952. Card said:

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revised number of deaths is credible, the bloodshed of this Defiance Campaign action exceeds that of the infamous Sharpeville pass protest, believed to be the worst one-day massacre of the apartheid era.

It is a stirring development that gross injustice, long hidden in plain sight, is being recognized. It is equally dramatic that, in the present day, little has changed in accepted views of the '1952 riots'. There is one intervening reason: the gruesome nature of the nun's murder has created a veil of secrecy over those who know most about Black Sunday. Until Qebeyi initiated his film project, few in his township were prepared to talk about Sr Aidan lest they be implicated in the 'strange things [done] to her'.[55] The most unutterable details refer to her corpse and the wrath it evoked. For example, during the 1953 trial of fifteen suspects accused of killing the nun, two women from Duncan Village testified that they saw flesh being cut from her. When they left the courtroom and boarded a bus home, the driver goaded passengers to kill the female witnesses, saying they were traitorous informers, *impimpi*, who had given false evidence.[56] The women disembarked at the next stop. Discussion of Sr Aidan became taboo, as the state and township turned away from Black Sunday. Policemen who may have had a hand in killing upwards of 200 people were never formally questioned, not even by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in its crusades to uncover 'human rights abuses from all sides'.[57]

SILENCES AND SECRETS

Within a year, the 'riots' had receded from popular consciousness into scholarship and biography.[58] During the mid-1950s, the sociologist Desmond Reader sought to discover the transgressive trends that caused Black Sunday. His study, *The Black Man's Portion*, blamed Defiance Campaign violence on 'passions which had lain dormant since the Kaffir wars' of the 1800s (Reader 1961: 28–9). For him, the Youth League chant, 'Bring Back Africa', echoed the cry of Xhosa regiments fighting British soldiers during the Cape conflicts of yore. This national struggle to preserve autonomy ended with the dispossession of African land, the erosion of traditional authority, and the proliferation of townships plagued by

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> I will tell you that there were 214 … That was the number of names in the green exercise book … We know that wherever we found somebody dead we went there … and [finding a corpse] we registered it … Now, don't forget … [t]hey did not shoot only at the square … they shot at all the other places and where the churches were burnt. It went on for hours. There is no other number I know – there could be 215 or even 280. We had 214 finish and klaar! (Carton interview with Card, 8 May 2012)

See also Carton interview with Qebeyi, East London, 8 May 2012.

[55]Bank interviews with Mqonqwana and Tutu, 10 Oct. 2010.

[56]*Daily Dispatch*, 15 July 1953.

[57]See <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/>. In early 1953, the city council decided to investigate 'the November 1952 riots': City of East London, Extract from Minutes of Ordinary Meeting of the Council, 3 March 1953, 14275; 'Native Riots' TCO, 50/665/3/1, 1343, 3/ELN, CAR. Opposed by the mayor, this inquiry never proceeded.

[58]In 1953, the mayor said that Black Sunday would fade from public memory because 'the riots … [were] of a trivial nature': Opposition to Motion of Enquiry to Location Riots, 2; 'Native Riots' TCO, 50/665/3/1, 1343, 3/ELN, CAR.

lawless youth. '[T]hese children', by which Reader meant 'the dagga [marijuana]-smokers and shebeen-frequenters, a few sub-mental cases, several with previous conviction[s] … were swept' into the ANC fold. On 9 November, they 'distilled in their moment of frenzy all the bitterness felt by their community at large against those who appeared to crush and exploit them'. The repercussions were dreadful: 'Any white person, however well loved … [such as] a dedicated woman doctor [who] happened to be there', became targets 'because their skin colour represented … autocratic oppression that appeared to … engulf their lives' (Reader 1961: 28–9; Dubb 1976: 123; Lodge 1983: 60).[59]

Another explanation of the East London 'riots', formulated in their aftermath, similarly obsessed over errant youths and their homicidal compulsion that fed the 'frenzied Africans' who 'could not be stopp[ed] … until blood ha[d] been spilled'. The author of this horror story, John McFall, was a journalist on the city paper, *Daily Dispatch*, covering the 'writhings of African nationalism' in the Defiance Campaign. McFall took leave from the newsroom to complete a book about Sr Aidan's murder with the title *Trust Betrayed*. His publisher, Nasionale Boekhandel, a South African press with ties to Afrikaner Nationalists, promoted *Trust Betrayed* as an 'objective appraisal' of the 'benefactress who dedicated her life to the spiritual and physical welfare of Africans [before she] was stoned, stabbed, and burned; and then the mob resorted to cannibalism' (McFall 1963: frontispiece). One of McFall's chapters speculated that godless Mau Mau terrorists had incited young copycats in Duncan Village. This perspective was shared by one township resident who wrote an editorial urging youth in his community to stop posing as 'Mau Mau'. His letter suggests that the revolt against Kenyan colonialism fascinated Defiance Campaign activists. It should come as no surprise that opponents of apartheid would invoke an existential threat to white supremacy in Africa. Foreign journalists alluded to a similar connection. On 10 November 1952, the *Chicago Tribune* listed columns in its international section, one reporting Sr Aidan's shocking murder from East London, while the other bylined Nairobi, detailing an operation of 'police and troops … [to] ferret out members of the Mau Mau anti-white cult from their hideouts'.[60] Like the press, Reader and McFall attributed the '1952 riots' to an impulsive, inscrutable fury. In contrast, this article identifies cultural messages in violent social acts that communicated meaning to intended audiences, probing the ideas of corporeality and vengeance circulating in Duncan Village. Were the mortal remains of the nun seen by township combatants, with their neighbours slaughtered by the police, as a source of ritual strength and protection? What customary scripts decided the bodily fate of white victims of racial retribution? And were targeted people viewed by their enemy as worthy of appropriate treatment in the circumstances?[61]

In the early 2000s, the nun's murder was also revisited by Donald Card, a constable in Duncan Village in the 1950s whose autobiography sensationalized the incident. Formerly a detective, security policeman and mayor of East London, he

[59]Mager and Minkley offer a well-researched account of 'tsotsis, amatsotsikazi and the riots' as well as 'rioters' tried in courts during 1953 (Mager and Minkley 1993: 236–42).

