ACTIVIST MEMORIALIZATION:

BEARING WITNESS AT ST. GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL

SARAH VAN MILL

VMLSAR001

SUPERVISED BY SEAN FIELD, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTRE FOR POPULAR MEMORY

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:_____ Date:_____

'Bearing Witness', like 'solidarity' and 'compassion', is a term worth rehabilitating. It captures both ways of knowing, both forms of silence. Bearing witness is done on behalf of others, for their sake (even if those others are dead and forgotten). It needs to be done, but there is no point exaggerating the importance of the deed. I would like to insist that the term used here acknowledges that, no matter how great the pain of bearing witness, it will never be as great as the pain of those who endure, whether in silence or with cries, the indignities described in these pages…

- Dr. Paul Farmer

Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to address the question: how can memorialization contribute to social transformation? Specifically, in what ways is memorialization activist? To answer this question I worked with St. George's Cathedral's Crypt Memory and Witness Centre on their Bearing Witness exhibit, conducted primary and secondary literature surveys (namely academic articles and books, and periodicals from 1980-1986), story-telling focus groups and individual interviews. The exhibit group consisted of 17 former South African squatters who fasted at St. George's Cathedral in 1982, demanding rights to live and work in Cape Town. Of the group of 17, I conducted personal interviews with seven women and three men.

Who gets remembered and what events get recorded as historically relevant are contentious subjects, particularly within transitioning societies. Peace and social transformation can either be promoted or thwarted depending on the extent to which citizens feel represented in the national history narrative. Thus, transitioning states have increasingly looked to truth commissions to uncover the "truth" about the past in order to secure a more stable future for the country. These state-driven processes, however, are not designed to address all factions of society, nor all problems of the past. Thus, civil society must engage with the gaps and opportunities presented by these state-level structures to develop a more inclusive history.

In South Africa, the transition to democracy is due to a large number of anti-apartheid activists – those who saw themselves as political, and those who did not. Nevertheless, a large number of people bore witness to collective struggles and to their desire for a democratic and just South Africa, e.g. the group of squatters who fasted at St. George's Cathedral in 1982. By methodologically mirroring the initial concept and process of bearing witness, with a focus on providing opportunities for former activists to share their memories to an empathic witness, memorialization can continue past activism and advocate for future change. In this way, memorialization can become activist.

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1 Introduction

Napoleon is rumored to have said that "history is an agreed upon fable." The phrase, although hyperbole, demonstrates that what gets written as "history" depends on who writes it, the historical context, and the writers' various biases and agendas. History - regardless the country, the culture, the people - is political.

For countries emerging from conflict, the manner in which history is conveyed, particularly the history of the tumultuous past, is particularly important. Peace can either be promoted or thwarted, depending on the degree to which citizens feel represented in national narratives. Thus, nation-building efforts often look to history as a means to secure peace, reconciliation and security. These nation-building efforts, however, often privilege certain kinds of histories, namely those of the winner, the heroes and heroines, and the social elite.

In this thesis, I will demonstrate why history is an important feature of social change for societies transitioning to democracy. More explicitly, I will argue that memorializing under-represented histories can be activist, and in being so, can contribute towards a more inclusive history, which contributes towards social change. Memorialization provides opportunities for alternative narratives and truths that not only acknowledge a wider spectrum of people and their experiences, but also can bring about changes in the future. Specifically, when memorialization becomes activist it can alter public consciousness by educating patrons and conscientizing[1] them, but also, and perhaps more importantly; it changes the people being memorialized by helping to remind them of their own power and agency. I use the St. George's Crypt Memory and Witness Centre *Bearing Witness* exhibit – an exhibit about 57 former squatters who fasted at St. George's Cathedral for 23 days in 1982 to demand rights to live and work in Cape Town with their families – as a case study. This exhibit, through its participatory methodology and acknowledgement of "forgotten" struggle activists, serves as an example of how exhibits can alter public consciousness and publicly value peoples' struggle for a just society.

1.1 South African Context

"Narratives of liberation are always tied to people's stories, and what stories we choose to tell, and the way in which we decide to tell them, form the provisional basis of what a critical pedagogy of the future might mean" (Freire 1993, xxi).

[1] Term coined by Paulo Freire in his 1970 work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

1.1.1 History and Apartheid: A point of contention

The struggle over history was an important aspect of the anti-apartheid movement. Black South Africans became dissatisfied with the framing of their history, particularly because of the stark differences in the framing of "white" and "black" history (Kallaway 2002, Van Eeden and Van der Walt 2000). Because white people were the framers of history, "South African history" supposedly only began when Europeans came to the African continent, as is evident in Muller's Afrikaner history volume *500 Years* (Muller 1969). Some members of the anti-apartheid movement were inspired by their lack of proper education and the deliberate exclusion of their history from their schooling (Van Eeden and Van der Walt 2000). This discontentment, along with having to learn Afrikaans in school, were contributing factors to the massive student strikes that culminated in the student uprisings of 1976, a defining moment in the freedom struggle.

The struggle over the framing of history resurfaced, in a new way, as South Africa transitioned to democracy. In transitioning societies "power and the struggle for power has to be rediscovered on the basis of the resistance which makes up the power of the people, the semiological, linguistic, emotional, political and cultural expressions which the people [used] to resist the power of domination" (Freire and Faundez 1989, 64). That is to say, the history of South Africa needed to be rewritten to include the various voices and cultures of the country that resisted oppression throughout the years.

1.1.2 History and the TRC: In pursuit of the truth

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was South Africa's national level effort aimed at uncovering the truth of the apartheid regime, reframing history and promoting national reconciliation (Feldman 2004, Field 2010). It was the most ambitious, in terms of scope and budget, of all 16 "truth commissions" and 21 "historical" commissions that have occurred worldwide (Field 2010). It sought to uncover the "truth" and confront the country's demons about the past so that the country could build a common history and a cohesive South African identity (Field 2010). In a sense, the TRC was an effort to integrate the tragedies that people suffered under apartheid into the national history narrative.

The TRC was widely successful in acknowledging the victims of gross violations of human rights. South Africans and the world at large could no longer ignore the intensely violent nature of the apartheid regime. The TRC did not, however, provide a platform to recognize the everyday victims of apartheid, who were the most numerous and the most under-acknowledged (Craps 2010), specifically those who were victims of forced removals, evictions and

dispossession. That is to say, the TRC did not address those who were victims of spatial Apartheid and social engineering (Cole 2011), which in turn contributed to their exclusion from mainstream history. State-level structures, such as the TRC, are usually defined by "a broad deference to historical political orthodoxy", which has "the effect of politically sanitizing versions of the past which offered more complex and less predictable understandings of the magnitude and nature of violence and violation under apartheid" (Simpson 2002, 220). Thus, "the tensions within the South African TRC around the methodologies employed in finding "the truth" reflect a broader debate surrounding methodological eclecticism and a seemingly irresolvable tension between empirical truth and interpretative, explanatory, or moral truth" (Cherry 2009). The history of the majority of South Africans - the history of the everyday victims of apartheid, particularly the history of women's struggles (Minow 1998) was not fully acknowledged, nor fully dealt with.

As a transitional justice process "the TRC has been heavily criticized within South Africa for the compromises made in the name of 'national unity' and reconciliation that allowed so many to walk free while the conditions they had perpetrated under apartheid and that had reduced so many to poverty and powerlessness remained intact" (Coombes 2003, 8). Thus, by only focusing on gross violations of human rights the TRC neglected to recognize the tragedies and human rights violations suffered by the vast majority of South Africans under apartheid (Coombes 2003). These struggles, including widespread violence, lack of housing, exclusion from public services, inadequate health care, etc., are the same struggles that permeate the lives of many South Africans today.

The aforementioned "political orthodoxy" of state-driven transitional justice mechanisms, such as the TRC, provides activists with an opportunity to engage with subverted narratives. In fact, political orthodoxy often brings to the fore problems that would, in the absence of it, go unnoticed. "Truth commissions can and do change the frame of public discourse and public memory. But they cannot be judged failures because they fail to change behaviour and institutions… A truth commission can winnow out the facts upon which society's arguments with itself should be conducted. But it cannot bring these arguments to a conclusion" (Ignatieff 1998, 173 in Field 2010). That is to say, it is actually in the TRC's necessary limitations that we see what other measures the government, civil society and individual citizens need to take to provide "adequate" measures and opportunities (Craps 2010, Hamber and Wilson 2002). Literature, educational and oral history projects, memorials, and other forms of memory work

can help to fill the aforementioned gaps that were highlighted by the state-driven structure (Brink 1998, Craps 2010).

1.2 Memory Work and History

Throughout the 20th century, in the context of widespread war and tragedy, memory work began to increase in prominence. Pierre Nora, a prominent figure in the field of memory studies, identified a paradigm shift from "history" to "memory" in the 20th century (Nora 2002). This shift led to attempts to democratize history. For example, minority memories / histories were increasingly being affirmed and the notion of collective memory gained prominence. These developments all potentially undercut the history of the elite[2].

Nora summarizes the relationship between history, memory, and activism when he writes that "the idea that memory can be collective, emancipatory and sacred turns the meaning of the term inside out. Individuals had memories, collectivities had histories. The idea that collectivities have a memory implies a far-reaching transformation of the status of individuals within society and of their relationship to the community at large" (Nora 2002). The idea that memory can be emancipatory is the cornerstone of my thesis. Memory work, namely memorialization, carried out in a certain way can contribute to the memorialized group's sense of identity and belonging, as well as provide a public platform to highlight current social and economic issues.

In Patrick Hutton's work, History as an Art of Memory (1993), he describes the importance of the present for how the past is interpreted. He writes, "what is remembered about the past depends on the way it is represented, which has more to do with the present power of groups to fashion its image than with the ability of historians to evoke its memory. Rather than culling the past for residual memories, each age reconstructs the past with images that suit its present need" (Hutton 1993, 6). Hutton argues that what is remembered, and the way it is told, depends on the current situation, and the tellers' current needs. He argues that "history should not be a commemorative exercise but rather a contributing element to a philosophy for fashioning the future" (Hutton 1993, 112), which speaks to my proposed notion of activist memorialization – that memory work carried out in a specific way, can empower groups to write their own history. History can serve activist ends, particularly when addressed outside of the academic environment.

[2] Although alternative versions of history can provide a different lens to look at history through, one must always be weary of merely replacing an old method with a new, without being self-reflective about the ways in which the new method can also become elitist, exclusive, etc.

1.2.1 Memorialization

Historically, memorialization has served a number of ends, e.g. to honour the dead, to honour current leaders, to inform patrons of subject matter, etc. Memorials, exhibits, museums, etc. are established at a certain time, in a certain space, for a certain reason. Thus, whether intentionally "activist" or not, these memorials serve to create some effect, some change, some alteration of society and consciousness. Memorialization, however, has increasingly honoured the historically under-acknowledged and has been a force in community activism (Coombes 2003). Memorialization is an explicit example of this "evolution" of memory – of a shift from elitist commemoration to an increasingly grassroots commemorative effort. To date, the literature on memorialization has not specifically addressed its activist nature.

Despite a wide prevalence of literature on memory work and memorialization as political and as having the ability to contribute to social change (Coombes 2003, Hutton 1993, Jansen 2007, le Goff 1977, Nietzsche 1995, Nora 2002) literature framing memorialization as activist is noticeably lacking. Nietzsche refers to "history in the service of life" (Nietzsche 1995). Le Goff calls us to "act in such a way that collective memory may serve the liberation and not the enslavement of human beings (le Goff 1977). Chesneaux calls for "peoples, and particularly those of the third world" to "liberate the past" (J. Chesneaux, 32 in le Goff 1977). He says that "we must not reject it [history], we must make it serve social and national struggles" (J. Chesneaux, p. 32, in le Goff 1977). Robert Jansen writes, "previous struggles produce distinct reputational trajectories that condition the potential utility of different modes of memory work" (Jansen 2007). Coombes asks what changes memorials are bringing about, namely, how are they influencing the collective consciousness and how are they bringing about the "New South Africa" (Coombes 2003). She asks "what the ideal role of the museum would be: to educate for transition and for a new model of national unity, or to be a venue that eschews a conciliatory role in favor of exploring the contradictions and tensions of a more dynamic model of history and society" (Coombes 2003, 206). All of these views elaborate on how civil society's role in memorialization (e.g. St. George's Crypt Memory and Witness Centre *Bearing Witness* exhibit) exists as a means of addressing past struggles – in itself a form of activism.

Creating an exhibit is a useful way to rupture the silence about the "everydayness" of Apartheid by providing a tangible outcome through an interactive, consultative exhibit-making process. People are recognized for their struggles under and against Apartheid, while also being active participants in the "recognizing". Certain ways of remembering help bridge the memory of the past (both the memory of trauma and the struggle against Apartheid) to the present and to the

future. “Narratives provide the discursive vehicles for transforming the burden of knowing into the revolutionary act of telling” (McLaren and Tadeu da Silva 1993, 73), thus providing a new avenue for political engagement.

1.2.2 Key definitions

Memorialization

Memorialization has historically connoted physical representations of memory; however, I will extend this term to include oral memorials as well (e.g. myths, genealogies and various forms of oral history methods (Brown 2004). Broadly speaking, memorialization includes all forms, both tangible and intangible forms of heritage and memory. As Blustein notes in his book on morality and memory, “bearing witness is itself a kind of memorial act – that is, both a way that people give shape to their memories and the shape that they thereby give them – and as a means whereby the past is preserved for and passed on to future generations, so that they in turn can remember” (Blustein 2008, 302). It is critical that I adopt this broader definition of memorialization, as this thesis seeks to uncover the overlap between memorialization and activism / bearing witness.

Activist

While there is no single definition of activism, I must be clear about what I mean by activist / activism. When I use the term “activist” I use it to describe an individual or collective that is engaging in *deliberate* action for change. The change does not have to be far-reaching. It can be change within one’s community, even if it is merely changing one’s own way of thinking. It can be adopting a certain methodology, one that is inclusive rather than exclusive and one that seeks to break down the artificial boundaries of academic “disciplines”. The deliberateness of the actions, however, is paramount. Activism means acting in a way that is conscious of the political background and consequences of one’s actions. Activism is generally regarded as “liberal”; however, one can also be activist and conservative (e.g. Islamic activism, pro-life activists, etc.) (Wiktorowicz 2004) and cannot be excluded from an inclusive definition. Activist behavior can range from “peace protests, to inwardly focused spiritual renewal, to using violence to attain movement goals” (Wiktorowicz 2004, 2). In the broadest sense, activism is “making the personal political” (Epstein 1990).

Empowerment

Empowerment, like activist, is an ill-defined term. In this thesis, when I use the word empowerment I use it to mean the process by which one recognizes one’s own agency, one’s

ability to be a "cause". In essence, it is the process of realizing one's activist abilities. Empowerment should not be seen as a result, but as a process that is continually being achieved.

2 Methods

"Ultimately, all our methodologies can enable us to find or know only part of the truth, and only imperfectly. Whether we use them singly or in eclectic combination, the best we can hope for is an approximation of the truth… But this does not diminish the importance of the search for the truth" (Cherry 2009, 63).

This thesis is the culmination of primary and secondary literature surveys (e.g. newspapers and academic articles), story-telling focus groups and individual interviews. In this chapter I will elaborate on the various methods I used, highlighting challenges, opportunities and successes.

This thesis is intricately connected to the St. George's Cathedral's Crypt Memory and Witness Centre's "Bearing Witness" exhibit. This thesis, although a separate and theoretically independent piece of work, is dependent on the exhibition process, namely access to interviewees and story-telling sessions, as well as emotional and intellectual support.

2.1 Literature

I consulted a number of resources to frame my methodology. As noted above, the group story-telling sessions methodology was already prescribed. For my individual interviews I used Valerie Yow's "Recording Oral History, A Practical Guide for Social Scientists" (Yow 1994), Perks' and Thomson's "The Oral History Reader" (Perks and Thomson 1998), specifically Portelli's "What makes oral history different" chapter, Denis and Ntsimane's edited volume "Oral history in a wounded country" (Denis and Ntsimane 2008), and MacKay's "Curating oral histories" (MacKay 2007).

To inform my analysis I used Antze and Lambek's "Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory" (Antze and Lambek 1996), La Capra's "Writing History, Writing Trauma" (La Capra 2001), a collection of Sean Field's work (Field 2008, Field 2001, Field 2010, Field 1999, Field 2008, Field and Meyer 2007), and Thompson's "The Voice of the Past: Oral History" (Thompson 2000).

The literature helped me to formulate my interview guide, and served as a guide for ethical conduct during interviews and as examples of oral history analysis.

2.2 Translations

The interviewees speak isiXhosa as their first language. Although many interviewees can converse in English, they much prefer to use their native tongue. Thus, the story-telling sessions and interviews were translated by one of the members of the Centre's team, an external volunteer (for the group sessions), or one of the former squatters. Consequently, all quotes are from the translation (unless otherwise noted), rather than from the original speaker, and are subject to translator error. Due to the sensitive nature of the discussions, it was critical that trust was built between the research team and the interviewees. Thus, personal interviewees (which were more sensitive than the group discussions) were only conducted with the use of a translator familiar to the group and trusted by them.[3] Although the speakers' words may have been compromised because the translator was not a professional translator, trust was already established and it was beneficial to use the team member rather than an external, professional translator.

2.3 Ethics

All participants signed a broad consent form designed by the Crypt Memory and Witness Centre that gave the Crypt Memory Witness Centre team permission to record story-telling sessions and personal interviews for the exhibit at St. George's and for other academic purposes. The form was explained to them verbally, both in English and isiXhosa, and translated into isiXhosa.

The Crypt Memory and Witness Centre paid for transportation and meals for all story-telling sessions. I paid my translator for the individual interviews an agreed upon price of ZAR 150 per day. I also paid for her airtime that was used to coordinate interviews and keep in touch with interviewees. I incurred all travel expenses (approximately ZAR 30 per day) for the translator or for interviewees.

Interviewees were not remunerated for their interviews; however, they did not incur any costs. I gave all the interviewees a small gift as a gesture of my gratitude, not as a payment.

