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Dennie, Garrey

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by: Garrey Dennie

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King Sabata Jonguhlanga Dalindyebo, deposed Paramount Chief of the Thembus, was buried twice. The first interment took place on 20th April 1986; the second took place on 1st October, 1989. The first interment was secretive, hasty and without salute - a pauper's burial. The second was a visible organisation of grief, a public performance, highly orchestrated, and supremely lavish - a king's burial. The first interment attracted minimal media comment; the second was a well chronicled affair receiving significant attention from both the local and international media.[1]

This paper represents some musings upon the contrasting burials of Chief Sabata Dalindyebo. Its primary aims are to explore the kinds of contests which produced the different burial rituals, [or lack thereof] and to subject the rituals themselves to closer examination in a search for their meanings. The most crucial argument advanced in this paper is that the struggles which surrounded the control of the burials of the Thembu King were urgent attempts to appropriate the dead body in a bid to inscribe and to re-write specific political messages on the corpse, and to erase others. Furthermore, the burial of Dalindyebo provided a powerful platform from which these messages could be disseminated to a larger audience.

This larger audience was first of all the Thembu people to whom the deposed Dalindyebo had remained their legitimate king; but the audience also included the wider South African population for whom the issue of apartheid has been the focus of extensive debates and bloody confrontations. Within the context of Dalindyebo's burials, the principal antagonists were Kaiser Matanzima, ex-President of the Transkei and firmly committed to Pretoria's bantustan policies; and opposed against him were the family of Dalindyebo, the African National Congress and its affiliated organisations, and current military leader of the Transkei, General Bantu Holomisa.

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The power to inscribe particular messages on the remains of Dalindyebo was necessarily limited. His body was not a blank slate upon which any number of messages could be inscribed. Instead, the body was already a highly complex text, suffused with meanings, a text authored by Dalindyebo himself. The political and socio-cultural experiences of the living man circumscribed the range of meanings which could be adduced or attached to his dead body. He was a Thembu Chief. This permitted one reading. He was a supporter of the African National Congress. This permitted another. He had been engaged in three decades of struggle with Matanzima and Pretoria over what he perceived as their assaults on his power and his constituency. This too permitted another reading. And the list can be extended to include his religious beliefs, his family, his choice of friends, his personal habits, etcetera. Notwithstanding these,

once we locate Dalindyebo within a specific historical experience, we limit the range of meanings which could be attached to his corpse.

It is crucial to observe that the meanings which could be attached to Dalindyebo's corpse might not have been all visible to those who fought to control his burials. Secondly, even where such visibility might exist, both his supporters and detractors could choose or reject particular meanings to advance their own particular interests. As we examine the ways in which Dalindyebo's burials become moments for the articulation of competing political interests and, an opening up of a discourse on Thembu history and culture, we might, perchance, come closer to an understanding of what it means to live and to die, to bury and be buried, in a conflict ridden South Africa.

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The Politics of Burial: Other times and places

The burials of Dalindyebo were not the first occasions in South Africa where the burial of the dead became a terrain of struggle between competing groups. In fact within South Africa, the politics of burial is an extremely complex set of inter-related phenomena embracing the establishment of cemeteries, crematoria, and the by-laws governing their operations, the apportionment of these to different racial and religious groups, the establishment of mortuaries, the development of burial societies, the management of death by funeral parlours, and of course, the very rites of burial. Indeed, in the South Africa of the 1980's, the rites of burial have been the centre of intense conflict, mass funerals became moments of massive contestation, one funeral became the precursor of another, and the government responded by placing a ban on what it understood to be "political funerals". The contests over the burials of Dalindyebo must necessarily be placed within the context of the heavily politicized funerals of the nineteen eighties.[2]

Outside South Africa mass funerals have also been moments which precipitated social and political change. The Iranian Revolution of 1979 is a powerful reminder of such. The funerals of fallen martyrs provided the opportunity to mobilize grief, organise resources and plan the strategies which swept away the Shah and pave the way for the triumphant return and rulership of Ayatollah Khomeini.[3] In Chile, the mass funeral which accompanied the reburial of Salvatore Allende seventeen years after the overthrow of his government by General Pinochet became a moment to remember his life, to mourn his death and, to reflect upon the political order which had replaced him. His reburial was simultaneously a condemnation of General Pinochet and a recognition that the general's power though somewhat diminished, remained a potent force. Significantly, though Salvatore Allende received a state funeral, he was deprived of military honours

military honours, no doubt due to the fact that General Pinochet still remained head of the army.[4] In Argentina, the violation of Peron's grave, the cutting off of his hands and the holding of these for ransom convulsed the body politic. In a provocative title, "Democracy handcuffed: The Profanation of Peron's Grave" Rosana Guber explores this sacrilege within the context of the past and present politics of Argentina and finds that this literal appropriation of the dead body to be not simply a question of entreneurial interest or criminal conduct, but a powerful symbol of the tensions of the political transformations taking place in Argentina.[5]