[60]*Chicago Tribune*, 10 Nov. 1952.

[61]Our questions were informed by Peter Delius's study of witch murders during anti-apartheid unrest; he deftly scrutinizes oral and legal explanations of transgressive violence (Delius 1996).

was tasked with apprehending suspects in Sr Aidan's killing. While Card was not at the crime scene, he intimately recreates the manner in which the victim 'was stopped by a mob in Bantu Street' and assaulted 'through the broken window'. He describes the driver's door being opened, her stabbing, and the 'sticks and stones … thrown at her. She appeared to be dead when the mob turned the car on its side with her in it and when petrol ran out they set it alight.' His subsequent details of cannibalism rely on dubious testimony. When the vehicle 'cooled down slightly', he writes, 'the burned body of Sister Quinlan was dragged out' by people who 'walked down the street eating … [her flesh], with blood running down their chins' (Thomas 2007: 36–7).

DIGGING DEEPER

Before assessing African memories of the nun's death, Card's recent murder narrative should be compared with the older legal record. In a 2012 interview, Card said that Sr Aidan's attackers excised her private parts and chewed them with 'blood running down' before searing her body. This grisly rendition and others like it in his autobiographical accounts contradict Card's prior court statements. In 1952 he was a junior policeman barred from Duncan Village on 9 November.[62] His superiors arrived at the nun's car an hour or so after the victim died. Almost no one in Duncan Village gave police investigators verifiable information about the unfolding scene. The next year, during the trial of the fifteen suspects linked to the nun's homicide, Card delivered his proof of cannibalism under oath. He referred to the statement of a female witness who went missing, making her testimony inadmissible.[63] Then he said that Sr Aidan was mutilated after being burned. His stance was corroborated by defendants who saw another accused woman carrying a handkerchief containing human flesh 'burnt on one side' and by post-mortem reports.[64] In particular, the Assistant District Surgeon of East London, Dr Sachs, examined Sr Aidan's remains, or more precisely her 'head and trunk, the upper portion of the right arm and the stump of the thigh'. He concluded that the victim had not been tampered with before being burned.[65]

The legal system also heard from Mavis Mkonebi. On 19 November 1952 she told the police of her involvement in Sr Aidan's murder. Mkonebi was promptly charged. Her isiXhosa statement was given to an interpreter and transcribed into Afrikaans by Mr Synman, the Assistant Magistrate in East London. Mkonebi admitted to seeing flesh removed from the nun's arm with a table knife. The question at trial was whether this operation was lethal. Defending Mkonebi, Joe Slovo, the attorney for all the accused, acknowledged that 'after

[62]Although Card had low-ranking professional status, his skills as an isiXhosa linguist made him valuable as an investigator of the murder of Sr Aidan (Bank and Bank 2013: 17–18).

[63]*Daily Dispatch*, 14 July 1953. If Card's witness took the stand, her pre-trial statement would have been read into the record. Vansina reminds us that orally re-presented evidence is 'unreliable' in cases where 'information [is] already in the possession of the questioner' (Vansina 1985: 30).

[64]Court testimonies of Mavis Mkonebi and Ivy Plaatjie: *Daily Dispatch*, 14 July 1953.

[65]*Daily Dispatch*, 12 July 1953. Dr Sachs examined the nun's cadaver a day after it arrived in the morgue.

the initial assault … a number of people attempted to obtain flesh from the deceased', but suggested that the cutting happened after Sr Aidan had died. In addition, the prosecutor struggled to resolve the allegations of Card's fellow constable, who saw the nun's blazing car, protruding 'naked arm' and 'fingers contract', but could not tell 'whether any other contracture took place … [after] the flames became worse and the hand disappeared from view'.[66] The prosecutor summoned experts to give an opinion. Dr Sachs confirmed that the contraction could have been 'caused by the flames' while Dr Stevenson, an independent specialist, said that fire produced uncertain outcomes and incinerated clues. Deciding that the nun may have died from the initial blows, the presiding judge did not consider the issue of ritual homicide. Instead, the verdict asserted that Sr Aidan was caught in a 'revenge murder' orchestrated by those who vowed that 'they killed us, the white lady must die'. Without conclusive evidence of their guilt, the court acquitted Mkonebi and nine other defendants; these included Clements Karools, who had danced around the victim performing liberation songs and waving a sickle. According to court records, seven defendants were convicted, among them two men, Vumile Nonqobo and Albert Mgxwiti, who were sentenced to hang. Nonqobo was found to have stopped the car and battered Sr Aidan, and then stabbed her. For his part, Mgxwiti apparently boasted in a beer tavern that he had killed the nun. The prosecutor placed him at the crime scene through the eyewitness testimony of Ethel Dlabantu, who said that Mgxwiti knifed the victim seven times.[67] If the nun's vital body was ever mutilated, the judge decided, it was never proved.[68]

The *Daily Dispatch* photograph taken in mid-March 1953 (Figure 7) shows men and women accused of participating in the killing of Sr Aidan. Suspect number 3 was Agnes Bewana. The man holding a number 6 placard was Tolwani July. The woman signed number 7 was Ivy Plaatjies. Suspect 12, obscuring his identity with hat and hands, was Obbie Mgcoxa; he was soon released from custody. Bewana, July and Plaatjies escaped capital charges. Instead, the Solicitor-General tried them 'under increased jurisdiction … [for] despoiling or violating a dead body'. On the far left of this image a man standing and looking at the window may have been either Nonqobo or Mgxwiti.[69]

[66] *Daily Dispatch*, 14 July 1953.

[67] Mgxwiti denied all charges, claiming that he was attending his sister's daughter's wedding on 9 Nov. This alibi was endlessly debated by Duncan Village residents: Bank interview with Dyani, 12 Sep. 2014.

[68] Sampson's judgment was reported in the *Daily Dispatch*, 12 July 1952.