[3] Sindiswa Nunu was my translator for all personal interviews. The group knew her from her activism in the 1980s. Some interviewees had even stayed at her home.

2.4 Story-telling Sessions

The Crypt Memory and Witness team[4] organized three story-telling sessions – two at St. George's Cathedral in central Cape Town and one at Holy Cross church in Nyanga. Although I was a part of the team, I was not a part of the intellectual work that went behind the organization of these sessions. Other members devised the questions and agenda for the days. I participated in the story-telling sessions and provided input as needed throughout the day. The sessions were also open to input from the group, and often the agenda and methodology were refined to suit the group's needs.

The story-telling sessions began at about 09h00 and lasted until about 17h00 on three different Saturdays. They focused on the group's life during the year before the fast of 1982, the fast of 1982, and life at Holy Cross church in Nyanga. The story-telling sessions at the Cathedral and at Holy Cross both began with the group walking the space to begin to refresh their memories of the time they spent at each of the respective places. After the walk-about, the group was given questions in sets of approximately four or five questions about various themes. Then, they wrote down their answers to the questions. As many members of the group are illiterate, they would help each other or receive help from the translators. After everyone finished answering the questions personally, about four or five people would report to group. The motive behind this methodology was that each individual would get a chance to think about the question, however, the group as a whole, would agree on a general narrative. The nuances of personal stories were left for the personal interviews.

2.5 Individual Interviews

Interviewees were divided between Lynette Maart and me. Lynette chose five people that she knew better or had specific questions she wanted to ask. I was in charge of interviewing everyone else. My translator and I coordinated individual interviews. Interviewees were given the option, based on the translator's work schedule, of when and where they would like to be interviewed. Interviews were conducted at either the Crypt at St. George's Cathedral, the translator's office at Khulumani in Woodstock, Cape Town, or, preferably, at the interviewee's home or the home of another interviewee. The interview sessions were often disrupted or loud due to background music or family members or neighbours coming in. Although it disrupted the

[4] Team members include Father Terry Lester, Lynette Maart, Josette Cole, Megan Greenwood, Sindiswa Nunu (translator), Mawush (temporary translator), and myself.

flow, it also gave a casual and unintimidating feel to the interviews. In the case that a location was too distracting or noisy, we moved to a quieter location.

The interviews were based on an interview guide that I prepared based largely on model life history interview questions (Thompson 2000). The Crypt team and my supervisor provided input on the interview guide, as it served both my research purposes and the Crypt's. The interviews lasted anywhere from one to two hours and covered the interviewee's life from childhood to the present day, although they were strongly focused on their life as squatters and the 1982 fast at St. George's Cathedral. The interview guide is included as Annexure A.

On most days we would conduct two interviews in a day, although some days we only conducted one. All participants suffered from interview fatigue, particularly the interviewee and translator, so although I would have liked to extend the time of the interviews, it was not practical.

2.6 Challenges

Originally, my intent was to archive the recorded interviews at the Centre for Popular Memory at the University of Cape Town (UCT). After much discussion with the Centre for Popular Memory and with the team of the Crypt Memory and Witness Centre, an agreement could not be reached as to where the interviews should be archived. I decided to forgo my original intention of archiving the interviews at the Centre for Popular Memory, because my access to interviewees and my involvement in the project hinged on the support of the Crypt Memory and Witness Centre and I did not want to strain that relationship. I do plan to pursue the archiving of the interviews, wherever that may be, at a later stage. Currently they are stored by the Crypt Memory and Witness Centre and by me.

3 Brief history of squatter struggle in the Western Cape

Below is a brief history of the squatter struggles in the Western Cape from 1980 - 1982 according to South African newspapers. The struggles of the interviewees can be located in this general context. Although squatter struggles preceded 1980 (i.e. the struggle to preserve the Modderdam squatter community began in 1976 (Cole 2011)), I began my historical review in 1980 to reflect the focus of the story-telling sessions, which began focusing on the group's life one year before the fast (i.e. 1981). After the story-telling sessions, it became clear that the two years before the fast were when most people began to face increased detentions, deportations

and demolitions, thus I began my newspaper review in 1980. Please refer to Annexure B for a more detailed timeline.[5]

3.1 Life Under Influx Control (1980 – 1982)

From 1980 to 1982, the Western Cape authorities increasingly tightened their influx control regulations and efforts in an attempt to deepen their regulations on the movement of black South Africans to urban areas. This is demonstrated by increased deportations, detentions and the demolitions of the houses of squatter communities, which resulted in increased confrontations between squatters, police and the government, as the government attempts to tighten their control (see e.g. Cape Argus 24 June 1980, 8 July 1980; Cape Times 19 March 1980, 21 August 1981, 28 January 1982; Star 8 October 1981[6]). These measures motivated various members of civil society, both individual and collective, to increase their opposition to the State's policy towards squatters. Specifically, the Western Province Council of Churches demands that the presence of about 2000 Nyanga squatters be declared legal (Cape Argus 2 March 1982). Western Cape Minister of Co-operation and Development, Piet Koornhof, and Chief Commissioner, Mr Timo Bezuidenhoud, begin negotiating with squatters regarding passes to permit black South Africans the right to live and work in the Cape Town (Cape Times 29 January 1982, 12 February 1982, Cape Argus 2 March 1982). Ultimately squatters and the government could not come to an agreement.

3.2 St. George's Cathedral fast (8 March – 1 April 1982)

57 men and women, plus their children (who did not fast), fasted and prayed at St. George's Cathedral for 23 days between 8 March and 1 April 1982, demanding the right to work and live in Cape Town with their families (Cape Argus 10 March 1982). The Dean of St. George's Cathedral, Rev. Edward King, ensured that the squatters have the full support of the church (Cape Argus 15 March 1982). Other Christian churches demonstrated their solidarity with the squatters by urging Dr. Koornhof to legalise the squatters that are living in the Cape Peninsula (Cape Times 16 March 1982). Determined to fast until their demands were met or they died, the fasters' plight attracted local and international media attention (e.g. the BBC covered the fast and interviewed one faster, Theophilus Tayo). The fasters were repeatedly warned that they were suffering from malnutrition and several were hospitalized (Cape Argus 13 March 1982, 20 March 1982; Cape Times 24 March 1982). One faster miscarried (Cape Argus 13 March 1982).

[5] The summaries are based on the detailed timeline.

[6] Refer to Annexure B for full newspaper citations of deportations, demolitions and detentions.

After 23 days, the squatters suspended their fast after members of the NG Sendingkerk helped facilitate negotiations with Dr. Koornhof, in which he promised three weeks of immunity from harassment while their case was decided on (Cape Times 31 March 1982, 1 April 1982; Cape Argus 31 March 1982, 1 April 1982; Star 2 April 1982).

3.3 Life after the Cathedral (1982 – 1985)

After negotiations with Dr Koornhoof, the squatters left the Cathedral and settled at Holy Cross church in Nyanga, where their plight received very little publicity. The Dutch Reform Church deemed their fast "sacrilegious" and called their actions "unlawful" (Cape Times 16 April 1982). The Cathedral group expanded, as the Cathedral fasters acted on a mandate from other squatters (Cape Times 22 September 1982). Dr Koornhof repeatedly delayed the deadlines on which their fate would be decided (Cape Times 21 April 1982, 24 May 1982, 22 September 1982); however, in 1984, influx control measures collapsed, including the Coloured Labour Preferential Policy, contributing to an increased sense of freedom from the black community (Weekend Post 29 September 1984). Conversely, the provincial government continued their efforts to consolidate black settlements in the Western Cape through their efforts at resettling black South African squatters in Khayelitsha (Cape Argus 7 July 1982; Daily Dispatch 21 March 1984). The United Democratic Front (UDF) opposed this resettlement in their million-signature campaign (Sowetan 5 June 1984). The provincial government continued to raid and harass the squatter camps (Citizen 7 October 1983; Cape Times 8 July 1983). Ultimately, the government's plan to resettle squatters to Khayelitsha was largely successful, as many squatters, including the Cathedral group, moved away from the squatter settlements to improve their stability and escape the increasing violence that ensued due to internal battles between leaders and differing priorities (Cape Times 2 April 1985, 3 April 1985, 8 April 1985; Cape Argus 6 April 1985). Finally on 3 April 1985, in negotiations that were supposed to be resolved within three weeks of their exit from the Cathedral, but lasted three years, the Cathedral squatters' take Koornhof's offer to resettle in Khayelitsha (Cape Times 3 April 1985).

4 Life History Vignettes

> *"This… hurts them (although they are very proud to have contributed to the freedom struggle), for no one sees them – poor, ordinary people – as actors in history"* (Saikia 2007, 79).

This thesis focuses on one group of South African former squatters. The group undertook a 23-day fast at St. George's Cathedral in 1982 to demand their rights to live and work in the city of Cape Town (see Annexure B for a detailed timeline of squatter struggles from 1980-1986). Today, many members of the original fasting group of 57 have passed away or could not be located. My thesis, therefore, is drawn from interviews with ten of the members and from a focus group of 17 of the members[7] who are involved in the Crypt Memory and Witness Centre's exhibit process. The group of ten includes seven women and three men. isiXhosa is the native tongue of all members of the group. All but two were born in the Transkei / Eastern Cape, and all but one grew up there. They range in age from 55, at the youngest, to 71, at the oldest.

In this chapter I will briefly outline the lives of the ten people I conducted individual interviews with.[8]

Cekiso, Lydia

Lydia Cekiso was born in 1957 in the Eastern Cape town called Lady Frere. Her mother's cousin raised Lydia, because her father had died and her mother had to go to Cape Town to find work. She was raised in the Zion church and still practices today. Lydia was educated until Standard 4 when she was expected to quit, look after the farm, and marry.

When she was 18, Lydia's guardians arranged her marriage. Lydia resisted, though, and ran away to the Free State to work on a farm there. Eventually her family realized that it was not good for her to marry this man, since he too was an orphan and would not have family to support them if they came upon hard financial times, so they did not force her to marry him. Subsequently, she moved to Butterworth to work in a factory.

In 1981 she moved to Cape Town to find a job. She realized if she was going to survive she needed to be self reliant, so she went and stayed with her brother in Langa. She resumed her schooling and finished Standard 7 while also maintaining a job as a domestic worker. Lydia joined the Cathedral group because the hostel in Langa that she was staying in was demolished and her brother moved to Zone 23, where she was illegal. Her aunt's daughter knew of the

[7] Story telling group size varied from day to day. In total 17 former squatters participated in the process.

[8] Other participants not included in this section are: Mavis Ncaza (now deceased), Nontshapo Violet Nconjane, Cynthia Nomeva, Christopher Toise, Nowinala Mlonyeni and William Salumane. They are included in the group story-telling sessions, though, and may be quoted in that context.

Nyanga Bush grouping (the Cathedral group) and so Lydia decided to join up with people who, like herself, did not have a place to live. After joining the fast, Lydia was one of the fasters who had to be taken to the hospital. She fainted on the seventh day and was admitted to the hospital, where the doctors told her that she was dying of starvation. As soon as she recovered a little, she resumed her fast at the Cathedral, determined not to negatively affect the group's cause.

Like the other fasters, Lydia moved from the Cathedral to Holy Cross Church in Nyanga and then into tents in Nyanga Bush until she moved to "Swartklip" (Khayelitsha) in 1985. Lydia did not want to move to Khayelitsha, referring to the move as a "forced removal".

Lydia has three children, all born in Cape Town after the fast. Today she is happy with her living conditions. She said, "You know I'm happy and I'm very glad, more especially that I moved from the squatting point of view, having the brick house because by the time I was in a shelter, when it is raining, as it is today, it used to rain because there were leaks in the squatters, but now there are no more leaks and when I'm in the house with my kids, and no matter what they are doing, at the end of the day they have their home."

Makuluma, Hicksonia

Hicksonia was born in 1949 in King Williams Town in the Eastern Cape. She never knew her father and never saw her mother after her mother moved to Cape Town. Her grandmother, with whom she was very close, raised Hicksonia. Her grandmother even let Hicksonia negotiate her own lobola.

Hicksonia married a man she fell in love with in Cape Town. Her soon-to-be-husband was working in Cape Town when they fell in love, and although Hicksonia was concerned that he would use her, he promised her marriage and sent his elders to speak with her grandmother and her. In 1970 she moved to Gugulethu to be with him and began work as a domestic worker. They are now separated.

Hicksonia has six children. She was pregnant with one during the fast at St. George's. All matriculated, and one even went on to tertiary education. He was beat up by "hooligans" in 2008, resulting in a two-week stay in the ICU for a hole in his skull. He still cannot walk today. Hicksonia did not want the hooligans prosecuted because of the widespread injustice throughout South Africa.

Hicksonia joined the fast to ensure that she had a pass to the city. She said she was "always in hiding" and even though she was pregnant, she continued with the fast. She felt "in between" on the prospect of miscarrying her unborn child, because although she had children, she wanted a girl, but she also needed a pass. Hicksonia did not miscarry, and delivered a baby girl.

Hicksonia was not Christian when she joined the fast at St. George's, although she says that after three days of fasting she became more religious. She became Christian when one of her sons became sick and would not get better despite going to traditional healer after traditional healer. She calls his recovery a "miracle".

Still today, Hicksonia is unsatisfied with the outcome of the fast. She had high hopes for the fast. Hicksonia says the group was divided, because the group did not get the bungalows they were promised, and instead were moved to Khayelitsha. Hicksonia refused to move to Khayelitsha, choosing to move to the barracks in Nyanga, where she still lives today, although she has more space and has beautified her home.

Malibeni, Dorothy

Dorothy was born in the Transkei in 1948. Growing up, Dorothy's father worked in Cape Town and her mother was a housewife. She only saw her father once a year, which was hard on her because she wanted to see more of him. Her father became involved in politics, which resulted in him being caught by the police and having all his things stolen. Dorothy was angry because then he came back to the Transkei with nothing.

Dorothy left school at Standard Five, even though she was very bright at school, with dreams of being a teacher or a nurse. Her teacher offered to help her with her tertiary if she was able to finish school. However, because her father did not always send money home, her family would go hungry and become unable to pay school fees. This experience taught Dorothy that she should not rely on anyone to assist her.

She moved to Langa, Cape Town in 1979 to find work as a domestic worker, because there was no work in the Transkei. Her father had recently passed away, and since her mother was illiterate and did not speak English it was hard for her to find work. Dorothy moved in with her relatives in Langa until she moved to Crossroads and joined the larger squatter group.

Dorothy has never married. She has three children – two girls, who are twins, and a son. She has one granddaughter. Until the fast ensured that Dorothy would not be arrested again, she

was forced leave her children in the Transkei. "I left them there though, because it wasn't nice… They were hungry and it wasn't even nice to me, but I was forced to leave them there to come here and do all the struggling. The bottom line is in between the struggle of being arrested, not having a place to stay, the bottom line is that I had to work."

Dorothy was arrested under the pass laws several times and sent to Pollsmoor, sometimes spending up to two weeks in jail. The renovations of the Langa barracks, which resulted in Dorothy being without shelter and being continuously harassed by the police, along with the horrible conditions in jail, prompted Dorothy to band together with the other squatters.

Dorothy is a religious person. She grew up Anglican, but did not begin to commit herself until she was older. Dorothy became religious when she realized that the religious people did not attend the death of someone who is not religious. She felt that as an older person it is important that the religious people should cover her back, so she began to take religion more seriously.

Currently she lives by herself in a shack on the same land that she moved to in 1985 after the Cathedral group moved to Site C. Dorothy says that her life has improved since 1994 since now they have electricity and a flushing toilet, but "not much" else. Dorothy wants a "real house" and believes that crime and abuse are two big problems for her community today. Dorothy says she does not have any goals for the future, but instead expectations: "I cannot say I'm dreaming as such, because I'm always waiting to have a house, a decent house at the end, rather than the one that I'm having. So I'm not even regarding that as a dream, rather as an expectation of what I'm going to get. Otherwise since I've started this storytelling I just find myself very happy. I have my own self-confidence. My own self-esteem."

Mgentsu, Evelyn

Evelyn was born in Engcobo, Eastern Cape in 1954. She lived in the Eastern Cape until 1974 when she moved to Cape Town. She grew up with both of her parents. Her father worked in the Eastern Cape as a construction worker on the roads.

In 1973 she quit school during Standard 7. She liked science, history and geography and wishes she could have studied more. She liked history because it is about "stories about what's taking place. Because out of those stories you realize there are prophecies that are being made out of the difficulties that we've encountered…because history can encourage human beings that you much sacrifice in life."

Evelyn was married in 1974. She met him in Cape Town, when she came for a holiday, and then moved to Cape Town to be with him. When she first moved to Cape Town she got a pass for 14 days, but stayed after and hid. She assisted people that were self-employed selling chickens. She was arrested innumerable times. She paid several fines and spent time in jail, sometimes up to a week because no one knew she was arrested, but she was never deported.

The early 1980's were a particularly difficult time for Evelyn because her marriage had fallen apart as well. "You know, it was not only for the government. It was also the time of breaking my marriage. There were a lot of silly things that came up with my in-laws, because I was also even aligned with the cows that are plowing the fields. They would say to me, like if in the marriage you are not producing, they are saying, you better be like a cow and go and plough the fields. Those funny things. The struggle both in marriage and the government."

She got in touch with the Cathedral group because she saw them grouped together in the open space in Nyanga. She knew they needed the passes that she needed. When she joined the fast she was already separated from her husband. One of the reasons that she threw herself into the struggle was because she hoped that the fasting and praying would also get her what she wanted – children. "I was pregnant. And then during the time I was being chased by the police for the pass laws, the passbook, the police kicked me and I miscarried. That was the time I lost the child and in the hospital they told me that I've got limited… you know… so I wouldn't get the children any longer. Then when I heard about the fast I just, said, I don't have kids and I won't have children in the near future because of the system, so let me go on fighting with the government until I achieve something, because the only thing that can make me comfortable is to what I need, to get it out of the authorities."

She didn't get exactly what she wanted from the fast. She hoped "the government would do exactly what it promised," but Evelyn said the fasting and praying was empowering, and gave her self-esteem. "I did have that empowerment before, but it wasn't so strong when I got the prayer."