Elsewhere, we can find other instances where the tumult of the dead is charged with the political concerns of the living. In China, the Chinese authorities banned the celebration of 'the Festival of the Dead' for fear this might become the occcasion to commemorate the memories of those who died in the Tiannanem Square massacre [6]. In Mongolia, a frantic search takes place for the grave of Ghenghis Khan as Mongolians debate issues of nationality and culture, and move away from the strict orthodoxy of marxism-leninism.[7] Today, in India, students set themselves ablaze to protest government policies, and the death of these students threaten to bring down the government of V.P. Singh.[8] Faced with these occurrences, we are challenged to reflect upon the meanings which people now and in the past attach to the politics of death, grief, and burial that they do not attach to other realms.

David Cohen has also pointed to modern Kenya where struggles surrounding the burial of the dead have unleashed enormous public demonstrations and excited vigorous national debates, as witnessed by the sudden deaths by apparent assassination of Pio Pinto, of Tom Mboya and J.M Kariuki. And concerning the death of S.M. Atieno, he observes,

> "In Kenya, the burial of prominent Nairobi lawyer, S.M. Atieno constructed a context for extraordinary debates concerning family, gender, class, ethnicity, the status of tradition, the idea of "modernity", and the meaning of death and burial"[9].

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Historical and Anthropological Approaches to Burial

With very few exceptions, African historians have yet to approach the burial of the dead as a subject worthy of historical investigation. Historians of Europe and North America have been bolder. In his study, The Royal Funeral in Renaissance France, Giesey argues that the French royal funeral emerged as an attempt to resolve a constitutional crisis caused by two conflicting traditions of kingship, one which held the new king

was not fully empowered until he was crowned, and the other which held that the new king exercised full sovereignty from the moment of his predecessor's death. Thus, in the late fifteenth century, the royal funeral provided a ritualistic compromise between these two theories by situating the moment of transference of sovereignty neither at the death of the old king nor at the coronation of the new king, but midway between - at the funeral and burial of the deceased.[10]

For Aries it is the private grief of the individual which fascinates, whether he is at the hour of his death, or whether he is the individual faced with the loss of his loved ones. In The Hour of Our Death Aries examines modern European and American funerary customs and attitudes to establish their longevity. He finds that contrary to popular conceptions, these 'traditions' were of very recent origins and were associated with a specific phase of modern life, namely the industrial revolution.[11]

Anthropologists working on Africa have been more alert to the importance of funerary beliefs and practices. In a volume of essays edited by Max Gluckman, The Allocation of Responsibility, the contributors point out that in some African societies, for example the Azande, death and other misfortunes are never apprehended as purely chance occurences but as the devious work of either man, woman or spirit. Thus death rituals become not only the mourning of the dead, but very means of establishing guilt, determining retribution and insuring protection against further misfortune.[12]

The perception that these rituals tell much more about the living than they do about the dead informs the title of a volume of essays edited by Bloch and Parry, Death and The Regeneration of Life. Their explicit purpose is to examine the significance of symbols of fertility and rebirth in funeral rites but, as they themselves admit, it was impossible to exclude consideration of many other aspects of the treatment of death. One such aspect is what they refer to as "death and the legitimation of authority", where funerary practices serve to legitimate the social order and its authority structures. [13] John Middleton has made the same observation. In his Lugbara Religion: Ritual and Authority among an East African People, he points out that the cult of burial is intimately connected with the maintenance of lineage authority, and that through their control of the death rituals, senior men attempt to sustain their authority against their juniors claim to independence.[14] It is precisely at this point where one finds special resonances with the burials of Dalindyebo. His first inglorious burial can certainly be read as an attempt to shore up a particular political order. His reburial would offer a different reading - that the burial of the dead become the site and moment to challenge and possibly subvert the existing social order.

Some anthropologists have recognized explicit political agenda in some funerary practices. In his study Land and the Uses of tradition among the Mbeere of Kenya,[15] Glazier argues that the Mbeere burial of their dead became a way of claiming ownership of land to counter the threat of British expropriation of Mbeere land. Feeley Harnik's "The Political Economy of Death" is also clearly conscious of the political dimensions of death rituals. For the Sakalava of Madagascar, the burial of former royalty and the building of royal tombs are intimately bound up with their rejection of French imperialism and their continuing efforts to control their own labour.[16]

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The Political Life of Dalindyebo