[69] *Daily Dispatch*, 14 March 1953; see also Case of Regina versus Albert Mgxwiti & 12 Others, charged with the crime of murder, Chief Clerk to Solicitor-General, Grahamstown, to Magistrate, East London, 18 March 1953, 71/24/53, 1/2/1/660, 1/GSC, CAR. Prior line-ups confused the names of the suspects. Some of the accused eventually tried in court were designated different suspect numbers after the 14 March photograph appeared in the *Daily Dispatch*: Rex versus Albert Mgxwiti & 7 Others, Warrant of Sheriff or Deputy-Sheriff to summon Accused and serve Indictment and Notice of Trial, UDJ 172, Judge President of the Eastern Districts Local Division at Grahamstown, Assistant Registrar of the Eastern Districts Local Division of the Supreme Court of South Africa, Chief Clerk to the Solicitor-General of the Eastern Districts of the Cape of Good Hope, 19 May 1953, 1/2/1/660, 1/GSC, CAR.

FIGURE 7 Suspects in the murder of Sr Aidan lined up before the magistrate of East London.

THE RAW AND THE COOKED

Even with fading memory, senior citizens of Duncan Village vividly recall Black Sunday. Their testimonies illuminate crucial cultural explanations for the violence on 9 November 1952, including the nun's murder. Without hesitation, many oral sources refuted the cannibalism claim, labelling it a lie thrust into the mouths of township residents. Ronnie Meine explained: 'Sister Aiden [*sic*] came at the time when black people were provoked by the police because the police were shooting people … The following week the white police picked up people whom they tortured and … [w]hile we were in detention we heard screams of tortured people admitting to things which they had not done and some would say "Sorry my white man, sorry my white man, I did do it" [i.e. consume the nun's flesh].'[70] Duma Qabaka echoed these sentiments, if ambivalently: 'As far as I know, no one ever attempted to eat the flesh of Sister Aiden [*sic*]. I wouldn't like to say much about that, you see, because these things always go along with what we call mob spirit, you see; that is, heresy, that sort of thing … but my belief is, you see, no one can ever eat or [be] seen to be eating human flesh.'[71]

[70]Bank interview with Meine, 10 June 2008.
[71]Qebeyi interview with Duma Qabaka, Duncan Village, 14 May 2006; this transcript is in the authors' possession.

Qebeyi's research reveals why suspects remanded in custody signed affidavits professing that they had eaten Sr Aidan; they had done so under severe duress. Card not only denied the coercion in this instance but also refuted the idea that his counterparts were routinely forcing confessions from accused blacks.[72] Qebeyi tackles this contention by tracing allegations implicating the former constable. In 1997, Card was accused of human rights violations as an operative of the security branch known for torturing activists. The documented charges were so serious that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission invited him to a hearing; he attended with counsel.[73] Qebeyi says that Card fabricated the cannibalization of Sr Aidan in his 2007 autobiography to avenge the injury ten years previously to his reputation as a man of 'law and order'. Moreover, Qebeyi contends that township people at the murder scene would not have openly consumed the nun. However, he does allow for the probability that someone handling the assaulted victim could have taken and disseminated pieces of her body to make *muthi* thought to shield people from an attack. Whatever the case, Qebeyi suggests that the nun's mutilation stirred dormant rumours that fuelled street quarrels. He recalled a memory of the outspoken J. J. Matotie, an ANC firebrand who later joined the rival Transkei Independence Party of K. D. Matanzima. Matotie's defection marked him as a 'collaborator' in the eyes of the ANC guerrilla wing, which assassinated him in 1963. A decade previously Matotie had been a Youth League organizer in East London banned by the Suppression of Communism Act 1950, along with other Defiance Campaign stalwarts in Duncan Village. Under penalty of imprisonment, Matotie could not go to Bantu Square on Black Sunday. Afterwards, he criticized ANC leaders for mismanaging the prayer meeting.[74] As a boy, Qebeyi heard Matotie wrangle with one lady suspected of Sr Aidan's murder. They shouted at each other about treachery and *muthi*, Matotie from the verge, the woman from her veranda. She accused him of being an 'apartheid stooge'. Matotie retorted that at least he 'did not shame the Xhosa nation by eating the flesh of a white nun'.[75]

The oral testimonies evaluated in this article reveal a great deal about betrayal and secrets, especially the taboo subject of *muthi*. While African sources emphasized that Sr Aidan was never eaten as it was 'against their culture to do so', they acknowledged that European flesh – ground, cooked, and lubricated in human fat, *amafutha* – was coveted by *izinyanga* or healers. These *izinyanga* purified *muthi* in ceremonies that involved burning and mixing human flesh with other

[72]Carton interview with Card, 8 May 2012.

[73]Donald Card came before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to refute allegations that he violated human rights during the apartheid era. His testimony appears in Cases EC1985/96KW and EC1990/97KW, 14 May 1997, King William's Town. Card's accusers who testified included, for example, the relative of ANCYL leader Alcott Gwentshe, Zweliyazuza Gwentshe, Case EC0354/96ELN-Mdantsane, 11 June 1997, East London, Day 3; Daniel Nongena, Case EC1985/96KW, and Makhi Bhoyi, Case EC1990/97KW, 14 May 1997, King William's Town, Day 3; and Vuyani Mngaza, Case EC0068/96ELN-Mdantsane, 11 June 1997, East London, Day 3; <http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/hrvtrans%5Chrvel2/gwentshe.htm>, accessed 11 Oct. 2012.

[74]J. J. Matotie felt that, when top ANC leaders were banned, the second-tier command lost control of the Defiance Campaign; see his letter to the *Daily Dispatch*, 14 March 1953.