Today, Evelyn lives in a brick house. She is a sangoma and mediates in her community.

Mgweba, Xoliswa

Xoliswa was born 1 November 1946 in Kensington, Cape Town, but moved to the Eastern Cape when she was three because her father retired. When she was 29 she moved in with her cousin in Langa, Cape Town so she could look for a job.

Xoliswa's childhood was difficult because her father lost his sight, thus the family relied on her mother to bring in money. Her mother did this by helping other people in the community and by receiving assistance from her family, who was a little wealthy. Her family was very close. Xoliswa had good relationships with both of her parents. Her mother taught her about religion (she is Methodist) and her father encouraged her to go to school. She completed Standard Six, which was the highest she could go in the Bantu education system.

After being arrested several times, particularly in 1981, and being deported, Xoliswa joined the fast. She says, "it was the time where you joined a group that is going to assist you. We're being arrested, harassed by the police, so I thought, let me at last be on the crew of the politics…"

After the fast Xoliswa did not move to Site C because it was too far from work. She joined the people who were nearby, and today she lives in Langa.

Xoliswa wants to gives "a vote of thanks for all the people who were with us throughout the time. There should be a lot of people who died along the way if there wasn't any assistance from the clergy. I just have the opportunity to those people who contributed to the struggle."

Motom, Ngqunyana

Ngqunyana Motom was born in 1950 in the Eastern Cape town of Engcobo, close to Umtata. He came to Cape Town in 1958 as a young boy and stayed at a dairy farm, where his father was. He played with all the white kids there, who were his friends and did not treat him "funny". He stayed here for six months then moved back to the Eastern Cape. They moved to Cape Town again in 1970. It was a hurtful situation for him to have one parent living in separate places. "This hand and this hand are the members of one body. So if one hand is collapsed, it's definitely there is something lacking."

He was never permanently in school because of all the moving. He attended school to Standard One, because every time he was in school he had to move because his pass would expire. He was very disappointed that he did not get to attend school, because he was very excited about.

Motom's parents used to go to political meetings and his father was a cardholder of a political organization (deliberately did not say which one). He did not become political from his parents, because politics was underground by that time. He became political from where he used to stay, because there were other politically active people there.

He was married in 1973. He moved to Cape Town immediately after. Motom had an arranged marriage. His wife left him in 1995 and they formally separated in 2003.

Before the fast, Motom had three children. They lived with the mother in the Eastern Cape, which was hard on Motom. He only got to see his children once a year when his contract as a labourer ended. He wanted his wife and children to come to Cape Town. When his family did come and stay with him in Langa, they faced many struggles. "For them [his family] it was very difficult because if I wasn't there they had to lock to doors and the curtains and stay in the dark. Or otherwise they had to go out of the hostels to hide themselves from the police. There were lots of harassments from the police." His wife was arrested and taken to Pollsmoor with their children. Subsequently they were deported.

Eventually, Motom's family moved to Nyanga East where his relatives lived to avoid police harassment. It was in Nyanga that Motom met up with Cathedral group. Motom joined the fast while his wife was in the Eastern Cape. He says, "I was fighting to stay with my family where we want to without being harassed." Despite concerns of how his children would eat while he was not working, and fears that he would be fired, Motom joined the fast to ensure his family's rights and to finish what he had started. He did not want his children to grow up with separated parents. "They can separate themselves rather than by the situation… To me, it was the situation that made me to be separated from my parents." He says the fasting and the praying gave him strength to continue.

After the fast, Motom says that his family "stayed freely, no harassments, I was working then. If my wife want to go to Eastern Cape she can go and my kids if they want to visit the Eastern Cape it was just fine…. There weren't fears then." Motom was fully participating in the community meetings and helping to sort out community issues.

He continued his activism and would often toi toi[9]. Motom now lives in Khayelitsha Site C. "One thing that's bothering me is that I'm not working, and my children are starving, so I'm not well. I'm not happy because of that." He was a construction worker, but now has no work. He still supports six of his eight children (the youngest is 18), with the help of one of his daughters who is working nights as she finished school.

[9] The phrase toi toi means taking to the streets in protest, and often includes singing, dancing and chanting.

Mtschicelwa, Zwelinzima

Zwelinzima Mtschicelwa was born in 1945 in a small town outside of Umtata the Eastern Cape. His father worked in Cape Town, but he was very close to his mother. Despite his father being gone, the other men in his community played a fatherly role in his life[10]. His father eventually took another wife. Mtschicelwa's family practiced a mixture of Christian and traditional religion, but Mtschicelwa considers himself as only traditionally religious.

In 1966 he moved to Johannesburg to work in the mines for a year. Subsequently he moved back home for a few months before seeking work in Cape Town as a farm worker. Mtschicelwa was forced to work as a casual labourer, moving frequently between jobs, ranging from farming, to construction to working as an electrician.

He married in 1975, but was forced to live away from his wife as a result of the pass laws. As Mtschicelwa became older and was confronted more directly with the restrictions of Apartheid, including the pass laws, he began to take after his politically active father, and also became politically involved. He said, "I realized why my father was a politician and I felt that it was important that I follow his footsteps because I, really it was the way how we're surviving." Mtschicelwa was involved in the Uprising in 1976, recounting his involvement he says, "So we using the stones and the other measures of the petrol bombs and we were also shooted back by the Boers, so it was just a vast thing because basically we were focusing directly to the government and there was a process where everything that concerns the government were being destroyed."

Mtschicelwa's wife joined him in Cape Town in 1980 or 1981. This motivated him to join the fast, because his wife was always running from the police. Mtschicelwa and his wife decided that only he would fast because, in his words, they had decided, "we're going to fast until we die, if the authorities are not responding. So I said, if I die there, she must live with the child."

When asked what the differences were between the fast and his political involvement in the 1976 Uprising, he says, "Difficult as they are both, but they are different. In this sense, that when you are fasting, you don't fight, you are humble, only waiting for the day of your death. On the side of the politics, fighting, seeing somebody falling by the bullet next to you, hearing the bullet passing you, but you're not turning back, you're going forward, but waiting for the one to catch you."

[10] This is common among the interviewees, whether or not their parents were around; all elders are looked at as "mother" and "father".

Like many of the other fasters, Mtschicelwa was not wholly satisfied with the outcomes of the fast, but says, “although the outcomes weren’t exactly what we needed, we got something.” After being arrested countless times, Mtschicelwa was finally free from arrests.

Mtschicelwa lives in Khayelitsha Site C, on the same plot of land he moved to after the fast, in 1985. He finally got his brick house last year.

Ncisana, Kate Ntombonzi

Kate was born 5 July 1946 in Cape Town. After the Group Areas Act was passed her family moved to Elsie’s River. In 1958 she moved to Jamestown, because “they were chasing us out”, and Kate’s mother was concerned about her education (which is evident because Kate finished high school and is one of the few interviewees who is fluent in English). Kate, however, was extremely close to her father, who was still living in Cape Town, so in 1962 she moved back to Cape Town to be with him. Kate was a twin (her twin died very young), as was her father and grandfather, which formed part of the bond between Kate and her father. For five years she worked as a live-in domestic for 34 rand per month. She was able to visit her dad and weekends and complete her Form 3 education (equivalent to grade 11).

Both of Kate’s parents were self-employed, making things with their hands. Kate’s mother taught her to make handicrafts, which both her and her mother would sell for extra money. This is a skill, which has been a source of great comfort to Kate.

Kate describes her parents as good moral guides. Her father was very religious (as is Kate) and would tell her “nothing fixes you like prayer”. Kate missed being away from her father, and says the best advice he gave her was telling her “When you’re depressed don’t think of me, pray to God.” Her father was slightly political, but wanted he did not want to use force, preferring politics to be based on Christianity. Kate says he was a little bit involved in the Pan Africanist Congress, but he did not like all the “pushing around, the fighting”.

In 1961 Kate went through an arranged, customary marriage. She says she does not know “what’s love”. Her mother taught her “when you’re arguing with your husband – let him talk.” Kate says, “I didn’t follow her advice.” Kate says that there were not any big arguments in her marriage, but her political activism was too much for her husband so they separated. She says he wants to come back to her now, because he “wants a babysitter”.

In 1966, Kate’s mother died. Kate’s baby boy was 11 months old and went to stay with Kate’s mother-in-law. Kate did not know them that well and she didn’t feel happy that her son did not

grow up with her. She said her next child was 17 years later so that she could raise her. "Even now, my son is unbalanced because he thinks I love my daughter more than him." Kate was finally able to raise her son after they moved to the Cathedral camp in Nyanga.

Kate became involved in politics through the domestic workers strike of 1979. Her involvement in the Domestic Workers' Union led to her involvement in the Cathedral fast. She is weary of politics, however, and thinks they "make false promises". Despite her unease, she was also involved in The Women's Homeless Peoples Federation and organized a sit-in on Rondebosch Commons, which enabled Kate to go to India.

Today, Kate has accepted her living arrangements. She does not "want to make a fuss anymore." Her son is "Mr. Fix It" and has taken in six foster kids. Her daughter is also community oriented. Kate teaches young girls in Site C how to make beadwork from a shipping container next to her new brick house.

Nconjane, Shirley Bomela

Shirley was born in 1956 in Engcobo, Transkei. She became pregnant in Standard 9 and had to quit school to earn money. In 1977 when her child was one, she left her child with her mother. She moved to the hostels in Langa, Cape Town to search for work. She found work as a domestic worker in Crawford.

She got married once she moved to Cape Town, when she was 21. Being away from her child "was not so nice, but I couldn't do otherwise because I know while I was staying with my child we won't get food, so I think maybe I must go look for a job. And my mother at that time was not even getting pension. That's why I decided to go look for a job." Shirley's wage as a domestic worker provided for her mother, her younger sister, her child and herself.

She wanted to be involved in the fasting group, because all the squatters had common problems (arrests, deportations, demolitions, etc.) so she thought they should work towards a common solution. Furthermore, her brother-in-law (Violet's[11] husband) was a part of the leadership of the Cathedral group. She said that fasting "was a good idea, because when you fast, you just… when you need something you must fast. That's why I think it would be better." Shirley says the fast was difficult for five days, but after that she did not feel the hunger. "When we start singing. Sometimes I get lazy and I think, 'Ooo, what are they doing now? I feel like

[11] Violet is another member of the group, but she was interviewed by Lynette Maart.

sleeping, I'm not singing, I want to rest, because I'm hungry." But as the song goes on she feels fresh again. "I don't know where I get that energy."

Even though the fast was difficult, Shirley was thankful to feel safe and not fear the police. Her husband supported her fasting because he also knew she was safe. Shirley feels that the fast was successful. She says that many people were worried about moving to Swartklip (Khayelitsha) because it was by the sea and they feared they were going to be chased into the sea. She said as long as she got a place, though, she did not worry.

Today, Shirley is very disappointed that her community does not recognize the Cathedral group for their struggles and that she is still living in a shack that floods every winter, when other people that did not struggle now have brick houses. Her biggest goal in life now is to have a brick house that she can leave her children.

Ngweventsha, Sithandathi

Sithandathi Ngweventsha was born in 1940 in Conga, a town in between the former Ciskei and Transkei. His father had three wives who all lived in the same place. "The three of them, took me as their biological one. So I loved them in the same way." His family survived on farming, "you know at that time. It was very good… It was a very, very, very, very soft life."

In 1964 he moved to Langa, Cape Town to work offloading at the docks. "My father, my mother, and my other mother all passed away. I had only one mother left with four of the kids. Then I foresee that at least there is a limitation of all the resources that are around. And what was more focused on me was that I never go to school. But I don't want them also to take my footage. So I decided to come to work to get some money so that they can go to school." He still works for the same company and has never been promoted. When asked why he said, "You'll never get that in these companies over there. Racism is still there. Only white people are getting promotions, not us."

After moving to Cape Town, he went back to the Eastern Cape and got married, but his wife could not move to Cape Town with him, so he continued to move back and forth: "When I get tired of being arrested and have a little bit of cash in my pocket I just run quickly home."

His wife eventually met him in Cape Town, but he said to me "you know at that time there were three shifts of police who were going to arrest you. So if you stay with your wife next to you, really you must make a plan or strategize what you are going to do. If you've got money you

must locate the five Rands just to bribe so that your wife mustn't be taken there and go and pay that big amount of money in court."

His wife was not here when he started the fast at the Cathedral; however, when she saw him in the papers, she came with their two children and stayed at Holy Cross, waiting for him to meet her and the children there.

Ngweventsha is traditionally religious, but still joined the Cathedral group: "I joined those people even though I know fasting is a religious thing and I wasn't anti-religious by kind of nature, but because I was really so traumatized inside and oppressed I am just getting fears of myself that I may be interrupting the religious of the other people that I will meet in the church. So to me, it wasn't a new thing of this, by so hearing, but I felt that because we are fighting a common thing, I had to join them… I was just interested in going and dying where the other people are going to die if we are about to die."

Ngweventsha does not consider himself to be politically active. He says that after the fast he considered joining a political organization, but "because of the dynamics between the organizations I started to be confused and I felt that if I starting to involve myself in these organisations I'll end up not knowing what am I doing."

Today Ngweventsha lives in a shack in Khayelitsha Site C. He laments his situation saying, "I'm still living in a shack and I've got the kids that are staying with me. There are a lot of them. They are not working. They went to school, but they don't get jobs. That is hurting me." Nevertheless, Ngweventsha is demonstrably proud that his children are literate (he is not), as he mentions their literacy several times.

Similarities and differences

Commonalities amongst the group include a general nostalgia about childhood. This could be due to the fact that many children look at their early years with fondness, or because the Apartheid state had not quite infiltrated into the everyday lives of common citizens. All interviews recognized the need to become self-sufficient and earn money once they came of age. They overwhelmingly viewed the farming ways of their ancestors as unviable way of surviving and supporting a family.

The group (except one) did not define themselves as political. All of them were especially adamant that the fast was religious and not political. This was surprising to me, especially since the media had, on occasion, termed the fast a "hunger strike". They differentiated between

political and other forms of activist behavior by defining political as having to do with political parties, and by noting the humility that they say is inherent in the religious struggle but not the political.

Education levels noticeably varied between men and women. Women were much more likely to have more education, while the men had very few years, if any. In the story-telling sessions, it was also obvious that women were more literate than the men (both in isiXhosa and in English), which indicates the gaps in education amongst the men.

5 Conceptual Discussion of "Bearing Witness"

> *When it is genuine, when it is born of the need to speak, no one can stop the human voice. When denied a mouth, it speaks with the hands or the eyes, or the pores, or anything at all. Because every single one of us has something to say to the others, something that deserves to be celebrated or forgiven by others – Eduardo Galeano, "Celebration of the Human Voice/2"*

"Bearing Witness", also the title of the Crypt Memory and Witness Centre's exhibit, is the theoretical framework that this thesis hinges on. The phrase, however, is problematic as it has taken on a number of different uses within a variety of contexts: "if one can use a term as easily to describe a testimonial given during a church service or an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting as to describe surviving and later denouncing a massacre, then there is reason enough to worry about its utility" (Farmer 2005, 27). The phrase, which originally has its source in a religious context, has come to refer to various ways of "speaking up / out", virtually becoming synonymous with "testifying" (Blustein 2008).

The phrase, when carefully defined, encapsulates the uniqueness and utility of bearing witness. Thus, to understand the motivation for the exhibit and for my discussion of activist memorialization it is imperative that I carefully elaborate its significance within a religious context, an activist context, and ultimately what it means for "activist memorialization".

5.1 History of Bearing Witness

5.1.1 Etymology

The concept of bearing witness has both Greek and Latin origins. Witness, in Greek, is *martis*, which in early Christianity became closely associated with the "persecution of believers, thus taking on the modern meaning of *martyr*" (Hallas 2009, 10). The historical connection and the

similarities in connotation between martyr and bearing witness become evident. From its Greek origins, both martyr and witness came to connote not only an ideological, but also a physical, a bodily, commitment to a "truth" (religious or not).

The "witness" element of bearing witness is also intricately tied to the concept of testimony, because it is a witness that gives testimony. In Latin, testimony is derived from the word *testis*, which is a third party (*terstis*) in a lawsuit or trial between two parties (Agamben 1999, Hallas 2009). However, in Latin there is another form of witness – *superstes*. *Superstes* "designates a person who has lived through something, who has experienced an event from beginning to end and can therefore bear witness to it" (Agamben 1999, 17) in (Hallas 2009, 12-13). This distinction between witness as *testis* and witness as *superstes* captures a key difference between testifying and bearing witness.

A witness as *testis* "derives enunciative authority from his or her exterior relation to the event witnessed" (Hallas 2009, 12-13) and thus can testify as an objective witness, because "the *testis* signifies an autonomous, exterior body appropriate for the objectivity demanded by evidentiary discourses such as law and history" (Hallas 2009, 12-13). The witness as testis testifies because of an external summons to do so (Hallas 2009).

In contrast to the external impetus to bear witness, "the *superstes*, is driven by a subjective impetus to bear witness to the event. The ethical address of the *superstes* entails a request to listen, to acknowledge, to affirm, and to share the experience of the event, in other words, to bear witness to the witness, to become a secondary witness" (Hallas 2009, 12-13). "The witness as *superstes* relies on his or her interior relation to the event, witnessing it from the inside and surviving it. The witness as *superstes* is indeed a survivor (*superstite*)" (Agamben 1999, 17 in Hallas 2009, 12-13). The discourses of law and history "often remain suspicious of the subjective authority claimed by the *superstes*, whose bodily presence alone can bear witness to surviving the event" (Hallas 2009, 12-13).

The early Christian church combined the concept of witness (*martis*) with the concept of dying for one's faith, one's truth (i.e. martyrdom), to form a religious conception of bearing witness (Hallas 2009). This combination of witness and martyr is integral to the contemporary understanding of bearing witness, because although bearing witness is no longer exclusive to the Christian faith, it draws from that concept. Specifically, bearing witness includes the idea that the human body is critical to witnessing, as demonstrated by martyrs who offer up their physical bodies for truth. The Christian concept of bearing witness also contributes to the

necessity of relationality for bearing witness. "Dying as a witness to god, the martyr needs a secondary witness to interpret and preserve this testimony in telling the story. Hence two layers of witnessing: the dying martyr as a witness for god, the bystander as a witness for the martyr" (Assmann 2006, 269).