The search for an explication of the burials of Dalindyebo necessarily begins with an appreciation of the political life of Dalindyebo. Indeed, more pertinent to our case is an understanding of the struggles which ensued between King Dalindyebo and former president of the Transkei, Kaiser Matanzima. Note that I have already pointed to Matanzima as one of the major antagonists in the struggles for the control of Dalindyebo's remains. Dalindyebo and Matanzima were distant relatives of each other. Both were also relatives of the current Deputy President of the African National Congress, Nelson Mandela, then still a prisoner. Indeed, although Mandela did not take a direct part in the drama, his wife, Mrs. Winnie Mandela did. To that extent his presence loomed large over the political stage that set relative against each other, Dalindyebo versus Matanzima.[17]

Sabata Dalindyebo was a member of the "greater" house of the Thembu royal family. Not so Matanzima. He belonged to the "lesser" house of the Emigrant Thembu, and thus according to Thembu customary practices, a lesser Chief to Dalindyebo. These differences do not in and of themselves explain the bitter political differences that divided the two men. For such an explanation, we need to look at the intervention of the South African state into "ethnic" politics and its conscious manipulation of the traditional chieftainship to produce chiefs more willing to comply with Pretoria's designs. It was Matanzima's active collaboration with the South African government in furthering these designs which precipitated the conflict between himself and Dalindyebo. For whereas Matanzima participated in the "balkanisation" of South Africa, Paramount Chief Sabata became increasingly opposed to a set of policies designed to deprive Africans of any claim to South African citizenship. The ultimate trajectory of Dalindyebo's political position was a berth within the camp of the African National Congress.

The South African government amply rewarded those chiefs who

complied with its demands. And it punished those who were more recalcitrant. Dalindyebo would be punished. In 1958 the South African government partitioned Thembuland into Thembuland and Emigrant Thembuland. At one stroke the territorial suzerainty of was reduced. Simultaneously, the territorial and statutory powers of Matanzima were increased. Not only did he gain land at the expense of Dalindyebo, he was also proclaimed regional Chief of Emigrant Thembuland, thereby increasing his status to nearer that of Dalindyebo. Matanzima's star continued to climb while that of Dalindyebo waned. In 1961 he was appointed Chairman of the Transkeian Territorial Board. In 1966 he became the Chief Minister of the Transkei. In 1966 he was also appointed by Pretoria as Paramount Chief of the Emigrant Thembu, an appointment that had no known precedent in Thembu customary law.[18]

Paramount Chief Dalindyebo had consistently opposed the institutional positions of power which the South African government bestowed on Matanzima. Yet there was little he could do to prevent Matanzima's rapid climb up the ladder of power prestige, and privilege. At the same time, he himself became the target of a series of measures designed to weaken his position and authoriy among the Thembu people. Because Dalindyebo commanded the loyalty of a mass following, the South African government refrained from executing direct repressive measures against his person for fear that such might have provoked large scale public unrest. Instead, the government, and later its Transkeian counterpart, systemically stripped Dalindyebo of his authority by removing from his jurisdiction most of the districts traditionally under his control. Dalindyebo himself best describes what happened.

> "Since the early sixties my close associates have been subjected to arbitrary action by the government. I have been persecuted for my political convictions ...and have been ridiculed and humiliated by junior chiefs who were government supporters. I became King of the Thembus with seven districts. Because of my uncompromising stand against apartheid, I have ended with only three".[19]

The conflicts between Dalindyebo and Matanzima would extend into the era of an 'independent' Transkei. Dalindyebo's co-operation with the creation of an independent Transkei had been sought by offering him the Presidency in the soon to be "independent" state.[20] This would have afforded the Transkeian state greater popular legitimacy. Dalindyebo's refusal to cooperate in the creation of an independent Transkei and his active campaign against this idea ensured that "independence" was obtained with less than thirteen percent popular support.[21] Dalindyebo had to be punished again. The Transkeian government passed a law criminalising any criticism of Transkeian

"independence" and this was bolstered by yet another law which made it a criminal offence to criticize the president, that is, Matanzima. On 29th July, 1980, Dalindyebo was arrested and charged with issuing statements which were calculated to injure the reputation of the State President, and for propagating views which were aimed at subverting the sovereignty of the Umtata parliament and the constitutional independence of the Transkei.[22]

The outcome of the trial was a foregone conclusion. People who were prepared to testify on behalf of Dalindyebo were intimidated and failed to testify. Nelson Mandela was subpoenaed to appear in the defence of Dalindyebo but the South African government refused to permit his public appearance. In the course of the trial Dalindyebo's relatives and friends were detained by the Transkeian security forces. Dalindyebo himself was temporarily stripped of his chieftainship pending the outcome of the trial. He was found guilty and sentenced to a fine of R700 or eighteen months in prison. Having been convicted of these "crimes", the Transkei government ordered that he be permanently stripped of his chieftainship.[23] This was done. Matanzima then installed Bambilanga Mtirara as Thembu King. On August 10th, 1980, Dalindyebo fled into exile.[24]