[75]Bank interview with Qebeyi, Duncan Village, 15 Feb. 2014.

sacred elements.[76] In particular, *amafutha*-infused medicine was said to neutralize threat or harm by enhancing personal luck, bestowing supernatural power, and turning someone invisible.[77] Above all, the human ingredients of *muthi* armoured people against ruinous and lethal misfortune, *isinyama*, invasively delivered, particularly the superior firepower of an oppressor. Indeed, they said that this belief was shared by African neighbours far and wide. Decades ago in Natal, *muthi* made from human flesh was coveted by Zulu opponents of white rule. During their defiance of unjust law – in this case an onerous poll tax that triggered 'Bhambatha's Rebellion' in 1906 (Marks 1970) – they culled the flesh of a slain settler to boost their protective *muthi*. An idiom circulating at the time summoned protestors to hunt and slaughter white buck (antelope), *inyamazane emhlophe*, a metaphorical term for the embodiment of colonial power.[78] In one skirmish, mounted government forces reconnoitring for a larger colonial army equipped with Gatling guns was ambushed by anti-tax rebels led by *inkosi* (chief) Bhambatha kaZondi. Four white policemen were stabbed to death, among them Sergeant E. Brown (Stuart 1913: 172; Carton 2000: 105–6). Several of Bhambatha's men quickly skinned (*bacwiya*) Brown, cutting away his fatty tissue and genitalia, for an *inyanga* identified in archival documents as the war doctor Dakakwesuthu. This *inyanga* apparently burned and concocted an extraordinary version of shielding medicine called *intelezi*, which promised to turn bullets into water.[79] In Dakakwesuthu's concoction, Brown's *amafutha* was the vital sealant of *muthi* and absorbed the 'proximity' – to use Joost Fontein's term – of destructive dominance that spear-wielding protestors planned to unleash on their enemy, who had far more lethal firearms (Fontein 2011).

During the Defiance Campaign, the *muthi* in demand among Duncan Village residents contained *amafutha*.[80] Herbal *muthi* infused with the heated fat of a white person, *amafutha ephumalile*, was made into a paste that could be daubed on eyelids or the forehead, or smeared into skin incisions that drew blood and

[76]Bank interviews with Qebeyi, 15 Feb. 2014; Dyani, 12–16 Sep. 2014; Keke, 14 April 2012; Carton interviews with Card, 8 May 2012; Qebeyi, 8 May 2012.

[77]In the 1950s, Duncan Villagers who worked for whites collected their employer's nail filings, hair strands and skin flakes to mix with *muthi* that allegedly helped them win over the boss. Similarly, African brewers sought to stimulate business by washing themselves in lagers sold at white bars. Bank interviews with Dyani, 12–16 Sep. 2014; Keke, 14 April 2012.

[78]Testimony of Mpatshana; Testimony of Socwatsha; Testimony of Nsuze; 2 June 1912. These Zulu men were interviewed by James Stuart, a Natal 'native affairs' official, Zulu linguist and intelligence agent in the colonial militia during *impi yamakhanda*. Mpatshana told Stuart that '[c]wiyaying … [entailed a] man … [being] sent to secure pieces of [human] flesh'. Socwatsha clarified the circumstances of Brown's mutilation: 'cwiyaying [was] taking place … due to the belief that … a buck (*inyamazana*) be caught' (Webb and Wright 1982: 327–8).

[79]Statement of Hlangabeza Dhlamini, 7 April 1906; Statement of Vava Pungula, 7 April 1906, Magistrate Weenen, Minute Paper Secretary for Native Affairs, SNA 1104/1906, 1/1/339; Annual Report of Magistrate Nkandla 1906, 13–14, Minute Papers Secretary for Native Affairs, SNA 3258/08, 1/1/414, Secretary for Native Affairs Papers; 1/SNA, Pietermaritzburg Archives Repository (PAR). Testimony of Mpatshana; Testimony of Socwatsha; Testimony of Nsuze; 2 June 1912 (Webb and Wright 1982: 327–28); Testimony of M. Mazibuko, KwaMashu, July 1982, 3, Tape Transcript MAZS, Oral History Project Relating to the Zulu People, Killie Campbell Library, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

[80]Powerful *muthi* concocted from a limb or organ was perceived to transfer attributes of the removed part.

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created a booster reaction.[81] The term *phumalile* refers to an erect person walking through a doorway, a sign of influence. In contrast, black flesh, *sothamlilo*, was less potent and more ordinary (symbolically implying the same for disenfranchised residents). *Sothamlilo* referred to *ukhota*, the usual practice of sitting around the homestead hearth or stooping through the threshold of the *ndlu*, a round house. Given the importance of adipose tissue in concocting *muthi*, it is not surprising that township residents who say that the nun was mutilated make reference to her 'fatty thighs'.[82] One oral source, Mr Nginza, reported that during the evening of 9 November he was visited by 'some guy called Bethwell, also known as Gcwanini, [who] came over with his girlfriend … [She] said: "Yho, yho, yho, the nun was so fat, people are cutting her flesh from her thighs, yho, yho, yho, that scene is so bad, they burnt her car there at Bantu Street."' Nginza contended that he saw:

> Sister Aidan … kneeling down as she was burnt praying … [while her] fat was running down the street … [and] a guy I grew up with by the name of Tototo … [using] a bayonet and eating some [of her] meat. He thought I craved what he was eating and then he said: 'There she is, cut some meat there.' [This alleged bystander] asked: 'What should I cut?' And he [Tototo] replied by saying: 'It's her, go and cut there.' I then realized that it was the arm that he was eating with a knife.

Such accounts refer to *amafutha* procured from Sr Aidan's seared body.[83] If she was mutilated, Card's assertion that the victim was cut into raw

[81]In 1952, Duncan Village residents assumed that Mr Balfour, an African foreman at Consolidated Textile Mills in East London, controlled his employer by using *muthi* made from the fat of a white person. Balfour was said to have applied *phumalile* paste on his eyelids to give him power over the family that hired mill workers. It was also believed that an African supervisor at Palazzo bus company, which conveyed township commuters, consumed *muthi* containing white flesh to influence the proprietor. Palazzo's fleet was prevented by 'Native hooligans' from entering Duncan Village soon after Black Sunday: *Daily Dispatch*, 11 Nov. 1952. These *muthi* practices extended to Natal, where officials probed the use of *amafutha* medicine in Zulu ceremonies that installed a new *inkosi* (chief): Minute Paper, 'Native Customs', 20 July 1915, 1000/15, Vol. 212, 1/CNC, Chief Native Commissioner Papers, PAR. Today's South African media reports the sale of body parts to businessmen seeking market advantage: *Mail & Guardian*, 9 Dec. 1994; 9 Oct. 1998. Anxious about *muthi* consumption, the ANC government established the Ralushai Commission in 1996, hoping to restrict the use of 'traditional medicine' (e.g. to 'smell out abathakathi', or expel witches). Conflating *muthi* with witchcraft, Ralushai influenced similar inquiries by the Institute for Multi-Party Democracy; Gender Commission Conference on the Witchcraft Suppression Amendment Act of 1957/1970; and a Parliamentary Select Committee. See also Xaba (2007), Ashforth (2002), Geschiere (2006) and Republic of South Africa (1998).