The Holocaust was another critical moment for the development of the term bearing witness. Drawing on its Christian roots, bearing witness historically meant witnessing on behalf of one's god / one's truth, not on behalf of oneself. The religious martyr seeks out or submits to death willingly in order to gain a moral high ground. The martyr's death elevates him / her above victimhood to the status of a "potent adversary, morally or spiritually much superior to the opponent in power" (Assmann 2006, 268). The Holocaust, however, transformed the idea of bearing witness, because, "in the case of the Holocaust witness, these two levels of witnessing [on behalf of one's self and on behalf of one's god / truth] are conflated. The person who experienced the ordeal and the person who testifies to it are the one and the same…suffering and secondary witnessing, so categorically divided in the case of the religious and secular witness, merge in the Holocaust witness" (Assmann 2006, 269). Thus, one is both a witness for the truth of the event as a *superstes*, as a testis, and as a martyr.

The contemporary understanding of bearing witness conflates all of these understandings of the term. He / she who bears witness does it on behalf of truth and on behalf of others and oneself, using one's body as a tool and using the presence of others to ensure the truth is being borne to someone.

5.1.2 Contemporary Elements of Bearing Witness

Drawing on its etymological and historically religious roots, bearing witness maintains some of its earlier meanings and connotations; however, it has also come to describe a variety of other forms of witnessing. Contemporarily, bearing witness has three main features, regardless of the usage – dedication to experiential truth, utility of the witness' body, and the relationality between people.

Truth

Bearing witness, in all its uses, implies the sharing of a personal, first-hand, truth – whether in the courtroom, an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, or as a martyr (Hallas 2009, 10). Bearing witness is the sharing of experiential truth – one does not bear witness to scientific facts, but to social, religious, and / or political "truths" that are "true" because the witness experienced them. *How* the witness experienced an event is of equal or greater importance to *what* was

experienced. Thus, the "truth" of the event becomes tied to not only *what* happened, but also *how* it happened and *how* it was experienced and interpreted both in the moment and subsequently. The definition of "truth" is expanded beyond the historical / legalistic / scientific use of truth to include the human experience, which includes emotions, perceptions, and interpretations, which is valuable because it "entails a 'politics of phenomenology' that recognizes the priority of embodied experience, 'not as a structure to bracket and describe but as the social ground or foundation for actual praxis'" (Nichols 1994, 232 in Hallas 2009, 15). "Truth" comes to denote the truth of how an event was experienced, not just that an event happened.

Importance of the human body

The human body is critically important for the concept of bearing witness. If one is bearing witness it is because there is personal pain being borne, particularly in cases where the people that are being witnessed for cannot witness for themselves, either because they are physically unable (dead or incapacitated) or psychologically unable (traumatized or without personal / social power / strength). Their presence or absence is a physical representation of some element of the experiential truth and highlights the use of the word "bear", which connotes a painful / difficult experience (Blustein 2008). In other forms of bearing witness, the witness' own body is also affected. "The body of the witness thus commands critical importance; it can even risk imprisonment (of a material witness), torture, and execution (of religious martyrs)" (Hallas 2009, 10). The risks to a witness' body demonstrate the etymological link to "martyr". Thirdly, bearing witness is a performative act. "The performativity of the act itself, the power of the truth it produces, relies on the condition of an embodied enunciation" (Hallas 2009, 10). One must have someone to bear witness *to*. The goal is to share one's truth, therefore there must be someone to share it with, and who will potentially bear the truth forward.

Relationality

Bearing witness potentially involves two levels of relationality – speaking on behalf of others and speaking to others (Bakhtin 1986, Campbell 2008, Hallas 2009, Wertsch 2002, Farmer 2005, Coady 1992, Blustein 2008). Some argue that one does not bear witness for him or herself alone (Hirsch and Smith 2002, Farmer 2005). Others, however, argue that one can only bear witness on one's own behalf (Coady 1992). Still others argue that one can bear witness if one is the primary or secondary witness (spouse, descendent, intimate member of the same community, etc.) (Govier 1999, Blustein 2008).

Thus, one can bear witness for a group of which one is a part of (e.g. Holocaust victims / survivors, fellow believers, other squatters), but bearing witness is not solely an individually motivated act. It is not without self-interested motives, but it has motives of change on a collective level, even if that change is as simple as conveying the truth about an event. One can bear witness about an event that was experienced, merely to demonstrate that the event happened.

Drawing on the history of the concept, I will purport a definition of bearing witness that necessitates witnessing for collective change. Specifically, the collective nature of the term becomes evident because bearing witness draws on the concept of witness as *superstes*, *martis*, and the history of the holocaust witness.

Testifying, in the legal sense, does not require agency because one is externally summoned to testify. Bearing witness, however, requires agency because it internally motivated by one's desire to convey truth (Blustein 2008). Because of the agency involved in bearing witness, and the commitment to truth, the witness is never speaking solely on his / her own behalf. The witness actively bears the burden of witnessing in order to have an alternative truth known, even at his / her own physical risk. Thus, I also argue that bearing witness necessitates a personal experience. One must have experienced, in some form or other, that which one is bearing witness to (Blustein 2008). Without the personal experience, the "bearing" of bearing witness loses significance because it is without the emotional and / or physical historical pain.

This personal experience, however, can be a secondary experience. The second aspect of relationality that is critical to the concept of bearing witness is the presence of another person. There must be a witnessing other (e.g. an analyst, a jury, an audience, etc.) to the testimonial act (Hallas 2009). Bearing witness is contingent upon a "listening other", whether that presence is in bodily form as in a courtroom, or as the reader of a testimonial story. The witnessing other acts as a secondary witness, another person who knows the "truth" and can then testify to it. The secondary witness fills a critical role in the process of bearing witness. As Assmann notes, the experience of witnessing an act of bearing witness (specifically martyrdom), is significant (Assmann 2006, 269) . The primary witness (the martyr) needs a secondary witness to bear witness to the initial act of witnessing.

5.2 Bearing Witness as Activism

Bearing witness is a powerful form of activism, because of its dependence on advocating truth, on human relations (specifically its focus on the collective), and its use of the human body.

Bearing witness is not only a statement of truth. Bearing witness is a potential call to action, even if that call to action is just a call to revise what one considers history, because "the individual story, whether told through oral narrative, fiction, film, testimony, or performance, also serves as a challenge and a countermemory to official hegemonic history" (Hirsch and Smith 2002, 7). Through the "individual voice and body" (Hirsch and Smith 2002, 7) bearing witness seeks to leave its mark on cultural memory, to recognize the past (and arguably the present) as having being affected by particular acts, by particular people. Witnesses do not, however, just share their own memories, but also those of their societies, because memories are acquired, recalled, recognized and localized in society (Halbwachs 1992, Hirsch and Smith 2002). Bearing witness is effected by *and* affects cultural memory. It is a call to recognize the histories and the traumas of people traditionally left out of historical narratives.

5.2.1 Historical act of squatters bearing witness

The historical act of the squatters bearing witness was borne out of the desire to have their plight known and to have their rights recognized. The act of fasting, of bearing witness, involves four elements: why the squatters took a stand to have their plight heard, why they chose to fast, why they chose St. George's Cathedral, and why they agreed to move to Khayelitsha.

The truth about squatting: Taking a stand to have their plight heard

The squatters began to organize because the government of the Western Cape had increased their efforts to consolidate black South Africans living "illegally" in Cape Town. Although most of the men had passes to the city (and were thus termed "legal"), they were still unable to live with their wives and children, and were harassed once their passes expired. Women, however, faced a bitter struggle, as all of them were permanently "illegal" in Cape Town. Motom explicates this well saying, "for them [his wife and children] it was very difficult because if I wasn't there they had to lock to doors and the curtains and stay in the dark. Or otherwise they had to go out of the hostels to hide themselves from the police. There were lots of harassments from the police." This motivated Motom to join the Cathedral group because, "I was fighting for my rights… I was fighting to stay with my family where we want to without being harassed."

Dorothy, who faced numerous arrests recounts: "it was so hurting to be in jail by then because it was cold, no blankets, no mattresses and the conditions of food weren't good. We were eating very funny food. And you always staying in a scary situation because we were together with the criminals and those kinds of things." The horrible conditions were something that prompted her to join the squatters, "Mostly I felt that to associate with the other squatters would be very vitally

important because our voice would be heard as one group. Because we're meant to achieve one goal, all of us: to have a place to stay with our families and then to be out of arrests for pass laws."

Dorothy was separated from her children when she was in jail. Her children were in the Transkei. She brought her children to Cape Town after the fast. She elaborates, saying:

> "I left them there though, because it wasn't nice. Though in Eastern Cape there isn't that time of struggling to be fed. They were hungry and it wasn't even nice to me, but I was forced to leave them there to come here and do all the struggling. The bottom line is in between the struggle of being arrested, not having a place to stay, the bottom line is that I had to work."

She felt that joining with the Cathedral group would get her what she wanted, namely a pass and a place to stay:

> "I never thought of having a fast, as Dorothy, but when this was being spoken about in the meeting, I felt that, no, I had to associate myself with the group because I need a pass and at the same time I need a place to stay. And these people that are going to go there, to fast, their names are going to be written down, then I'll be left out. I'll be the one left out, in this whole process, so let me also embark myself in this. That was my reason."

Ngweventsha, although he was not religious, felt that there was no other way to ensure his wellbeing, but to fast. He said that "I joined those people even though I know fasting is a religious thing and I wasn't anti-religious by kind of nature, but because I was really so traumatized inside and oppressed I am just getting fears of myself that I may be interrupting the religious of the other people that I will meet in the church. So to me, it wasn't a new thing of this, by so hearing, but I felt that because we are fighting a common thing, I had to join them." Ngweventsha, although aware of the religious nature of a fast, knew that the most important thing for him was to be unified with other squatters.

Fasting: Claiming the religious and moral high ground

Through the entire group story telling sessions and the individual interviews, it never became clear how exactly the group decided to fast. Some say that the religious people suggested the fast, others say the media, others say the leaders, and still another says they got the idea from some women who fasted in Umtata after one of the deportations. Nevertheless, there is

consensus about the utility of fasting, and that it was a fast, not a hunger strike (as portrayed occasionally in the media). Generally, the group showed a distinct distrust of political organizations, partially because the organizations were underground and information about them was limited. The group avoided using that term hunger strike because hunger strikes are political tools. Instead, they used their faith to enact change, embarking on a fast. Religion enabled them to have their voices heard in a safe space.

Shirley said that fasting "was a good idea, because when you fast, you just… when you need something you must fast. That's why I think it would be better. I didn't know at that time when I was fasting that I would get something. I was just thinking about the police every time." Shirley did not think of the fast as political, because political methods put man above God. She said that fasting is more humble. Mtschicelwa, who participated in both violent and nonviolent struggles, agrees, saying, "Difficult as they are both, but they are different. In this sense, that when you are fasting, you don't fight, you are humble, only waiting for the day of your death. On the side of the politics, fighting, seeing somebody falling by the bullet next to you, hearing the bullet passing you, but you're not turning back, you're going forward, but waiting for the one to catch you." Motom says that fasting ensures positive outcomes, because "when you are fasting and praying there are no bad things that come out, but in a toi toi there are certain things – maybe you can be caught by a bullet, because at that time police were shooting. So they are different. But, it's one symbol. But in a different way."

The fast established the group as having the moral high ground compared to the aggressive tactics of the Western Cape government and the Apartheid regime, as demonstrated by the support garnered from the Black Sash, the media and religious bodies. The group, in an act of desperation, fasted and prayed, submitting themselves to their god and to the compassion of others, becoming willing to accept death over a life without rights. Lydia, who was hospitalized for starvation, says, "I told myself, this is where I'm going to die if I'm dying, because I'm with the people that I've given my hope with them. And when they think of this fasting, it was for a purpose, so I cannot break that purpose of the elders. When I asked Lydia about her experience in the hospital and whether she was tempted to give up the fast she said:

> Lydia: You know, on the 7th day, I wake up in the morning. I went to freshen myself and come back. We usually sleep on the benches with our blankets. Then I felt that there's something moving around and it comes up here (motions), when it comes here I cannot

breathe. And this happened so hurting. Up until I just cried! When I started to cry it was the time that I collapsed. I couldn't, I didn't know what happened to me.

SV: What happened after you collapsed?

Lydia: Of what happened in the Church, I cannot say because I don't know. I was unconscious. I was awakened when I was in hospital with this man called (unintelligible), but I don't remember who was the other one. Then what happened, I was asked where am I staying and I told them and they said don't I want to go back home and I said, "No" and they referred (unintelligible – man from earlier), can't you see that this child is going to die of this fasting that you people are doing. And he said, "yes, it's better for her to get died because you white people, you don't want to respond to the needs of the other people, especially us, the blacks, it's better for the blood to shed so that you can respond to our needs". And then…

SV: I think this is an interesting situation when you are in the hospital, because I think you could have probably very easily gone home.

Lydia: You know, even then, to my mind nothing strike on my mind that this is my opportunity of going home. What came to my mind was that this is the unity that we are forming. For me to break the unity would be messing up the decision of the elder people. You know, ever since I grew up a shy person, I don't want to mess somebody's things. So I felt that whatever I can be sick, or what, I had to go back to where I said I'm going to. So I resisted, saying I'm going back to St. George's Cathedral.

SV: What did you think, what did you feel, when this doctor was saying that you might die?

Lydia: You know that even worked my mind. By so saying that I can die because I was already gave up, saying that anything must happen to me. I'm just there.

This dialogue with Lydia demonstrates Lydia's obvious desire for collective action, but also the strength and dedication of her individual participation. In Lydia's case, this is particularly interesting, because throughout the interview she described herself as being a person unwilling to disagree with or challenge her elders. A body of research indicates that religion often provides the space for women to engage in political and civil action (B. O'Neill 2006, Caiazza 2005). Somewhat ironically, "women are sometimes able to benefit and find individual agency

within the most patriarchal of religious institutions… Within many such institutions, women can receive the stimulus and claim the agency necessary for participating in political and civil arenas" (B. O'Neill 2006, Caiazza 2005). Despite conveying an unwillingness to challenge the direction of her elders, Lydia demonstrated a profound sense of agency and willingness to sacrifice her physical body for the collective cause.

Hicksonia, who was pregnant, did not want to break the fast, even though she risked losing her unborn child[12], because then the fast would be a "lie". Hicksonia, like Lydia, demonstrated a deep commitment to achieving individual rights, as well as collective rights. They both recognized the need to participate collectively; therefore, they both underwent severe personal stress to continue collective action.

Fasting unified the group. They inspired each other to continue, specifically drawing on their shared religious motivations. Dorothy said that "what I've experienced in that fast was that, eh-eh, there are sometimes when you think you're going to die, but then when somebody starts to sing and you follow the song, it's when you recap the energy…that's the thing that made me continue because I always regain strength after singing and praying." She said, "After three days I feel a little bit stronger. No hunger," but that she felt "like I don't have intestines… It was very cold inside." Evelyn said the fasting and praying was empowering, and that it gave her self-esteem: "I did have that empowerment before, but it wasn't so strong [as] when I got the prayer."

Lydia also felt that the fasting and prayer strengthened her resolve: "Whatever the days were going. I just gave my focus to what I'm doing because it was just that there was no food. We were not eating. What are we doing? We're just thinking and praying. And you know what usually happened, when I felt that I'm losing the energy, there was the man that always like, he was like a person who monitored that there is one losing the energy, because that man, when I'm losing the energy, that man could just rise up and sing a song and preach and preach and preach. When he started preaching after regaining my strength, again he can preach and I can just see myself singing again and regaining the strength again.

Collectively, the group repeated the power of group song and prayer for maintaining their resolve. Years after the fast, during his interview, Motom still recalls the collective spirit of the

[12] Priscilla, another faster, miscarried during the fast.

group, which motivated him to join the exhibit process: “At least this is going to revive our spirit again and this is also going to take us to this unity that we used to have.”

Extending the collectivity at St. George’s: a safe place, a high profile place

Although the motivations behind fasting are still unclear (and perhaps unique to each individual), what is clear is that St. George’s Cathedral was chosen because it was high profile. Their plight would be heard in the Cathedral, where it might not be heard in a small church in the townships, and the police would be less likely to harass them because of the Cathedral’s profile. This tactic proved successful, as the national media covered the event almost daily and the BBC and other international media covered the event. Furthermore, as soon as the group moved to Holy Cross parish in Nyanga, media coverage dropped almost entirely.[13]

Ngweventsha, although non-Christian and unfamiliar with fasting, says the fasting and praying was motivational, as well as the media coverage:

> “As much as I wasn’t familiar with the fasting, I was having that hope that what we are fighting for we’re going to win. And what was most interesting to me and that strengthened me a lot more than the prayers and the other things that was taking place in there. I don’t know whether the other people still remember of this, there was a white woman who came in St. George’s Cathedral and she was having a newspaper and she encouraged us to be strong and to continue with this fasting because in the newspaper that she was having and she said she’s not going to show the other white people she had an article that the son of Koornhof was schooling overseas and he was there being evicted from school saying that he must go home to his father and tell his father to clean up the mess that he’s doing to these kind of people that are here in St. George’s Cathedral. And I felt that this is going to be our victory. I became more strong and strong.”

Motom and Shirley both expressed similar sentiments. Motom said “when I saw the media I felt confident, that yes, this has now reached a point where all what we are doing is going to be publicized. Everyone will know what is taking place.” Shirley said it was:

> “So interesting to see the media there. One thing struck on my mind was that. This is the time that everyone will know that there is something taking place here in St. George’s Cathedral, because the publicity is going to be out there. As a result of that,

[13] See timeline attached as Annexure B.

> out of the role of the media, even the general people were just coming from their work and pass by to see these people that they've learned about from the newspapers. So to me their role was very much important in the fasting point of view."