[82]Bank interviews with Dyani, 29 August 2011, 12–16 Sep. 2014; Tutu, Duncan Village, 12 July 2008.

[83]Some people were seen taking fatty pieces of flesh from Sr Aidan, fearing that, if they did not, they would be labelled *impimpi* (sell-outs or informers). Nginza's 2006 testimony, recorded for the film *Black Sunday*, is telling because he gave his knowledge of Sr Aidan's attack to a trusted community insider, Qebeyi. Footnotes 70 through 80 illuminate a sensitive subject – Africans harvesting human flesh for protective medicine – which tends to silence insiders and intrigue outsiders (Mchunu 2015; Bonner and Ndima 2008). A critical review of the oral evidence shows that individuals at the scene of the deaths of Sergeant Brown and Sr Aidan did not necessarily offer the clearest perspectives. Rather, we found that the more revealing testimony sought to comprehend taboo culture in the context of shared existential threat: lethal, intruding, white rule. With closer

bloody chunks is contradicted by eyewitnesses who saw the condition of the nun's body.[84]

Most African interviewees insisted that there was no moral justification, certainly in Xhosa cosmology, for consuming uncooked human flesh. At the same time, historical records reveal that Xhosa and other indigenous fighters in South Africa's nineteenth-century frontier conflicts sliced body parts from enemies at the behest of 'war doctors' seeking human flesh for fortifying medicines (Peires 1989: 24–5; Murray and Sanders 2005: 299; Crais 2003). In light of the archival evidence, it is possible that Sr Aidan's body bore characteristics of this kind of ritual killing for *muthi*, which was still occurring in rural Xhosa communities riven by feuds over scarce land and traditional authority.[85] At the same time, Basutoland, a British protectorate and African kingdom neighbouring the Eastern Cape, was experiencing a spate of 'medicine murders'. Colin Murray and Peter Sanders (2005) investigated more than fifty such cases that took place between 1945 and 1955. These crimes entailed targeted killings of villagers by chiefs who sought advantage in the political allocation of land and authority, using 'war doctors' to make strengthening *muthi* from human sinew and bone.[86]

BaSotho residents lived in Duncan Village. It was said that one of them cut the nun to manufacture *muthi*. Rumours also circulated that a dreadlocked Bhaca healer, *inyanga*, was positioned over Sr Aidan, carving, distributing and concealing her flesh. He apparently beckoned people to take a slice of the nun, who may have been breathing her last.[87] Bhaca lineages were concentrated in a region of Natal that supported Bhambatha's *muthi*-driven insurgency. Oral testimony also explains the preference for culling tissue from a mortally wounded victim; with Pohl's barrage escalating into outright war, township residents reverted to dynamic custom that took on new forms, and later regretted it. The *inyanga* simulated an evolving nineteenth-century battle ritual in the Cape that African regiments enacted when harvesting flesh from freshly assaulted enemies to forge martial *muthi* (Peires 1989: 24–5; Crais 2003; Mda 2016).[88] The judge and

examination of this threat, the historical sources of *muthi* murder might be better understood, including its attendant fury, nuance, distortion and contradiction. Thus, *muthi* murder was neither timeless nor inscrutable but evolving and explainable. The comparison between *impi yamakhanda* and Black Sunday created another opportunity to consider taboo evidence as a product of history and metaphor expressed through traceable idioms such as *inyamazane emhlophe, intelezi, amafutha ephumalile* and *sothamlilo*.

[84]*Daily Dispatch*, 14 July 1953.

[85]Some of these cases went to court and were reported in the *Daily Dispatch* during the early 1950s.

[86]The ruling Basuto Congress Party denied these killings but incriminating evidence was irrefutable (Murray and Sanders 2005: 42–7, 110–11, 142–5). 'Medicine murder' has kindled scholarly debates over the existence of 'occult' killing and ritual war-doctoring (Ranger 2006; Ter Haar and Ellis 2009; Mchunu 2015). There is rich scholarship on the politics of African witchcraft (Redding 1996; Niehaus 2001; Bernault 2006).

[87]Qebeyi interviews with Qabaka, 14 May 2006; Mahashe, 12 June 2006; Bente, 12 June 2006; Carton interview with Qebeyi, 10 May 2012.

[88]Consulting oral histories and legal records, Zakes Mda's novel *Little Suns* (2016) dramatizes Mpondo warriors' use of *muthi* made from the flesh of freshly killed European enemies during an anti-colonial war against British power in 1880. In Basutoland, there were 'medicine murder' cases in which witnesses said it was better to cull flesh when the victim was alive because tissue was more potent in a raw state (Murray and Sanders 2005).

prosecutor in the Sr Aidan case did not consider these cultural histories of *muthi* in conflict zones; nor did the defence attorney, iconic ANC strategist and leading communist Joe Slovo.

CULTURED AND UNCULTURED SOCIAL ACTS

Scholarly examinations of the '1952 riots' disaggregate social acts: first the killing of a nun and then of the salesman, then different skirmishes between the state and the mob. This may be due to the order of importance placed on each incident in the official record. Archival documents emphasize the apartheid government's view of 'chaotic' law-breaking. City authorities – and by extension the press – reported that Sr Aidan and Barend Vorster died in a 'savage' battery, which murdered a woman of 'mercy' and orphaned white children.[89] Such sentiment elevated the tragedy of two 'Europeans', which Defiance Campaign leaders also lamented. On 11 November, the *Daily Dispatch* printed a Youth League statement acknowledging that 'a riot' had occurred and expressing 'great regret that two European lives were lost in the disturbances'.[90] Delivering the funeral requiem for Sr Aidan, Archbishop McCann reminded mourners that 'she gave herself under God for … the Africans particularly. The tragedy was that those, for whom in the love of God she gave herself, should have put her to death.'[91] By contrast, interviewed township elders said that Sr Aidan and Mr Vorster were enveloped in a conflict instigated by the police invasion of Bantu Square, which triggered racially motivated counter-attacks against the 'white enemy'. As one eyewitness named Malcolm Dyani explained, Captain Pohl ordered his white men 'to kill and we kill[ed] to warn … [so] the police would know what was in store for them if they did not stop shooting'.[92] The nun was stabbed near the prayer rally. Vorster lost his life farther away in Thulandeville section, where the assailants had seen trucks filled with constables rake bystanders with gunfire.[93]

Oral sources, too, highlight how the two murders mean different things in Duncan Village. Memory of Vorster's death quickly faded from popular consciousness,[94] while Sr Aidan's fate caused anguish in East London for decades. Why? Was the nun slain by perpetrators familiar with her Catholic charity, while Vorster, the hustling salesman, stumbled into trouble? The erasure of Vorster from the story of the '1952 riots' is likely attributable to his ethnic and class position in English-speaking Cape settler society as well as to his own

[89]Notes of Informal Meeting of the City Council, East London, 10 Nov. 1952, 30, 13446; Statement Union Minister of Justice, East London, 11 Nov. 1952, 2; Minutes Special Meeting of the City Council, 11 Nov. 1952, 45–47, 13474; 50/665/3/1, 1343, 3/ELN, CAR.

[90]This statement by Alcott Gwentshe asked for 'restraint even in the teeth of police provocation': *Daily Dispatch*, 11 Nov. 1952.

[91]*Daily Dispatch*, 13 Nov. 1952.

[92]Bank interview with Dyani, 12 Sep. 2014.

[93]Before chasing Vorster, his attackers had heard the news that the police had fired on Bantu Square.

[94]Accounts of Black Sunday cited in this article scarcely mentioned Vorster's killing. Rather, they focused on Sr Aidan's 'peculiar' death and the resulting police brutality that devastated Duncan Village.

decisions. He was a poorly educated Afrikaner who spoke isiXhosa, presumably to sell his policies for his employer, the African Homes Trust. Additionally, Vorster ignored police admonitions to leave Duncan Village, choosing to carry on making his weekend money until he reached the wrong place at the wrong time (Mager and Minkley 1993: 230).[95] In contrast, Sr Aidan was killed in her adopted home. An Irish-born liberal, she emigrated to South Africa and studied medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand. Also known as Dr (Aidan) Quinlan, she treated township patients for free in St Peter Claver's health centre.[96] In sum, the nun's professional and personal qualities elevated her status and heightened her tragedy. However, distinctions between the victims end there. Oral sources entangle the fates of Barend Vorster and Sr Aidan in a social act of killing with discernible cultural meaning and turmoil. The 'Boer' victim embodied Afrikaner apartheid, interviewees said, and in so doing he became a legitimate target for a masculinized code of punishment learned by Xhosa boys in peer-based stick fighting. Vorster was set upon by young men of a similar age who had banded into *iviyo* or *ibutho*, a regimental cohort that herders enrolled in and represented when wielding their cattle switches to guard pastures and test their mettle against rivals. Sticks felled Vorster, although his assailants stabbed with knives as well. They smacked his arms, knees, ankles and shoulders, key spots to strike in stick fighting when a competitor seeks to disable his opponent's ability to retaliate or retreat strategically. Most importantly, Vorster was smacked on the front and back of his head, prized hits of a sporting warrior who could land decisive blows.[97] The autopsy report charts the victim's trauma: his broken bones, bruised legs, piercing injuries, and fatal wound, a fractured skull (Figure 8).

Sr Aidan was another matter altogether. Her murder produced lasting shame in ANC ranks and among many Africans in East London because this crime came to represent the most outrageous collateral damage of the Defiance Campaign, which aimed to be just and non-violent. While this reaction of appreciable shock and dismay is understandable, it has muted one unanswered question. Why have official accounts and scholarly explanations of the '1952 riots' not delved into the cultural circumstances of the nun's murder? Men, women, boys and girls participated in her assault. Were they simply craving blood? It was revealed that a thirst had been quenched, for some attackers reeked of alcohol. The Xhosa ancestors of Duncan Village, confronting white power in the nineteenth century, had not been accustomed to do so when drunk. Oral sources evoke Sr Aidan as a good person who did not personally deserve retribution but was nonetheless killed because she was a white woman associated with the oppressor. She was a recognizable force in the community under another name, Dr Quinlan, whose clinic mediated illness, a prime source of *isinyama* or misfortune.

[95] *Daily Dispatch*, 20 April 1953; Bank interview with Mda Mda, Mthatha, 12 July 2010. A former Unity Movement activist, Mda grew up in a family linked to the insurance industry. His father knew Vorster; they were rival salesmen in Duncan Village competing for the same pool of customers.

[96] Letter H. Driffield, Town Clerk East London, Cape, to M. Houte, Ladysmith, Natal, 30 Sep. 1954; this file contained the Town Clerk's summary of a 10 Nov. 1952 *Daily Dispatch* report: 'Native Riots' TCO, 50/665/3/1, 1343, 3/ELN, CAR.

[97] There is scholarship on stick fighting in Nguni communities (Mager 1998; Carton and Morrell 2014).