The Cathedral, and subsequently the media, played the role of the "listening other", as well as helping to create other "listening others". The plight of the squatters was shared not only with Cape Town and South Africa, but also with the world. As Jordt explains in her analysis of political activism in Burma, religion can play a profound role in political matters, specifically because religious bodies have popular support and moral legitimacy, and thus government is hesitant to interfere with them (Jordt 2007).

Sacrificing for others: Shacks and Khayelitsha

A critical element of the Cathedral group's fast was that they were not only fasting for their own rights, but for the rights of squatters in Cape Town more generally. This is critical because it not only demonstrates their motive for social change, rather than only their personal rights, but it is also important because it affected the results of their fast. Dr. Piet Koornhof, the government official in charge of dealing with their case repeatedly offered them a deal if they quit fasting and accepted his offer of bungalows for the 57 squatters (see Annexure B). The group, however, repeated their message that they were not only fasting for themselves, and thus would not accept an offer than excluded others. When asked whether they were satisfied with the outcome of the fast, they generally say they were, because they felt safe. Others, however, are bitter that their housing situation has not improved because the government did not follow through on its promises.

Lydia recounts how the government's promises were not fulfilled:

> "We had the tents and we were promised that we were, all the fasters, were going to be given bungalows. And the bungalows never came in. At least we beautified our places of stay by buying the ceiling boards like this and putting it to cover ourselves and shape the sight of the squatters and then we stayed. And then we were told that we were going to be moved here and this area was called Swartklip [Khayelitsha] and we started to resist saying that we don't go there. And we were forcibly removed to be here". She continued, saying, "no, no decision was taken of coming here. It was a forced removal. I remember the others moved a little bit, because we were just told that we were coming here and the trucks were brought in to take us because we were just so surprised of the area called Swartklip and we never even have an idea of that kind of place. The others

even left there and they moved during the time of 1986 shootings and burnings. No decision taken by us."

Lydia, like other fasters is disappointed by outcomes of the fast, as evidenced in our conversation below:

SV: Ok, so you were forced to move from the tents to here. And this was the sort of "outcome" of the fast, is that you were allowed to stay here?

Lydia: To me I cannot exact that it was the outcomes of Swartklip, or I'll be saying that it was a diversion of the outcomes of the St. George's Cathedral. Because what we're told there is that we were going to be given the bungalows to the place that we were going, of which it came not the way it was said because we told these people that the place that they are going to take us to is far from work, as you can see. We didn't like this place, so we were forced to come.

SV: So you were not so happy with that?

Lydia: No.

SV: And what do you feel about it now?

Lydia: To mine own perspective, excepting the group, I wasn't pleased of the area according to the distance from work, because I was used to be nearby work. And really I was too far to be here. But on the other hand, I was just pleased of having my own plot, because that was my goal, to have my own plot. But at least, I became used to be here, as the time goes on. Otherwise I wasn't pleased, only for the distance. Because we are even saying, they are just throwing us away.

Other interviewees are less jaded. Dorothy, who still lives in a shack, says that the fast ensured their freedom. She said: "after the fast I felt very brave, that after I got 3 months permit. It was great to me in the sense that I was free, I could go look for a job, no harassments, no arrests and prison free. So at least there is a part that I've achieved out of the fasting goals. But we still looked forward to getting the houses, of which is after then I did have a shack. Then all the goals that I needed to achieve, I've achieved. Through the fast."

Motom said he was satisfied with the results of the negotiations. He said that once the group moved to Holy Cross "we've stayed freely, no harassments, I was working then. If my wife want

to go to Eastern Cape she can go and my kids if they want to visit the Eastern Cape it was just fine… There weren't fears then." Because he was motivated to improve the lives of his children, he felt that that could happen in Khayelitsha. He did not want his children to grow up with separated parents. "They can separate themselves rather than by the situation… To me, it was the situation that made me to be separated from my parents."

All interviewees felt a sense of accomplishment since they were no longer harassed for passes. This was definitely a positive outcome of their unity. The interviewees who feel less satisfied because they were not given the houses they were promised (whether or not they still live in shacks), or were forced to move to Khayelitsha, demonstrate why even today the interviewees feel taken for granted. Their struggle contributed to hundreds of other squatters' sense of safety (with regards to passes), and to their ability to get land of their own, even if it was far from the city in Khayelitsha, yet they have gone unrecognized.

5.3 Memorialization as Bearing Witness

> *"To have suffered together is of greater value than identity of custom houses and frontiers…for indeed common suffering unites more strongly than rejoicing. Among national memories, sorrows have greater value than victories, for they impose duties and demand common effort" (Renan 1999: 153).*
>
> *"Renan's argument for the value of suffering elevates the community of survivors to claim a moral position and give agency to self and others to tell their experiences. Suffering and speech are thus connected, and both telling and listening are crucial to reconvene community that is glued together by shared memories, painful though they may be"* (Saikia 2007, 80).

As demonstrated in the previous sections, and reflected in the quotes above, the group felt a strong connection with each other due not only to their common struggle as squatters, but also specifically due to their common struggle of fasting. Both Motom and Ngweventhsa explicated how they thought the exhibit process reunited them, that they felt their spirit of unity was revived, and how they hoped it would continue. The memorialization process reminded them of their strength and collective power. Specifically, the acts of telling, being listened to, and being remembered helped them to remember their collective power and potential.

5.3.1 Telling as activism

Within feminist approaches and psychology / psychoanalysis, talking about trauma is seen as a potential step towards self-empowerment and towards some ability to live with the trauma. Specifically, "therapists who work with victims of collective violence emphasize the need for social repair. A therapist explains: 'victims need to know that their society as a whole acknowledges what has happened to them'" (Becker et al., 589 in Minow 1998, 336). Dorothy provides a good example of this as she explains why she is involved in the exhibit process:

> "When I was approached about my story I felt very proud. You know, when I look back on the past and feel myself in this house, I feel like at least I participated in the struggle. I struggled to have this house. It never came out of the air. It was never a donation to me. I struggled and fought to get this place where I am now. That is why I felt so proud and I had confidence and also I had a sense of giving the real story of myself, as Dorothy."

She giggles as she tells me, that, despite feeling unsatisfied with her housing situation she feels well: "Otherwise since I've started this storytelling I just find myself very happy. I have my own self-confidence. My own self-esteem." The exhibit and related research processes provide Dorothy with a sympathetic witness, to whom she can talk about her traumatic past and convey her disappointments of today.

Hallas describes the importance of this relationship between the one who is bearing witness and the one whom is listening:

> "Psychoanalysis understands the performative process of bearing witness for the *superstes* as a form of transference in which the patient/witness and therapist/listener both undergo a transformation. The witness begins to come to terms with the event, to truly experience it for the first time, while the listener shares the burden and, with it, the responsibility to participate in the struggle produced by the experience of the event. This responsibility offers the promise of transforming the psychic recognition of the trauma into praxis, which may entail political engagement, forms of social and psychological support, or the establishment and maintenance of the event's place in collective memory" (Hallas 2009, 12-13).

In the case of the exhibit, the goal is to include these individuals' stories into collective memory and encourage social change by bringing awareness to current social issues in their lives and the lives of other South Africans.

It is critical that those who have been under-represented and unacknowledged by their communities feel that they have been heard: "Literacy, communicability, and decipherability are forms of symbolic and cultural capital. Language, like memory, is part of the power of consciousness" (Derrida 2001 in de Silva 2007, 142). Ngweventsha shared his pain with me, saying, "What I'm saying is that it's not good to me is this. Well of course yes, I'm in Site C, but I'm still living in a shack and I've got the kids that are staying with me. There are a lot of them. They are not working. They went to school, but they don't get jobs. That is hurting me." By providing a platform for his voice to be heard, the Bearing Witness exhibit can help Ngweventhsa to mark his place in the community's consciousness, to increase his cultural capital and feel more secure with his socio-economic position.

Mtschicelwa said that he appreciated his inclusion in the exhibit process that St. George's Cathedral was undertaking "because you're speaking about something that I was in, let me speak myself about what I've went through."

The exhibit process provides a platform for Dorothy, Mtschicelwa, Ngweventsha and the other interviewees to bear witness once again. "For a human witness to testify, to bear witness to what he or she has externally witnessed, an act of perception must be transformed into a speech act; mediated by human memory, visual perception thus becomes verbal enunciation…For such an image to bear witness to the event it has 'captured,' it must rely on an external human agency to name in language the event for which it provides visual evidence" (Hallas 2009, 14). Thus the interview process and the exhibit provide the opportunity for the fasters to once again bear witness. The benefits of telling one's story are contingent, however, on a specific way of listening.

5.3.2 Listening as activism

For telling to be activist, it requires a listener that is sympathetic to the teller's story and to the activism of telling and listening. That is to say, "the ethical address of the *superstes* entails a request to listen, to acknowledge, to affirm, and to share the experience of the event, in other words, to bear witness to the witness, to become a secondary witness" (Agamben 1999, 17 in Hallas 2009, 12-13). Martha Minow elaborates, arguing "the benefits of truth-telling depend in no small measure on the presence of sympathetic witnesses. Survivors recount the painful

stories in the course of establishing trusting relationships and receive acknowledgement and validation from others" (Minow 1998, 333). The strength of the exhibit process is that we worked with the interviewees over several months, visited them in their homes and even took them on a social outing to Robben Island. When interviewees run up to hug me and call me to ask me when they are going to see me again and to tell me they miss me, I know that I have filled the role of an empathic witness and have gained their trust.

The strength of the Bearing Witness interview process is that it is not solely an oral history project, but part of a larger exhibit project. While oral historians generally conduct "semi-structured or where possible interviewee-led styles of interviews, which occur within an intimate one-on-one dialog," the "TRC oral testimonies were delivered before TRC commissioners, lawyers, translators, media, and a crowded audience" (Field 2010). The TRC had the benefit of placing individual stories in the public consciousness, but not on the individuals' terms. The exhibit process, however, is both a participatory process, open to interviewee input and suggestions, as well as a means of changing public consciousness. The interviews, although guided, changed dramatically depending on what stories interviewees wanted to tell. The relationship between interviewer / listener and interviewee / teller is always a delicate relationship; however, "the distance between victim and listener hence cannot become an obstacle, nor can we continue to treat violence 'like someone else's history – or even, not history at all' (Pandey 2001:6)" (Saikia 2007, 67-68). Listening compassionately to others' stories and providing a platform for bearing witness, is critical; however, cues should always be taken from the interviewee / teller. Thus, "we insist that we always ask the political questions of how relations either thwart or enable agency, especially the agency of those politically marginalized, and of how relations might be reshaped to serve a vision of greater social equality" (Campbell 2008, 44).

For example, the strength of the Bearing Witness interviewees, and their desire to share their stories, is demonstrated by their willingness to participate in the exhibit, even before a relationship had been established. When I asked Lydia why she chose to take part in the exhibit process she said:

> You know I was very glad and also excited when I heard this thing about Dorothy because what struck my mind was that, "Are there people that are still recognized us after so many years?" I mean, it was just an amazed to me that there are people that can think of publicizing our struggle of then because I thought we were just taken for

> granted, no one even acknowledged us. So that is the thing that drove me. Because when I heard about this I was very much excited and even committed to go around and look for the others if Dorothy is asking me because to me, what was just striking and imagined was how do these people even think of recognizing us?

Dorothy shared a similar sentiment, feeling proud to be recognized:

> When I was approached about my story I felt very proud. You know, when I look back on the past and feel myself in this house, I feel like at least I participated in the struggle. I struggled to have this house. It never came out of the air. It was never a donation to me. I struggled and fought to get this place where I am now. That is why I felt so proud and I had confidence and also I had a sense of giving the real story of myself, as Dorothy.

Several interviewees spoke about the need to be acknowledged, or validated. Lydia thought that her community would be very surprised by the exhibit:

> I think that other people are going to be surprised and amazed and the others are going to be shocked because I don't think the others that are looking at us think that we have done what we have done. So when they see that definitely they will be surprised.

Thus, validation / acknowledgement is important, because "non-validation of their circumstances exacerbates the rage and bitterness of victim communities" (Green 2009, 77), which may have been particularly relevant considering their disenchantment with being moved to Site C in the first place and the lack of physical improvements in their lives.

Hirsch and Smith argue that listening, that acknowledging others' pain can be considered activist:

> "A feminist cultural memory … would engage in modes of knowledge that are embodied, material, located and thus also responsive and responsible to the other. Feminist modes of listening…can become ethical and political acts of solidarity and, perhaps, agency, on behalf of the trauma of the other. Significantly, however, they would also warn of the risks of even such a well-intentioned identificatory practice and the inevitable appropriations that inflect a politics based on empathy. They would remind us that forgetting and suppression must be contested by active remembering and that the

> practice and the analysis of cultural memory can in itself be a form of political activism" (Hirsch and Smith 2002).

Hirsch and Smith explicate well the potential for listening to be activist, but with important qualifications. They note the potential for activist listening, but also warn of the danger of appropriating stories. Thus, not *all* listening is activist, but a particular kind of listening, one that has motives of solidarity, not only empathy. Listening, within a memorialization process, can be activist because of its dedication to "active remembering" and solidarity.

Cynthia Enloe, a prominent feminist scholar, also considers listening, like telling, to be a political act (Enloe 1990). The relationship between listener and teller can be a political act. "These feminist theorists emphasize that self and community are in a symbiotic relationship and that the act of telling and listening reconstitutes relational understanding in which language becomes the location to create and identity and fight silence in both the political and the cultural arenas" (Saikia 2007, 68). In the case of the squatter group, many members are motivated to share their story to establish their position firstly, within their immediate community, and secondly, within the wider South African community of struggle activists.

Shirley, for example, is still hoping that the "54"[14] will get nice houses so that the people can see "those were the fighters of the passes and the houses. It was so nice, but later on I think, eh, we look the same as the people who didn't even participate in our… You see? Lately I think, these people they don't even know where I come from. I ask myself, inside, they don't know where I come from. Yes, we got hokkies[15], but I know where I come from. They only grab it now. It was so nice, but sometimes I think, No man, I shouldn't be staying with these people who didn't know this…"

She tells me she feels that her community in Site C not only does not acknowledge their struggle, but also actively suppresses the memory of their struggle:

> "We are just like enemies to the people now. When we come outside, we're enemies. We mustn't have our meetings now… and now we're… everyone's like, naw, we don't' worry about that 54, we also go, we were also in the squatter camp! Like that, like that. So, we didn't… that was not on our mouths about '54' now."

[14] The newspapers wrote that there were 57 fasters. Shirley says there were 54, probably due to some of the fasters terminating the fast early.

[15] Afrikaans word for a small house.

> "Last year, the year before. We used to held our meetings in Phillippe now, because when they watch us… when they see us walking together they say, "where are they going now?" Every time. So we decided to held our meetings in Phillippe. But that didn't work, we get tired."
>
> "We wanted to fight for our rights. Because we see, when we watch TV, we see the people, 'oh, that one was exiled, he gets so much for fighting' and we also think inside, 'why they don't worry about us'. And even Madiba Mandela knows about this, because the papers were also going to Robben Island about that people that are fasting. But no people talk about us. That's why we started to call again the meetings, so that we can… but as we coming from, when I come back I can't tell you that I come from the meeting of the 54 because I'm scared, maybe you're going to burn my house for that, because they don't want us to talk about the fasting people no, anymore. They say its nonsense."

Shirley assures me that she is no longer scared of the consequences of speaking up and that "I'm also really thinking this [the exhibit process] must go forward, really, so they can see even those that never participated, should also learn and know what we went through."

5.3.3 Exhibit as witness

The exhibit process (the story-telling sessions and personal interviews) provides opportunities for personal recognition and validation. The physical exhibit, however, extends this process to a wider public, playing into the relationality aspect of bearing witness. The exhibit will be located in St. George's Cathedral in central Cape Town, available to tourists, both domestic and international, and local Capetonians.[16] The exhibit serves as an extension of the bearing witness relationship developed in the interview / story-telling process, extending the act of bearing witness from the fasters to the physical exhibit and extending the concept of empathic witness to include patrons of the exhibit, while working to validate subverted histories, and educate and conscientize (Freire 1990) patrons.

The desire to be validated / acknowledged for their struggles motivates many of the interviewees. When asked what he hoped people would think when they saw this exhibit, Ngweventsha replied:

[16] There have also been discussions have designing a traveling exhibit that would move through the townships and throughout South Africa to increase the number of potential viewers.

> You know, to me, I don't care whatever what can people think of it, but to me, the only thing is this – they will know today that as much as we've started the struggle, it is being recognized by the other people. There are people that acknowledge what we did. As much as they don't understand that we did this struggle at the end, it accommodated even those that never participated in the struggle. That is what it is for me.

The exhibit is important beyond validation, however, especially for Mtschicelwa. When asked what he thought people should take from the exhibit he said:

> I think that this is the history of the coming generation. They will look and read and know of the past, and know the struggles that we went through and learn about how could they also defend themselves from whatever could come up in their generation.

Mtschicelwa recognizes the educational potential of the exhibit and its potential to bear witness. "Since the conception of witness as *testis* – or external witness – is grounded in a human act of visual perception, it has provided the principal framework for understanding how images may bear witness" (Hallas 2009, 13) and make the "invisible visible" (Assmann 2006, 271). Specifically, Mtschicelwa recognizes how knowing the past can help for constructive views of the future, including the ability to demand one's rights. For him, future generations need to know about the struggles under Apartheid, but more importantly they must learn from the methods of activism that were used in the struggle against Apartheid so that they can employ them in their time, for their own purposes.

Evelyn took an early interest in history "because history can encourage human beings that you must sacrifice in life," which contributes to her perspective that "it's much important that even though there are people that were upset on the things that happened then, it gives an interest in that kind of a person to get a knowledge and an understanding of what happened then. And the reason why that happened. And also for you to get the story it is for you to learn and get a comparison of then and now." She continues, saying "the exhibition itself and the surrounding elements in between the exhibition, will give a lesson to those that never participated. In fact, in general, it will give a lesson that unity is strength. To be united it's to be fit at the very same time."