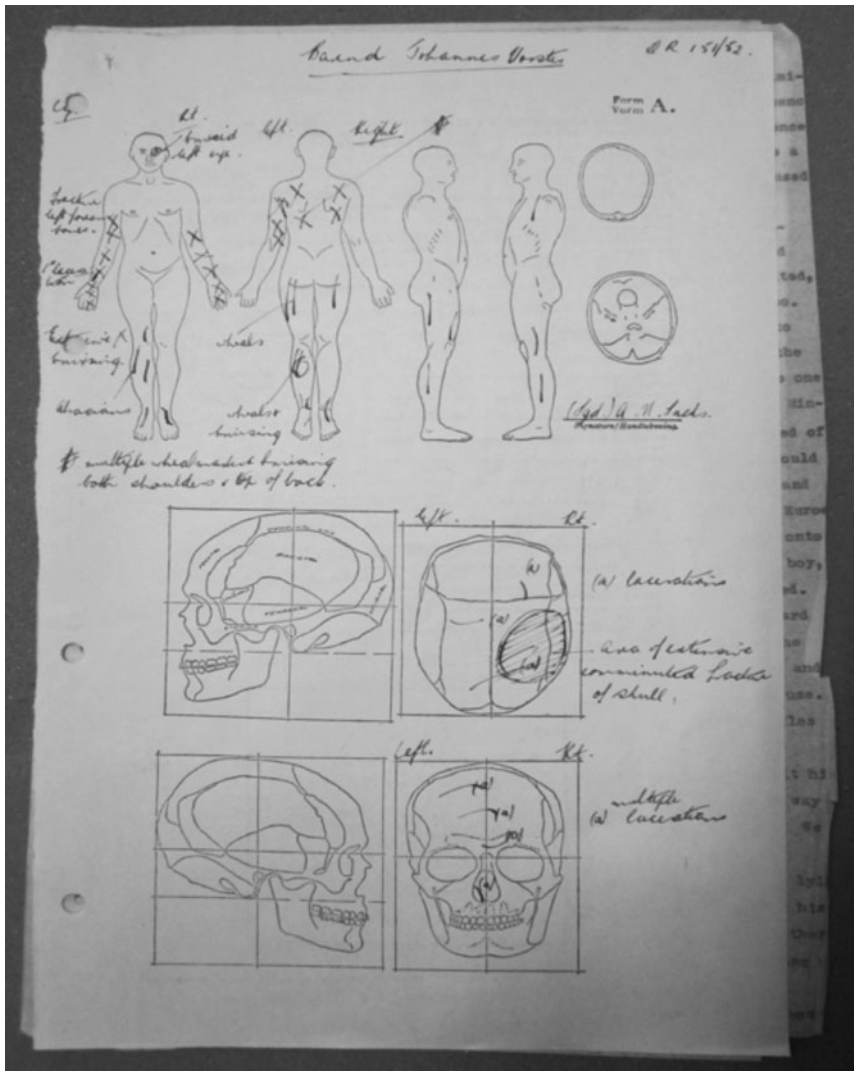

FIGURE 8 Dr Sachs' sketches of the deceased Barend Vorster.

Consequently, her corpse exuded 'dominating' power that could be absorbed through (a witch's) 'familiar' medicine (Niehaus 2001; 2013).[98] In describing how Black Sunday unfolded, oral sources situate the nun's mutilation on a battlefield, which extended from Bantu Square and Thulandeville to the edges of Duncan Village. In this lethal zone, the white enemy's body contained potent

[98]Niehaus examines symbolic associations between 'occult' misfortune and whites perceived by Africans as witch familiars (Niehaus *et al.* 2001: 63–82).

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properties for *muthi* that strengthened those trapped in war. During early phases of the 1906 poll tax uprising, the flesh of colonists was procured for related reasons. More recently, the 'Marikana massacre' at a platinum mine in North West Province exhibited similar practices. This 2012 incident began when African workers, many of them migrants from the Eastern Cape and Lesotho, walked off their jobs and fortified a hill sanctuary near the mine. After killing (black) security men sent to break the strike, the miners prepared for retaliation by summoning healers to cull the victims' flesh for *muthi* that might bolster their martial resolve. In response, the state launched a ferocious attack with high-calibre machine guns, killing thirty-four men from the hill.

When Sr Aidan drove into the township on 9 November, overwhelming violence pervaded Duncan Village. She was swept into and bewildered by the police shooting. So were her attackers. As the nun lay on Bantu Street, confusion set in at the scene, with overriding emotions of despair and hatred driving the moment. Her body began to be handled in an 'uncultured manner', although still within the explicable context of combat. The flesh taken from her, some oral sources remarked, had not undergone a process of customary purification from its raw condition to a 'cultured' state in a secret ceremony requiring the combination of burned human tissue with other materials mixed and mediated by a ritual specialist. Interviewees stated unequivocally that Xhosa people did not willingly consume raw parts from the nun; to do so would be a reprehensible uncultured act condemned by God and the ancestors. Still, the dark rumours that hovered over Bantu Street made oral sources wary of discussing Sr Aidan. If there is one conclusion to be reached, it is that her flesh was cut away for the purposes of making *muthi*. There is no credible evidence to indicate that African cannibals ate her bloody body. Rather, violence swallowed her. The metaphor of ingesting bloodshed was well known in the Eastern Cape. One century before, Xhosa people had confronted an invading 'monster' called 'British Kaffraria', militarized white power, 'which swallowed them up, tore them from their children' and, in the words of Jeff Peires, compelled them 'to make a final stand' (Peires 1981: 169).

CONCLUSION

After almost fifty years of silence, critical events of Black Sunday emerged again in the popular consciousness of East London, reframing collective memory of South Africa's liberation struggle. As township residents used the city's restitution hearings in the late 1990s to bear witness to white rule, their cathartic testimony focused on anti-apartheid activism. In airing and debating their shared experiences, there was one event that did not bring clarity or consensus: the death of Sr Aidan.[99] A few years ago, on the sixtieth anniversary of the Bantu Square

[99]Duncan Village restitution meetings acrimoniously debated the nun's murder; these disagreements were resolved with a decision to honour Sr Aidan on the fiftieth anniversary of the '1952 riots': Qebeyi's *Black Sunday* interview transcripts. Belinda Bozzoli's *Theatres of Struggle* also explores the 'dramaturgical spaces' in which narrations of liberation history played out in the era of democracy. Her superb study of memory and forgetting in Alexandra, a township traumatized by vigilantism, concludes with a communal reckoning of apartheid violence before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Bozzoli 2004).

massacre, the nun's murder again dominated public recognition of the '1952 riots'. Offstage, Qebeyi and the families of victims killed on 9 November sought recognition and compensation, and acknowledgement of a new death toll accounting for the many casualties. There is no indication that officials will honour these requests.

There is still an urgent need in East London – and elsewhere in the country – to develop a more nuanced, comprehensive interpretation of the Defiance Campaign and its precursor, the Youth League movement against the van Riebeeck festival. Fresh from lodger protests, militant ANC leaders radicalized Duncan Village in 1952. They orchestrated rallies in April and May that countered the van Riebeeck festival with narratives of legitimate violence against white supremacy during the frontier wars. By June, this message was inscribed in the minds of township youths. When the bullets ripped into the prayer meeting, a racial revolt erupted, propelling a succession of violent acts informed by ritual conceptions of the body and the power of *muthi* to repel domination and death.

To the ANC, Sr Aidan's 'senseless' murder and mutilation represented an appalling breach of civil disobedience. For many people in Duncan Village, the opposite was true: avenging apartheid terror by killing one or two white people was justifiable. On 9 November, a rolling police massacre gave township residents reason to draw on their repertoire of ritual resources. There is nothing in past Xhosa battle strategy that excludes the taking of flesh from an enemy in a war of survival that necessitates the making of *muthi* to shield combatants. What did and does not sit well in Duncan Village, however, was the 'uncultured' resistance witnessed by God and the ancestors. The 2002 fiftieth anniversary in the township and the hallowed city memorials a decade later, including Ndebele's elegy to the nun, touched on the spiritual wrath haunting Duncan Village. Without specifying the full circumstances of Sr Aidan's death, these ceremonies of propitiation and absolution have not explained an extraordinary act that should illuminate alternative cultural histories of a canonical episode in the liberation struggle.

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ABSTRACT

In 1952, the African National Congress (ANC) initiated its Defiance Campaign, opposing apartheid laws through organized civil disobedience and African nationalism. On Sunday 9 November, the city of East London became a site of political mobilization when 1,500 Xhosa-speaking ANC sympathizers peacefully protested in Bantu Square, the hub of a township named Duncan Village. Police arrived and fired on the crowd, igniting 'spontaneous riots'. An Afrikaner salesman and an Irish nun were killed in the ensuing unrest. Rumours circulated that a mob ate the white woman; troop reinforcements then fanned into the township to wage a retaliatory war, shooting and bayoneting their victims. Upwards of 200 Africans may have died but only nine fatalities were recorded. If the revised toll is credible, the bloodshed exceeds that of Sharpeville, the worst one-day massacre in apartheid South Africa. Oral sources explain why the slaughter in Duncan Village is not widely known. Township residents secretly carted the dead to rural graves, fearing to report their losses as people mourned the tragic slaying of the nun named Sister Aidan. Today, ANC rulers of East London seem content to silence the memory of a mass killing reputedly spawned by chaos and cannibalism. At the centre of this incident is Sr Aidan's mutilation for the purpose of making *muthi*, a shocking incident that dominates the story of violence on Black Sunday. Using archival documents and oral histories, and incorporating the methodologies of Jennifer Cole, Donald Donham and Veena Das, this article reconstructs a narrative of 'critical events' surrounding the nun's *muthi* murder. The scrutinized witness testimonies relay how township residents framed their fierce encounters with a symbolic (white person) and ubiquitous (militarized police) enemy. Oral sources reject the notion that an aimless 'riot' occurred on 9 November. Instead, they reflect on cultural enactments of purposeful violence through scripted assaults and *muthi* ritual. Ultimately, they view the fatal attack on Sr Aidan as an evolving customary act of defensive retribution and symbolic warning, submerging truths in apartheid and hindering reconciliations in democracy.

RÉSUMÉ

En 1952, l'ANC (African National Congress) lançait sa campagne de défiance (Defiance Campaign) contre les lois d'apartheid à travers un mouvement de désobéissance civile organisée et de nationalisme africain. Le dimanche 9

novembre, la ville d'East London devint un lieu de mobilisation politique lorsque 1 500 sympathisants de l'ANC, de langue xhosa, organisèrent une manifestation pacifique à Bantu Square, au cœur de la township Duncan Village. Arrivée sur les lieux, la police a tiré sur la foule, déclenchant des « émeutes spontanées ». Un vendeur afrikaner et une religieuse irlandaise furent tués lors des troubles qui suivirent. Des rumeurs ont alors circulé selon lesquelles la femme blanche avait été mangée par des émeutiers ; des renforts de troupes déployés sur toute la township se livrèrent à des opérations de représailles, faisant des victimes à coup de fusil et de baïonnette. Jusqu'à 200 Africains ont pu avoir péri, mais seuls neuf décès furent officiellement enregistrés. Si l'on s'en tient au bilan révisé, ce massacre excède celui de Sharpeville, le pire qu'ait connu en une journée l'Afrique du Sud sous l'apartheid. Des sources orales expliquent pourquoi le carnage de Duncan Village n'est pas bien connu. Les résidents de cette township ont enterré les morts dans le secret à l'extérieur de la ville, craignant de déclarer leurs défunts alors que l'on pleurait la mort de Sœur Aidan, la religieuse tragiquement assassinée. Aujourd'hui, les membres de l'ANC qui dirigent East London semblent se contenter de garder le silence sur la mémoire d'un massacre que l'on dit engendré par le chaos et le cannibalisme. Cet incident a pour élément central la mutilation de Sœur Aidan aux fins de pratiquer le *muthi*, un incident choquant qui domine l'histoire de la violence du Black Sunday. Cet article, en se servant de documents d'archives et d'histoires orales, et en intégrant les méthodologies de Jennifer Cole, Donald Donham et Veena Das, reconstruit un récit d'« événements critiques » qui ont entouré le meurtre *muthi* de la religieuse. L'examen minutieux des témoignages révèle comment les résidents de la township expriment leurs ardents démêlés avec un ennemi symbolique (personne blanche) et omniprésent (police armée). Des sources orales rejettent la notion d'une « émeute » sans but ce 9 novembre. Elles songent au contraire à des expressions culturelles d'une violence intentionnelle à travers des attaques scénarisées et le rituel du *muthi*. En définitive, elles considèrent l'attaque mortelle contre Sœur Aidan comme un acte coutumier évolutif de châtiment défensif et d'avertissement symbolique, immergeant la vérité dans les profondeurs de l'apartheid et entravant la réconciliation en démocratie.