Shirley echoes this sentiment, "You know, this is going to make a difference, I'm sure, because it's where they will learn and know that we've struggled before we came here. As they said, it was just like a gift. They will know now, that it wasn't a gift. We struggled to be here." Kate

wants to help people understand what they went through in order to motivate people. The exhibit is particularly useful for this because "the image always leaves an excess that remains after signification, that which, as surplus, evades the construction of meaning through discourse" (Hallas 2009, 15), rendering the exhibit open to interpretation and individual motivation.

Motom was excited about this process because he was going to get to see the other people again and he believes the exhibit will not only serve to inspire patrons, but the group itself: "At least this is going to revive our spirit again and this is also going to take us to this unity that we used to have."

6 Activist Memorialization

> *"The reach of political reconciliation is limited to the political elite, to political activists on this side and to state agents on the other side; its embrace is limited to a minority, in a word, to perpetrators and their victims… The embrace of social reconciliation includes the vast majority, in a word, beneficiaries and victims* (Mamdani 1998, 13).

Using the Bearing Witness exhibit as a case study, I argue that memorialization can be activist. Memorialization projects that seek to only acknowledge or educate are not activist; however, memorialization projects carried out within a certain methodological framework are activist because they bear witness (as previously defined), and bearing witness is activist. Thus, activist memorialization is contingent on the memorial project's specific content, process and outcomes.

6.1 Memorialization is Political

Memorials are not apolitical spaces; they are created with particular agendas, although not always self-consciously political agendas. This fact does not discredit, but rather enhances their ability to contribute to change, specifically through education. As Freire and Faundez argue, "by placing such stress on the political neutrality of education and science [or in this case, memorialization], their political partisanship is ultimately shown up. The denial that they are political is finally perceived as a political act" (Freire and Faundez 1989, 31). Political neutrality is not the goal. "Collective memories have political uses" (Blustein 2008, 104) (Foner 2002, Plumb 2004, Spitzer 1996) and thus memorials' political nature (intentional or not) actually enhances attendees' knowledge about the creators' perspective. This political perspective is to be embraced, rather than discarded. Ultimately, "in a society where everything is so highly

politicized, culture (including visual cultural statements) cannot be divorced from politics: *Culture is in politics and politics in culture*" (Coombes 2003, 151). Memorial activities "are not disinterested social constructions of the past but are marshaled in the service of political agendas that can be assessed for the valued and goods they do or do not promote" (Blustein 2008, 140). The challenge and the key, therefore, is to discover the influence of the two on each other, so that in doing so a transitioning society can be strengthened.

The goal then for activist memorialization is to promote histories that are and have been subjugated. Throughout colonial and patriarchal societies, national level narratives (often fashioned in a way to promote national unity) are promoted at the expense of the less powerful peoples' histories. In South Africa, where the black majority was oppressed for hundreds of years, the advent of democracy meant that in some cases "museums were enjoined to 'embrace the dynamic history' with 'blacks as makers of history' rather than 'blacks as makers of pots' and to encourage 'a reflexive approach where visitors to museums are exposed to debates rather than clear cut single issue answers and where they become aware of the processes which shape popular memory'" (Tomaselli and Ramgobin in (Coombes 2003, 152). This process of recognizing the histories and politics of subjugated peoples is evidence of democratic practices in the works, particularly if memorialization projects can avoid the temptation to provide an orthodox narrative and instead leave room for debate.

Furthermore, by recognizing subjugated histories, activist memorialization highlights many of the current issues that reflect *why* the group was and / or is subjugated. That is to say, the people being memorialized are generally both historically and currently without social and political power and are thus largely excluded from the positive benefits that social and political power bring, namely justice – social, economic, political, and cultural. Improper housing, inadequate medical care, unresolved psychological traumas and fragmented communities often still plague those whose histories have not been integrated into the recognized national history.

6.2 Recognizing Forgotten People and Struggles

Transitional justice mechanisms frequently fail to reach out to "ordinary members of society, those who benefitted or got victimized as part of the logic of an ongoing system" (Mamdani 1998, 13). State-level structures also have the threat of homogenizing and excluding the diversity of a country. As a transitional justice process "the TRC has been heavily criticized within South Africa for the compromises made in the name of "national unity" and reconciliation that allowed so many to walk free while the conditions they had perpetrated under Apartheid and that had reduced so many to poverty and powerlessness remained intact" (Coombes 2003,

8). Consequently, neglecting the structure of Apartheid was a fundamental error in the state-level process, because it denied many victims the right to share their truths about the structures of Apartheid, thus actively and inactively suppressing a more democratic notion of truth/s.

One of the primary strengths of activist memorialization is its ability to make formerly "intellectual" pursuits available to the average person. Those being memorialized play an active role in their own memorialization. Activist memorials provide a unique opportunity to complement the state-level structures, involving a wider constituency of people. Activist memorialization can "represent the beginning of a new phase in collaborative public history project" (Coombes 2003, 11), thus enabling the wider public to practice democracy by participating in the promotion of truths about the past, as well as drawing attention to contemporary issues.

The individual struggle and experience are recognized through activist memorialization efforts. The activist memorialization process ensures that the memorialized, the witness, has a voice in the process. Activist memorialization acknowledges the survivor's right and claim to their "'imaginative access' to history" (Brison 2002 in Saikia 2007, 68). Specifically, the activist memorialization process is not the primary body bearing witness; its role is to provide a space for the witness to "re" bear witness him/herself, because it is the witnesses' story. Activist memorialization projects merely facilitate its telling, thus highlighting the witnesses' value and agency.

As previously argued, both listening and telling are powerful methods of activist behaviour. Although the TRC and similar projects facilitate listening and telling, they lack the trusting relationships that are built over time through a sustained and collaborative effort (Minow 1998). Activist memorialization projects examine "past in the light of current needs, interests, beliefs, and values" ensuring "the past can become a force for personal growth and political and social betterment" (Blustein 2008, 13).

6.3 Memorialization as Public History Mechanism

> *"Monuments, museums and other cultural spaces should embody the history, experience and values of different groups and classes from their perspectives, not only those of the previously or currently dominant"* (Coombes 2003, 151).

Drawing on feminist theory, which privileges first-person narratives for telling history, activist memorialization similarly privileges the individual story (Saikia 2007). National history is all too often an "extension of men's history. Military and civilian men who participated in the war were

rewarded with high-sounding titles, their actions were memorialized in public ceremonies, and their deeds were enshrined in public, collective memory. The memory of the "liberation war" became the story of … the male hero, who symbolically and literally vindicated the colonial effeminization… in order to create a discourse of remasculinization … and the nation-state" (Saikia 2007, 73). Thus, activist memorialization aims to widen what is valued as history and who are valued as heroes / heroines, including both women and other traditionally excluded members of society. History, in the formal sense, tends to be dominated by the state and by "orthodoxy"; however, there are an increasing number of projects in South Africa that seek to create a more inclusive history, even within the academic world, namely The History Workshop (founded at the University of Witswatersrand in 1977, a year after the mass student protests of 1976) and the Centre for Popular Memory (formally founded at the University of Cape Town in 2001, but its predecessor, the Western Cape Oral History Project was founded in 1985). Memorials serve to honour those struggles and people that are left out of national narratives, to tie the past problems to the present issues, and to recognize that all people have a right to memory, a right to history.

6.3.1 Memorialization educates and conscientizes

Memorials are important places for alternative education, because "no matter how much the museum, consciously or unconsciously, produces and affirms the symbolic order, there is always a surplus of meaning that exceeds set ideological boundaries, opening spaces for reflection and counter-hegemonic memory" (Huyssen 1995, 15). It is not uncommon for educators to take their students to museums, memorials, etc., especially in relation to national history. The District Six Museum is a prime example of a museum that not only educates, but also serves to recreate some sort of collective identity amongst the people of "District Six" (Rasool and Prosalendis 2001). Travellers also frequent museums, memorials, etc. to educate themselves on national history. Memorials are creative, interactive ways to engage learners with various subjects.

In the context of transitioning societies, the construction of memorials begs a key question in relation to the goals of memorials: whether the goal is "to educate for transition and for a new model of national unity or to be a venue that eschews a conciliatory role in favor of exploring the contradictions and tensions of a more dynamic model of history and society" (Coombes 2003, 206). Thus, if memorials are aimed to educate, and "education [is] one place where the individual and society are constructed, a social action which can either empower or domesticate students" (Shor 1993, 25), then memorials serve as places that can either empower or

domesticate attendees. They can stimulate constructive thought, or they cannot. For memorials to fill this critical role of conscientizing, they need to stimulate the emotions and intellect of the attendees - forcing them, in a way, to open their hearts and minds to others' experience of struggle and to the "contradictions and tensions" (Coombes 2003) therein. "Critical consciousness proceeds through the identification of 'generative themes', which Freire identifies as 'iconic representations that have a powerful emotional impact in the daily lives of learners'" (Nora 2002, 5). The potential for an "emotional impact" also demonstrates the potential for a shift from historical consciousness to social consciousness, which recognizes the attendees themselves as political people, as people who have some stake in the portrayed events. It is this emotional impact that West calls the "painful yet empowering process of conscientization" (West 1993). Memorials can serve that function of engaging the attendees with subjugated histories in a way that encourages (although does not guarantee) emotive intellectual responses, which then in turn can stimulate a public conscience and social action.

As educational tools, and therefore political tools, memorials require attendees to engage (mentally, emotionally, and physically) with the presented material (through visual, physical, auditory, etc. means) and provide a special opportunity to do so. "What sometimes happens is that the oppressed popular masses, for a number of reasons, remain at the level of awareness of the facts, but fail to grasp the causes which are a more rigorous explanation of the facts. And simply superimposing a theoretical explanation which is alien to them will not be the way to solve this problem of knowledge" (Freire and Faundez 1989, 48). Unlike traditional educational means (i.e. books and lectures), memorials engage more senses, and thus more avenues for engagement and for the recognition of multiple truths. Physically, attendees must force themselves to walk around the memorial, which encourages engagement with the material. "When you put forward the idea that truth lies in the quest and not in the result, that it is a process, that knowledge is a process, and thus we should engage in it and achieve it through dialogue, through breaking with the past" (Freire and Faundez 1989, 32), you provide learners (i.e. all people learning, whether in a school or not) the opportunity to participate in the process, turning them into actors of change rather than passive recipients of "history". Therefore, if someone attends the exhibit, it already shows a willingness to put forward something of an active effort to learn what the memorial is trying to convey, "and then they will discover for themselves their moments of resistance, how they express their resistance, the foundations they have on which to build an ideology; and they will discover that it is they themselves who have to build it" (Freire and Faundez 1989, 28). Attendees are confronted with an opportunity to

see the ways in which history played itself out, and how it plays itself out in their lives, and how they are part of the process and have the opportunity to affect the process. "'Making public spaces intimate' means bringing our most intimate hurts into the public space, so that the 'talking about the hurts' triggers something in the audience with which they identify, which they receive and respond to" (van der Merwe and Gobodo-Madikizela 2007, 47). As memorials recognize under-acknowledged peoples' personal struggles, they provide the space for attendees to engage with those struggles and connect with their own struggles.

7 Conclusion

> *Each person establishes a sense of herself in terms of her ability to identify the subject or agency of her present thinking with that of certain acts and events that took place in the past… But remembrance in this sense is equally important to communities – families, tribes, nations, parties – that is, to human entities that exist often for much longer than individual men and women. To neglect the historical record is to do violence to this identity and thus to the community that it sustains (Waldron 1992, 6).*
>
> *"What is the moral value of bearing witness? There is the consequentialist answer which says: bearing witness promotes or may reasonably be expected to promote desirable outcomes of various sorts, and its moral value is entirely accountable for by the good consequences that do or are expected to flow from it. Among these consequences are the following: bearing witness, because of its testimonial character, is often crucial to restoring the mental health of survivors; it may be a necessary part of a process of reconstructing societies devastated by violence and internal divisions; it can focus attention on the needs of those who are in peril and generate support for humanitarian assistance; it can bring crimes or evidence for them to light and help bring the guilty to justice; it can inspire others with examples of exemplary loyalty and heroism; and so forth. Of course, outcomes may be uncertain and may not actually result; and bearing witness may have multiple and unintended consequences, good as well as bad" (Blustein 2008, 329).*

In 1982, 57 people fasted for 23 days for the right to live with their family. They were given that right, but poverty, family and community issues remain. Today, many of the former squatters are still dealing with property rights – vagueness over lease papers, plot size and ownership issues continue to create unrest. Many continue to wait for their Peoples' Housing Project (PHP) houses and still live in shacks. The townships are rife with violence and many families

still suffer due to sickness, unemployment and lack of quality education, public services, healthcare, etc.

The argument can be made that something is good only if it has good consequences (Blustein 2008); however, as demonstrated by the interviewees' comments, they feel successful, even though they did bear witness partly in vain. They achieved some of their goals, but not all of them. The 57 squatters' 23 day fast at St. George's Cathedral ensured that the larger squatter community enjoyed an increased sense of freedom. Although they did not get the houses they wanted, and many moved to Khayelitsha reluctantly due to its location, they were no longer threatened by arrests and deportations. Despite the lack of more tangible results, this freedom to live with their families in Cape Town made the fast worthwhile.

The Bearing Witness exhibit projects seeks to remember this group for their struggles, while also shedding light on the issues that continue to negatively affect their communities. However, despite goals of educating and advocating for social change, there are no guarantees the call will be heard. The continuing process of bearing witness to subverted narratives might do little to create material improvements in people's lives and can feel futile. This is important to note, particularly in South Africa, where "the black working class majority still live either in informal settlements or Apartheid-built townships" (Field 2010). Merely publicizing peoples' struggles does not guarantee a transformation of their circumstances or of the exhibit patrons' consciousness and the privileging of immaterial recovery over material improvements can be used as an excuse to ignore the systems of oppression that affect the lives of people in very concrete, material ways (Craps 2010).

Merely writing or talking about the injustices of the past does not heal the past. As Paul Farmer notes, "writing of the plight of the oppressed is not a particularly effective way of assisting them" (Farmer 2005, 26). Sean Field captures a similar sentiment common amongst researchers: "Every sentence I write about survivors feels as if I am doing them a disservice by analytically cutting into their shattered lives" (Field 2010). Similarly, I often felt throughout the exhibit process that my role as a researcher was an incomplete and largely ineffective role considering the changes that need to happen in their lives. However, the interviewees themselves, who repeated that they have benefited from the research / exhibit process, especially through an increased sense of power and self-esteem, reassured me that bearing witness, both then and now is a useful tool.

Nevertheless, the process of recognizing victims and / or survivors is always "unfinished business". That is to say, victims will always have continuing needs given their history of oppression. Reparations, truth commissions, exhibits, etc. have "ambivalent psychological consequences for survivors – public acknowledgement of social truths and monetary compensation are valuable contributions, but they can never wholly meet all the psychological needs of the survivors as these are disparate, inchoate and contradictory" (Hamber and Wilson 2002, 39). These ambivalent consequences should not deter society from striving to rebuild the lives of victims, or of the community at large. However, it does point out that "we should expect to have to live with the unsatisfied demands…of survivors for a long time" (Hamber and Wilson 2002, 39).

Bearing witness in the form of an exhibit does not guarantee that the interviewees will engage in further political activity, it does, however, seek to recognize this group of people for the hard battle they have fought and continue to fight today. This project is not so presumptuous to think it can solve all the problems of this group by merely enabling them to tell their story, but bearing witness does have positive outcomes. It provides space "for a new vocabulary to emerge, for it is only in language that communication becomes possible and the search for the meaning of violence and what it breached can continue" (Arendt [1953] 1994 in Saikia 2007, 67-68). By raising the status of the individual experience, while recognizing its necessary connection with the collective experience, we are able to see the effect that the individual has on the collective, as well as the role the collective has towards the individual. Recognizing individual memories is critical to valuing individual struggles, particularly those struggles that are under-acknowledged by the public.

This does not deny the political and activist nature of bearing witness, however. Thus, we must continually bear witness to the struggles of the past, but more importantly, we must support and engage in efforts that enable victims to bear witness to their own struggles. In this way, victims are able to [re]claim a stage and speak about their victories and their strength, rather than just their "victimhood", thus regaining their sense of power and dismantling their feelings of being forgotten. In this way, the exhibit supports Nora's notion that "memory can be collective, emancipatory and sacred" (Nora 2002). By following a similar format as Bearing Witness – a participatory exhibit process that values the individual – one can continue and expand the act of bearing witness, and thus continue the activism of bearing witness, working for social change by recognizing victims and their subverted histories.

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Annexure A - Interview Guide

First have interviews verbally agree to the recording of the interview

Interview Guide

I. Basic Information
    1. Name
    2. Present address
    3. Year of birth
    4. Marital status
    5. Year of marriage or cohabitation

II. Childhood
    1. Where were you born?
    2. How many years did you live in the house where you were born?
    3. Who did you live with?
    4. When did you first move?
    5. Where did you move?
    6. How long did you live in that house? (repeat as necessary)
    7. When did you move to the Western Cape or Cape Town?
    8. What township or squatter camp did you move to?
    9. Do you remember why your family moved?
    10. How did the move affect your family economically?
    11. How did it affect you personally?
    12. Did either of your parents have to commute long distances for paid work?
    13. Where did your father work?
    14. What kind of paid work did he do?
    15. Do you remember him ever being out of work?
    16. Where did your mother work?
    17. What kind of paid work did she do?

18. Do you remember her ever being out of work?
19. Do you remember your grandparents?
20. Did your grandparents play a significant role in your life?

III. Relationship with Parents

1. What was your relationship like with your father?
2. With your mother?
3. Did they live together throughout your childhood?
4. What kind of person do you think your parents hoped you would grow up to be?
5. Did they bring you up to consider certain things important in life?

IV. Religion

1. Did your parents attend a place of worship?
2. What denomination?
3. Did you attend service?
4. How important was religion to you in your daily life growing up?
5. How did it inform your ideas about how people should be treated?

V. Parents' other interests

1. When your parents were not doing their work, how did they spend their time?
2. Did they have interests outside the home? For example, did they participate in any community groups?
3. Were they politically active? Describe their activities.
    i. Were they active through political organisations?
    ii. Civic organisations?
    iii. Religious organisations?
    iv. Trade unions?

VI. Community and social class

1. What family relations of your mother or father do you remember?
2. Did they live nearby?
3. How did they influence you?
4. Who were the most important people in your community?

5. Why were they considered important?
6. Do you remember your parents ever attending community meetings?
7. Do you know what types of things were discussed in these meetings?

VII. School

1. How old were you when you started school?
2. Do you remember first going to school?
3. Type of school – coloured, black, Indian, white, bantu?
4. Were you satisfied with your schooling?
5. Did the teachers emphasize certain things as important in life?
6. How old were you when you left school?
7. Would you have stayed longer if you had the opportunity?

VIII. Work

1. What was your first full-time job?
2. How did you get the job?
3. Did you receive any training?
4. Were you ever promoted?
5. If you weren't, was that frustrating to you?

IX. Marriage

1. What age did you get married or did move in with someone?
2. How did you meet?
3. Where did you live after you were married / moved in together?
4. For how many years?
5. Why did you move?
6. Did your partner have a job?
7. What sort of job?

X. Children

1. Do you have any children?
2. Were your children born in a hospital or home setting?
3. How many? Names and years of birth.

4. Did they have the benefit of an education?
5. What type of education - coloured, black, Indian, white, bantu?
6. Can you talk about your experiences of putting your children through school?
7. Did they ever live separately from you when they were growing up?
8. Where do your children live no?
9. Have they started paid employment?

XI. Religion and Politics as an Adult

1. Do you remember your first experience of religion?
2. How important was religion to you as a young adult?
3. What church did you attend?
4. How often?
5. When did you start to take an interest in politics?
6. Did you attend community meetings?
7. Where were they?
8. What was discussed at these meetings?
9. Who were the leaders? Why?
10. What other meeting places were there?
11. Were politics ever discussed at church?
12. Why do you think politics were discussed at church?
13. Did anyone say that politics shouldn't be discussed at church?
14. Were you ever jailed?
15. Why?
16. For how long?
17. What effect did this have on you emotionally?
18. What effect did this have on you politically?

XII. Life before the fast

1. Where were you a year before coming to the cathedral?
2. What was life like? What happened in your day-to-day experience of life?
3. Were you involved in any organised action?

4. What were some of the things you enjoyed and the characters you remember?
5. How did you make the decision to come to the Cathedral?
6. Why did you come to the Cathedral?
7. Were any relatives or children with you at the Cathedral?
8. How did that influence your experience at St. George's?

XIII. Experience at St. George's

1. How did you gain entry to the Cathedral?
2. What was a day in your life as a 1982 Nyanga "Squatter" in St. George's Cathedral like?
3. What roles were play by the Cathedral staff or volunteers (if any) and identify any other significant role player?
4. Had you ever fasted before?
5. How was the fast negotiated and framed (Dos and donts)?
6. Were there any physical changes to your body and if yes, what happened?
7. Was medical support available and if yes, what form did it take?
8. Did you experience any emotional changes?
9. Did the fast trigger a spiritual experience?
10. There was a lot of media involved, do you remember any specific members of the media or media groups?
11. Who dealt with the press and how was that decided?
12. Were you ever interviewed?
13. In what way did the media help or hinder the fasting and negotiation processes?
14. You became known as the Nyanga Cathedral group?
15. How was this name attached to you?
16. What kind of contact was maintained between the Cathedral squatters and other squatter settlements?
17. Did you maintain contact with family and friends not in the Cathedral?
18. What kind of contact was maintained with organisations (including churches, trade unions, cbos) supporting the struggles of squatter communities at the time?

XIV. Life immediately after St. Georges – through the '80's

1. How did it get decided that you would move from St. George's to Holy Cross?

2. How did you feel about this decision?
3. What was it like at Holy Cross?
4. Who initiated the negotiations?
5. What were the central demands or issues for exploration?
6. Where did the negotiations take place?
7. How were the “community” delegates decided upon and who were they?
8. Were there any other people involve? Who were they? And what was there role?
9. What was the feedback mechanism to the group?
10. Were there any difficult decisions to be made and how were these resolved?
11. What were the promised outcomes of the stay at St. George’s?
12. What were the actual outcomes of the stay at the St. George’s Cathedral?
13. In what ways were you dissatisfied with the outcomes?
14. In what ways were you satisfied?

XV. Life from early/mid 80’s to 1994

1. Describe what life was life for you after leaving Holy Cross church in Nyanga.
2. Where did you live?
3. How many times did you move?
4. What did you do for work?
5. Was your family ever separated?
6. Did you participate in any other protests?
7. Were you politically affiliated?
8. What were your political engagements?
9. Tell me about a difficult time in your life during this period.
10. Tell me about a happy or exciting time in your life during this period.

XVI. Life 1994-2010

1. Did life change after 1994? In what ways?
2. How did it stay the same?
3. In what ways were your hopes fulfilled?
4. In what ways were you disappointed?

5. Would you consider yourself politically active now?
6. In what ways are you politically active?
7. Did you vote in 1994? Have you voted since? Why/why not?
8. Did your church-going habits change? Your personal prayer life?
9. Do you attend community meetings?
10. What types of things were discussed at these meetings?

XVII. Life Today

1. Where do you live today?
2. Who lives with you?
3. How do you feel about your living arrangements? Did you expect to be living in a different place / space?
4. Do you work? How do you get by with money?
5. Where do your children live?
6. Would you consider your children to be politically active?
7. Do you attend church? Regularly or irregularly?
8. Would you consider yourself politically active today?
9. In what ways?
10. Before starting this process with St. George's, how often did you think about the fast? Ever?
11. What specific thoughts about the fast did you or do you have?
12. What other memories does it trigger?
13. Did you ever talk to other people about your involvement in the fast?
14. Who?
15. What story did you tell? Was it detailed?
16. Did you ever meet with other people who fasted?
17. Who?
18. Why those people?
19. Before starting this process with St. George's did you ever go back to the Cathedral?
20. Why?

21. How often?
22. Why did you decide to participate in the exhibit, educational and research process?
23. What were your expectations for the process?
24. How have they not been met?
25. How have they been met so far?

The interview is almost over – look back at your life

26. What are your disappointments in life? What do you wish was different about your life now?
27. What are your proudest moments in life?
28. What are your dreams for the future?

Annexure B - Timeline of Squatter Struggles 1980-1986

TIMELINE FOR THE NYANGA "CATHEDRAL" AND OTHER SQUATTER STRUGGLES IN CAPE TOWN: 1980-1986[17]

Life Under Influx Control

Western Cape authorities increase their influx control efforts – attempting to further control the movement of black South Africans in the urban areas. This is demonstrated in increased deportations, detentions and demolitions of squatter communities. This motivates churches to increase their opposition to the State's policy towards squatters. Confrontations between squatters, police and the government increase as the government attempts to tighten their control. The Western Province Council of Churches demands that the presence of about 2000 Nyanga squatters be declared legal. Western Cape Minister of Co-operation and Development, Piet Koornhof, and Chief Commissioner, Mr Timo Bezuidenhoud, begin negotiating with squatters regarding passes to the city. Ultimately squatters and the government cannot come to an agreement.

1980 June 24: The Western Cape Administration Board begins demolishing shacks in Hout Bay, Phillipi, Philidelphia, and Kommetjie / Noordhoek.[i] Evicted squatters are moved to Langa where they face "disgraceful conditions.[ii]

1981 March 19: 500 people residing in Langa barracks are evicted, despite being promised accommodation and employment if they moved from Hout Bay to the Langa barracks willingly.[iii]

1981 August 17: Thousands of squatters flock to Cape Town for jobs promised by Koornhof. To address the "squatter" problem in the Western Cape Minister of Co-operation and Development, Piet Koornhof, offered more than 1000 jobs elsewhere in the country.[iv]

1981 August 21: 1059 squatters were deported to the Transkei following a raid on the Nyanga East squatter camp. Photographers attempting to take photos of the group were told that they were not allowed to take photos of the "prisoners".[v]

1981 October 8: Many of the more than 1000 squatters deported to the Transkei returned to Cape Town. The squatters were staying in church halls in Umtata and were being fed by the army.[vi]

[17] Timeline completed as part of my internship with the Crypt Memory and Witness Centre with input from Lynette Maart and Mary Burton. Copyrights belong to the Crypt Memory and Witness Centre.

1982 January 4: Archbishop Philip Russell says that without radical change in government policy, away from actions which are abhorrent to Christianity, there will be an increase in State-Church confrontation. He opts that Christians must press for that open ordering society in which all can play their full role.[vii]

1982 January 19: The chairman of the Cape region of the Institute of Race Relations, Sir Richard Luys, has called on Cape Town's Mayor, Mr. Kosie van Zyl, to form a mayoral committee to ensure that vision and humanity are present in all plans relating to squatters.[viii]

1982 January 26: Police in camouflage dress and officials from the Peninsula Administration Board (PAB) shoot at squatters in temporary shelter at Nyanga: four men were shot and seven squatters were arrested for public violence. After the shooting the police demolished the temporary shelters of the squatters.[ix]

1982 January 28: At 12.35 am, 3.15 am and 6 am the police made raids at the Nyanga shelters. Squatters ask the Administration board to listen rather than to shoot. A senior Administration Board official asks squatters to assemble a representative committee in order to put their case to the board. Mr Timo Bezuidenhoud, chief commissioner of the Department of Co-operation and Development in the Western Cape said he was prepared to arrange a meeting with the squatters as soon as possible to discuss how some of them could become legal contract workers. He said squatter shelters around the sandy knoll near Crossroads will be demolished and no new ones will be tolerated.[x]

1982 January 29: Talks with Mr. Timo Bezuidenhoud continue. A previous offer to sign the squatters on as contract workers was declined by the squatters, because this would mean that they would be separated from their families. Mr. David Nyagintsimbi (35) and Mr. Zamayedwa Malase (41) appear in court being charged with public violence. A group of Nyanga squatters was charged for being in the Cape Town area for more than 72 hours: they will appear in court.[xi]

1982 February 1: According to the Nyanga Bush Committee, Bezuidenhoud had never met with democratically elected representatives of the Nyanga bush people since the first deportations. Apparently, Bezuidenhoud spoke with people who were not officially representatives of the Nyanga bush people. Bezuidenhoud kept his door open for talks with the official committee.[xii]

1982 February 3: Bezuidenhoud offered the squatters contract-labour agreements between the homelands and South Africa. The squatters rejected the offer, saying contract-labour was an unstable form of employment and wrecked family life, as the family was not

allowed to live with the workers. They said they wanted to be registered as local residents and find their own accommodation and work.[xiii]

1982 February 4: Police deny that there were shots fired during the raid on 27th of January.[xiv]

1982 February 10: An unexpected raid at the Nyanga bush camp at night. Squatters were still involved in discussion with Government on their plight. According to the squatters, most of the committee members were arrested.[xv]

1982 February 11: An 'urgent' letter was sent by a Cape Town attorney on behalf of squatters in the Nyanga area to Chief Commissioner for the Western Cape, Mr Timo Bezuidenhoud. The Rev. Sidney Luckett, assistant priest of the Holy Cross Anglican Church at Nyanga approached the Law Society in this matter, because he felt that the fee of the letter (which was R1000) was exorbitant. 58 of the 62 squatters, including eight children, who were arrested in a raid on the Nyanga sand dune site early morning on 10th February, have been sent back to Transkei by bus. Mr Bezuidenhoud said if the squatting continued unabated, the situation would become chaotic and create health hazards. The Rev. Sidney Luckett said it is depressing that there still is no sign of a more humane approach by government to the problem of urban squatters, which is an inevitable consequence of extreme rural poverty.[xvi]

1982 February 12: The Law Society of the Cape of Good Hope asked the squatters' attorney for a full report on the squatter matter. The attorney says that the R1 000 fee was not only for drafting the 'urgent' letter, but also for numerous consultations, often at night.[xvii]

1982 February 13: The Minister of Police, Mr Louis le Grange, confirmed that police had opened fire in self-defence on the Nyanga squatters during a raid on January 26.[xviii]

1982 February 19: About 50 people were arrested again during a raid at Nyanga and they have been deported to Transkei. Mr Bezuidenhoud said he talked to the remaining squatters, offering them a work permit, which they refused. Bezuidenhoud states he cannot grant them work permits 'on the basis of their demands'.[xix]

1982 February 22: The Nyanga area was raided and the temporary shelters were torn down. No one was arrested.[xx]

1982 March 2: Mr Bezuidenhoud rejected site and service schemes for the Nyanga squatters. He also rejected a request from a delegation of the Western Province Council of Churches that the presence of about 2000 Nyanga squatters be declared legal.[xxi]

St. George's Cathedral fast

57 men and women, plus their children, fasted and prayed at St. George's Cathedral for 23 days between 8 March and 1 April 1982, demanding the right to work and live in Cape Town with their families. The Dean of St. George's Cathedral, Rev. Edward King, ensured that the squatters have the full support of the church. Other Christian churches demonstrated their solidarity with the squatters by urging Dr. Koornhof to legalise the squatters that are living in the Cape Peninsula. Determined to fast until their demands were met or they died, the fasters' plight attracted local and international media attention. After 23 days, the squatters broke their fast after members of the NG Sendingkerk helped facilitate negotiations with Dr. Koornhof, in which he promised three weeks of immunity from harassment while their case was decided on.

1982 March 10: Fifty-four men and women plus their children from the Nyanga squatter camp began a 'sit-in-fast' in St. George's Cathedral on the night of the 8th of March. A fast that they are determined will end only 'when we drop or when our plight is heard and understood'. The Committee of the Nyanga Bush people issued a statement saying they had the desire to live together as families in the Cape Peninsula where they are able to support themselves. They further desire to pray for their recognition as true children of God and the right to be treated as such. The very Rev. Edward King, dean of the St. George's Cathedral allowed them to stay, but said that there were some logistical issues concerning their stay at the cathedral.[xxii]

1982 March 11: A squatter representative said the group of 57 squatters had come to the cathedral in the hope that authorities would meet them to discuss their position. All logistic problems arising from the vigil by the Nyanga squatters had been solved. The first night locked inside the cathedral went quiet.[xxiii]

1982 March 12: Journalist talks to a few squatters who tell him that they will fast until their voice will be heard. A five-month pregnant woman, who is part of the fasting group, said that she was prepared to sacrifice her unborn child for their cause. Another woman looses her baby the same day. [xxiv]

1982 March 13: Several of the fasters are weak and have headaches and other symptoms caused by starvation. Initially, the squatters did not eat or drink anything accept for water. Now they've accepted glucose in water from church workers. A six-month-old baby was admitted to hospital with dehydration and one of the pregnant mothers had a miscarriage.[xxv]

1982 March 15: The fasters have now, on medical advice, started to take vitamins and fruit juices to stay alive. People also continue to get ill, and are treated in Groote Schuur Hospital.

Dean King says once again that the squatters are not alone in their plight, and that they have the full support of the church.[xxvi]

1982 March 16: The Mayor of Cape Town, Mr Kosie van Zyl, had responded to a telegram of the Civil Rights League urging him to visit the Nyanga Squatters at the cathedral. Van Zyl said he had referred the matter to the Executive Committee of the City Council. Meanwhile Helen Suzman, Progressive Federal Party MP for Houghton, had a half-hour meeting with Dr. Piet Koornhof, Minister of Co-operation and Development, on the subject of the cathedral squatters. Suzman said that although Koornhof listened 'sympathetically', he said that it was part of a much bigger problem and that there was no easy solution. Church leaders from different English speaking churches have planned a meeting with Minister of Cooperation and Development, Dr. Piet Koornhof. The church leaders said that the hope was that Dr. Koornhof would break the impasse on the stay of the squatters at the cathedral and their future in Western Cape. Also the squatters fast will be discussed at a meeting of Cape Town City Council's executive committee. The mayor of Cape Town will be present.[xxvii]

1982 March 17: The result of the meeting of the church leaders with Dr Koornhof was that Koornhof offered to talk to the fasters provided they left the church building. Squatters fear this might be a ploy, since in the past Dr. Koornhof failed to keep his promises.[xxviii]

1982 March 18: Squatters keep getting weaker. Four fasters were treated for severe abdominal and kidney pains, as well as other pains. The squatters are now taking fruit juice and vitamins. Also the squatters released a press statement, urging Dr. Koornhof to legalise them living in the Cape Peninsula. Professor Jacques Rossouw, director of the National Institute of Nutritional Diseases, said that the cathedral squatters could suffer ill-effects from their fast after about a month. On their diet, which was fruit juices and vitamins, the chances of survival were unpredictable. Priscilla Kumjuzwa, who had a miscarriage after her third day of fasting, returned to the church. She said it was better to die there than to live outside as a 'vagabond'.[xxix]

1982 March 19: Most of the fasters are sleeping throughout the day as they are getting weaker. Foreign journalists from the United States, Britain, Sweden, Germany and Australia are monitoring the squatters' story. The squatters now want to meet with representatives of the DRC, to ask for their support. Also, St John Ambulance started to monitor the blood pressure and weight of each squatter as people are getting ill. A law allowing for stiffer penalties against people who return after being deported to independent homelands was used on five squatters in the Langa Commissioners Court.[xxx]

1982 March 20: A stench as the result of a stink bomb pervaded the St. George's Cathedral, as the squatters continued their fast. A statement signed by seven churchmen from English-speaking churches said that Koornhof's decision to talk to church leaders only on condition that the Nyanga squatters leave the cathedral was a 'misinterpretation of the position'. Meanwhile a correspondent from a Hong Kong news agency joined the group of foreign journalists.[xxxi]

1982 March 22: The squatters keep getting weaker and their health is getting poorer. Two pregnant women who were admitted in hospital a day earlier return to fast. Leading Anglican clergymen call on the government to show 'Christian concern' for the squatters.[xxxii]

1982 March 23: Two weeks into the fast, no response from Koornhof. The squatters have however vowed to continue. Attempts by Helen Suzman, the Progressive Federal Party MP for Houghton, to evoke a response from Koornhof proved unsuccessful. Meanwhile the squatters keep getting weaker. They are still taking fruit juices and vitamins only. They have been joined in their fast by an Anglican Sister. The Athlone Advice Office carried out in-depth personal histories of the fasting squatters in the cathedral. Eleven of the Nyanga squatters were born in the Republic of South Africa (as opposed to being born in one of the homelands). 77% of the fasters lived in Cape Town for at least 10 years. Between them, the squatters had been arrested 252 times, and all the men and single women were employed before joining the fast.[xxxiii]

1982 March 24: After 15 days of fasting some squatters have gained weight, possibly because of fluid retention. Personnel of St. John Ambulance have expressed that some of the squatters were becoming oedematous – a condition where the limbs swell with fluid – and this could be due to malnutrition. The fasters are now taking less glasses of juice.[xxxiv]

1982 March 26: Six Western Cape church leaders (all of English-speaking churches) have made a renewed call to Koornhof, to address the plight of the squatters. Also the Very Reverend Dean E. L. King released a press statement saying that 'it won't help the situation if the squatters start dying in the cathedral'. He reiterated his plea to the authorities to start negotiating with the squatters. A large proportion of the squatters fasting at St. George's Cathedral were among the 1 000 people who, a year ago, lived for several weeks at the so-called 'No Name' camp in Nyanga through the worst winter in many years. They were raided and deported back to the homelands, only to return to the Cape Peninsula again. After returning they were deported again, and even then they returned. This time, some of them have chosen to take part in the fast at the cathedral. They want to be legalised, or die by starvation: this means no more

suffering from the influx control laws. From the 57 fasters, 32 are women, all 57 are under the age of 50, 14 under the age of 40, 24 over the age of 30, 17 over the age of 20 and one unknown.[xxxv]

1982 March 27: Ten women among the fasters are too weak to move freely and spend more and more time lying down, in spite of instructions of doctors. Meanwhile Koornhof still stays put. Definite signs of starvation, such as muscular wasting, sunken eye-balls, lethargic movements and difficulty in speaking, were apparent in the fasting squatters according to Dr. Marius Barnard.[xxxvi]

1982 March 29: The Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Rev. P. Russell, says the squatters can choose to be fugitives in the Peninsula or starve in the homelands. This situation is unacceptable and will cause increasing state-church confrontation. He refers to the banning of David Russell, priest to migrant workers in the Peninsula. An ecumenical service under the auspices of the Western Province Council of Churches was held for the Nyanga squatters. Also representatives of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde (NG) Sendingkerk were present, affirming that the squatters had the right of families. A few days earlier, two men walked through the Cathedral in plain clothes, but with guns exposed, attempting to intimidate the fasters. The men were asked to remove their guns. [xxxvii]

1982 March 30: Talks have begun between the NG Sendingkerk and Koornhof on the squatter issue. The chairman of the Western Cape Administration Board said no officials of the board had entered St. George's Cathedral to harass the squatters in the church. He was reacting to ports that armed men in plain clothes had entered the cathedral.[xxxviii]

1982 March 31: The diet of fruit juice and vitamins on which the fasters are subsisting could sustain them for a very long time according to Cape Town's Medical Officer of Health. A delegation of the NG Sendingkerk met with the squatters for the second time. They are in negotiations with Koornhof on behalf of the squatters. Sheena Duncan, National President of the Black Sash, visited the squatters to show her support to their plight and inform them that people in Johannesburg were thinking of them. Mr. Rommel Roberts denies allegations that he single-handedly orchestrated the fast at the Cathedral.[xxxix]

1982 April 1: The St. George's Cathedral fast ends after 23 days. A four-man committee agreed to terminate the fast during a three-hour negotiation with Dr. Koornhof. Dr. Koornhof promised to treat their case with "compassion" and to grant the squatters three weeks immunity during further negotiations.[xl]

Life after the Cathedral

After negotiations with Dr Koornhoof, the squatters left the Cathedral and settled at Holy Cross church in Nyanga, where their plight received very little publicity. The NG Sendingkerk deemed their fast "sacrilegious" and called their actions "unlawful". The Cathedral group expanded, as the Cathedral fasters acted on a mandate from other squatters. Dr Koornhof repeatedly delayed the deadlines on which their fate would be decided; however, in 1984, influx control measures collapsed, including the Coloured Labour Preferential Policy, contributing to an increased sense of freedom from the black community. Conversely, the provincial government continued their efforts to consolidate black settlements in the Western Cape through their efforts at resettling African squatters in Khayelitsha. This resettlement was opposed by the United Democratic Front (UDF) in their million signature campaign. The provincial government continued to raid and harass the squatter camps. Ultimately, the resettlement to Khayeltisha was largely successful, as many squatters, including the Cathedral group, moved away from the squatter settlements to improve their stability and escape the increasing violence that ensued due to internal battles between leaders and differing priorities. Finally on 3 April 1985, in negotiations that were supposed to be resolved within three weeks of their exit from the Cathedral, but lasted three years, the Cathedral squatters' take Koornhof's offer to resettle in Khayelitsha.

1982 April 2: The direct outcome of the squatters' negotiations was that Koornhof agreed to study 850 cases individually in order to assess whether one could be legalised in the Cape Peninsula, or not. The 850 names are those of different squatter groups in Nyanga. The squatters pitched ten large tents, supplied by the Red Cross, on the premises of the Holy Cross Anglican Church in Nyanga, awaiting their case studies.xli

1982 April 4: Rev. Desmond Curran, chairman of the Western Province Council of Churches denied the squatters left the cathedral under pressure of Koornhof, it was a gesture in order for negotiations to be fruitful.xlii

1982 April 6: The first 50 of 850 Nyanga squatters were taken to the Administration Board inspectors headquarters to establish whether they would be given legal status in the Republic.xliii

1982 April 7: The interviewing and screening of the 850 squatters has been stepped up to more than 50 a day. This followed a 'test run' of the first 50.xliv

1982 April 12: Rev. G.S.J. Moller, the Western Cape synodel commission chairman of the DRC, has said the fast of the squatters was sacrilegious. The political means of the fast was not in correspondence with the biblical means, which the fast should have.xlv

1982 April 16: The squatters were told to expect no more of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). The DRC, particularly the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Sendingkerk, helped the squatters in their negotiations, but now they say they will not cooperate with unlawful actions.xlvi

1982 April 21: Indemnity against arrest granted by Koornhof to 850 squatters is extended to the first of May. The extension is given in order to find certain squatters who have not yet come forward.xlvii

1982 April 22: Church and township organisations said in a joint statement that the 'struggle' of the Nyanga people would continue until the government changed its 'unjust laws and policies'.xlviii

1982 April 23: The Muslim News condemns the apartheid state for failing got meet the demands and rights of the disenfranchised and accuses it of turning migrant labourers into "non-people".[xlix]

1982 April 28: 210 people on the list of 850 squatters have not been found, and the squatters want other people to substitute them in order to make up for the original number. A squatter mother living in a tent at the Holy Cross Anglican Church in Nyanga gave birth to a baby boy.l

1982 May 4: Chief Commissioner of the Western Cape Dr. Timo Bezuidenhoud said the decision whether the squatters would be legalised will not be delayed further. The decision has missed the deadline of April 21 and May 1, because some squatters could not be traced to be interviewed.li

1982 May 24: The screening of the squatters was completed, but Koornhof has failed to respond. Their immunity to arrests still holds, until Koonhof decides on what to do.lii

1982 July 7: 100 of 700 squatters from Holy Cross were given permission to erect tents near Crossroads in a "no-name camp". The Western Cape Administration Board allocated the site and promised to install water and ablution facilities. The final date for a decision on the squatters' plight is set for 20 September. The squatters' pass books have been endorsed until then.liii

1982 September 22: The meeting to decide the fate of 5 000 Crossroads and Nyanga squatters was postponed because the commissioners had "further questions". Chairman of the

Civil Rights League, Mr. Brian Bishop, says this delay is another “rebuff, specifically worded to be meaningless”.liv

1982 September 30: Five shacks in Nyanga Bush are destroyed by armed police. The shacks were built to accommodate squatters who have been living in overcrowded “dome shaped plastic shelters” for over six months awaiting Dr. Koornhof decision. Mr. Bezuidenhoud said the squatters could accept and erect tents from churches.lv

1983 February 20: Over 1 000 plastic shelters that were erected as part of a mass protest action were smashed to the ground by a “huge cordon of police with dogs and armoured vehicles”. Police used tear gas and the dogs bit many people. Many of the people living in the demolished shacks were living in Cape Town “legally”.lvi

1983 April 27: 40 adults and 20 children of KTC were acquitted on counts of unlawfully occupying land without a permit.lvii

1983 May 6: 207 KTC shacks are demolished as police fire rubber bullets and release teargas to clear area. 72 “illegals” are arrested. Squatters are determined to rebuild and said they would not move until alternative housing is offered.lviii

1983 July 5: Cathedral and Sand Dune squatters are served with notice to remove “illegal” shelters erected in Nyanga. One of the shelters is a crèche for 60 children.lix

1983 July 7: 60 wooden shelters are torn down in Nyanga Bush by the WCAB. Later, the WCAB dropped off 30 Red Cross tents, which then were distributed to those whose homes were demolished. Others began rebuilding their homes.lx

1983 August 9: Another 80 shelters were torn down in Nyanga and Crossroads by the WCAB. Mr. Ken Andrews, MP for Gardens, accused the WCAB of deliberately harassing the squatters, most of whom are in Cape Town legally, awaiting the decision from Dr. Koornhof.lxi

1983 October 7: WCAB removes tents provided by the Red Cross as shelters, tears down plastic shelters and prohibits the Red Cross from providing any more shelters over the course of the week.lxii

1983 December 10: After a delay of several months, the WCAB finally receives permission to issue 33 more Red Cross tents to the Cathedral squatters. All of the tents were not distributed because the list of names of people who would get the tents that was submitted did not meet the Board’s criteria, because 18 of the people were not recognized “Cathedral” squatters.lxiii

1984 March 21: 30 000 “illegal” Crossroads squatters face deportation to the Transkei or Ciskei when the squatter camp is cleared. “Legal” residents will be moved to Khayelitsha.lxiv

1984 April 28: Questions were raised in Parliament about why a decision has not been made about the 850 Sand Dune squatters in two years, when they were promised a decision in three weeks. The question was tabled for Dr. Koornhof.lxv 199 homes destroyed were in Crossroads and Nyanga in month of April.lxvi

1984 June 5: 12 000 Crossroads squatters sign the “million signature” UDF campaign saying that they will not move to Khayelitsha.lxvii

1984 June 29: 85 homes are destroyed in the rain in Nyanga Bush. The raid follows discussions with Bezuidenhoud about the termination of the raids. Mr. Lawrence the Board’s director of housing and labour said he had received no request to stop the raids.lxviii

1984 July 12: Hundreds more are roofless after continued raids in Nyanga. More than 40 women protest at WCDB offices regarding raids in Nyanga. They stated that they have been waiting three years for a decision, yet the raids continue. They demanded their corrugated iron back for their shelters.lxix

1984 July 13: Bezuidenhoud and Koornhof agree to terminate raids and to allow the Nyanga Bush and Cathedral groups, who have faced numerous raids, to build more shelters provided no new members are added to their groups.lxx

1984 July 27: Approximately 100 shacks are demolished in Nyanga Extension in another raid on squatter communities. One KTC resident has had his house demolished four times in the past week. Many of the new squatters in the area are fleeing fighting in Crossroads.lxxi

1984 August 17: Dawn raids in the squatter camps result in arrests and several lost children. Several mothers were arrested, thus their children were left unattended.lxxii

1984 September 29: This week PW Botha announces that squatters in Western Cape can have 99-year leasehold rights and that the Coloured Preference Labour policy will be abolished. This signifies the government’s acceptance of black people’s permanency in the Western Cape.lxxiii

1984 October 11: Old Crossroads and Nyanga Bush residents refuse to move to Khayelitsha, resisting the government’s plan to consolidate all squatters in Khayelitsha.lxxiv

1984 October 30: Nyanga dunes squatters to elect new chairperson after old chairperson, Gwezela, fled after fighting left two people dead and three people injured over fights regarding land and water.lxxv

1985 February 19: Five people die and 29 people are injured in clash with police at Crossroads.lxxvi

1985 February 21: 1000 Crossroads residents march to demand release of Nxobongwana and Mandela. Police respond with teargas.lxxvii

1985 April 2: 8 000 Cape Flats squatters move to Khayelitsha. "Phase One" of the government's Khayelitsha plan is nearing completion, with almost all of the 5 000 houses filled. The government's spokesperson maintains that all people were relocated willingly.lxxviii

1985 April 3: Five groups (Cathedral, Dodwana, Sipeke, Tutu, Nyadeni) are given legal residence rights in Site C provided that they move to Khayelitsha. Bezuidenhoud maintains that the groups are not being forced.lxxix

1985 April 6: From April 15, 50,000 squatters will move to Khayelitsha – the largest relocation of people in the Western Cape. Hoza, the leader of the Cathedral Group, agreed that his group of 12,000 would move. In exchange for moving, squatters are given an 18-month permit and the right to seek work.lxxx

1985 April 11: The Crossroads group agrees to move to Khayelithsa and accepts the 18-month permit. The Nyanga Bush group continues to refuse to relocate.lxxxi

1985 June 21: WCDB seizes tents inhabited by residents of Site C. The squatters said they had been moved with the Cathedral group and did not know why their tents were taken. Mali Hoza, chairperson of the Cathedral group, was arrested. No charges had been made.lxxxii

1985 July 2: WCDB destroys 23 "illegal" shacks at Nyanga East over the previous weekend. The tents were erected in land that had laid vacant for two months after the group living there moved to Khayelitsha.lxxxiii

1986 May 19: Crossroads fighting between "fathers" and "comrades" leaves at least 14 dead, several of who were necklaced. Several people were left homeless after they fled the fighting.lxxxiv

1986 September 26: Refugee squatters at Zolani Centre in Nyanga were evicted and told to move to Khayelitsha, or be treated as trespassers. The Office for Community Services

(OCS, formerly the Western Cape Development Board) claims that the reason for the eviction is that the Centre is being renovated.lxxxv

Endnotes:

[i] 1980 June 24, Cape Argus
[ii] 1980 July 8, Cape Argus
[iii] 1981 March 19, Cape Times; 1981 March 13 Herald
[iv] 1981 August 17, Cape Argus
[v] 1981 August 21, Cape Times
[vi] 1981 October 8, Star
[vii] 1982 January 4, Cape Argus
[viii] 1982 January 19, Cape Argus
[ix] 1982 January 27, Cape Times
[x] 1982 January 28, Cape Times; 1982 January 28, Cape Argus
[xi] 1982 January 29, Cape Times; 1982 January 29, Cape Argus
[xii] 1982 February 1, Cape Times
[xiii] 1982 February 3, Cape Times
[xiv] 1982 February 4, Cape Argus
[xv] 1982 February 10, Cape Argus
[xvi] 1982 February 11, Cape Times
[xvii] 1982 February 12, Cape Times
[xviii] 1982 February 12, Cape Times
[xix] 1982 February 12, Cape Argus
[xx] 1982 February 23, Cape Times
[xxi] 1982 March 2, Cape Argus
[xxii] 1982 March 10, Cape Argus
[xxiii] 1982 March 11, Cape Times
[xxiv] 1982 March 12, Cape Argus; 1982 March 12, Cape Times
[xxv] 1982 March 13, Cape Times
[xxvi] 1982 March 15, Cape Argus
[xxvii] 1982 March 16, Cape Times
[xxviii] 1982 March 17, Cape Argus, 1982 March 17 Cape Times
[xxix] 1982 March 18, Cape Argus; 1982 March 18 Cape Times
[xxx] 1982 March 19, Cape Argus; 1982 March 19, Cape Times
[xxxi] 1982 March 20, Cape Times
[xxxii] 1982 March 22, Cape Argus; 1982 March 22, Cape Times
[xxxiii] 1982 March 23, Cape Argus; 1982 March 23, Cape Times
[xxxiv] 1982 March 24, Cape Times
[xxxv] 1982 March 26, Cape Argus; 1982 March 26, Cape Times
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[xxxvii] 1982 March 29, Cape Argus; 1982 March 29, Cape Times
[xxxviii] 1982 March 30, Cape Times
[xxxix] 1982 March 31, Cape Times; 1982 March 31, Cape Argus
[xl] 1982 April 2, Star; 1982 April 1 Cape Times; 1982 April 1 Cape Argus
[xli] 1982 April 2, Cape Argus; 1982 April 2, Cape Times
[xlii] 1982 April 4, Cape Times
[xliii] 1982 April 6, Cape Times
[xliv] 1982 April 7, Cape Times
[xlv] 1982 April 12, Cape Argus
[xlvi] 1982 April 16, Cape Times
[xlvii] 1982 April 21, Cape Times
[xlviii] 1982 April 22, Cape Argus
[xlix] 1982 April 23, Muslim News
[l] 1982 April 28, Cape Times
[li] 1982 May 4, Cape Argus
[lii] 1982 May 24, Cape Times
[liii] 1982 July 7, Cape Argus
[liv] 1982 September 22, Cape Times
[lv] 1982 September 30, Cape Argus
[lvi] 1983 February 20, Sunday Tribune
[lvii] 1983 April 27, Cape Argus
[lviii] 1983 May 7, Cape Times
[lix] 1983 July 5, Citizen
[lx] 1983 July 8, Cape Times
[lxi] 1983 August 10, Cape Times
[lxii] 1983 October 7, Citizen
[lxiii] 1983 December 10, Cape Times
[lxiv] 1984 March 21, Daily Dispatch
[lxv] 1984 April 28, Cape Times

[lxvi] 1984 April 28, Citizen
[lxvii] 1984 June 5, Sowetan
[lxviii] 1984 June 29, Cape Times
[lxix] 1984 July 12, Cape Times
[lxx] 1984 July 13, Cape Argus, 1984 July 14, Citizen
[lxxi] 1984 July 27, Cape Argus
[lxxii] 1984 August 17, Cape Times
[lxxiii] 1984 September 29, Weekend Post
[lxxiv] 1984 October 11, Citizen
[lxxv] 1984 October 30, Cape Argus
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