Dalindyebo lived for six years in Zambia, where he died on the 6th April, 1986. The first struggle over his body then began. It took two weeks of high level discussions involving the African National Congress on one hand, and the South African and Transkeian government on the other, before permission was obtained to return Dalindyebo's corpse to his ancestral home. [25]

The First Burial

The first burial was a tawdry affair, equally revelatory of the bitter conflict which had characterised the relationship between Dalindyebo and Matanzima. The return of the dead king, albeit in a coffin, allowed Matanzima to deliver his final coup de grace on his erstwhile enemy. Ignoring the customary practices of the Thembu people in burying their royal dead, Matanzima ensured that Dalindyebo remains were buried in the female section of a pauper's burial ground, an indignity that had no parallel in the Thembu people collective memory.[26]

Matanzima's authority over the the first interment of Matanzima was not one which was sanctioned by Dalindyebo's family. Matanzima was a distant relative and customary practice did not permit him to have control over Dalindyebo's burial. More crucial still, the conflicts between himself and the dead man ruled out the possibility of any such responsibility being allocated to him by Dalindyebo's closer relatives. Indeed, following a practice they had learnt from their South African masters, the Transkeian government imposed sweeping restrictions on the funeral.[27]

These restrictions followed the basic pattern of the first such curbs which were issued in July 1985. No memorial or commemorative service could be held out of doors. Only ordained ministers of a religious denomination could act as a speaker during the funeral proceedings. Moreover, he or she was prevented from discussing or criticising the government or any arm of the state. Neither was it permissible to issue statements in support of any organisations engaged in unlawful activities or boycott actions of any type. Only vehicular travel was allowed from the place where the memorial or commemorative service had taken place to the place where the deceased had to be buried. The route itself had to be determined by the police. The restrictions outlawed the display or distribution of flags, banners, placards, pamphlets or posters during the funeral ceremony; banned the use of a public address system at or during the ceremony; prevented the ceremony from lasting more than three hours; and limited the size of the mourners to not more than two hundred persons.[28]

The issuing of such restrictions demonstrated an extreme disregard for Thembu mortuary observances. Yet Matanzima's actions were not the result of a principled rejection of Thembu cultural practices as such. Rather, he realised that the funeral of the dead king could have become a platform from which his legitimacy as President of Transkei could be publicly interrogated. He was well aware that the funeral of Dalindyebo could be a focal position from which the constitutionality, authenticity and legitimacy of Transkeian independence could be challenged, with the dead King providing a powerful symbol around which these issues could be debated. To maintain the present political order and stifle debates regarding its legitimacy, Matanzima sought maximum control over the body of Dalindyebo.

Matanzima's opponents understood the terms of their contest with Matanzima. Thus, they successfully applied to the Transkeian Supreme Court for an interdict preventing any interference with the funeral and the corpse. This was to no avail. Matanzima ignored the court order, abducted the body from a funeral parlour and buried it in a commoners' grave. At the same time, Transkeian troops stopped buses of mourners from attending the burial. Three years later Matanzima stated that since he had not been mentioned in the court order it did not apply to him.[29]

Matanzima's ability to control the burial of his enemy was a clear statement of his political victory. He thereby reasserted that Dalindyebo was a deposed king; he thereby claimed a final resolution in the conflict within which himself and Dalindyebo had been embroiled; and he proclaimed the eternal existence of Transkei as an independent political entity against the frail mortality and impermanence of Dalindyebo. All these were of

course symbolic significations; but these significations were grounded in the concrete realities of the struggles which had taken place over thirty years. For Matanzima, the control of Dalindyebo's body was no less than an attempt to control a critical historical moment, a public debate on the nature of his rulership and the legitimacy of Transkeian independence.

Matanzima seemed much less aware that in seizing Daindyebo's body he reconfirmed to his detractors the illegitimacy of his rule. He was even less aware that in refusing to bury Dalindyebo according to the rites which the Thembu people reserved for their kings he offered to his opponents what was, perhaps, their most powerful weapon against him. For whereas before he stood accused of political corruption, abuse of power, and as an apartheid collaborator, he now stood equally accused of sacrilege and a blatant disregard for the customs of his people. There is an irony here. The creation of Transkei as an independent polity was based on what Pretoria presumed to be Transkei ethnic and cultural unity. Whatever legitimacy Matanzima could hope to achieve had to be based on the perception, organisation and manipulation of this ethnic consciousness. In effect, by disallowing Dalindyebo a Thembu royal burial, Matanzima undermined his own claim to some kind of ethnic legitimacy, indeed, even the claim that Transkei was an ethnic and cultural homogeneous unit.

The actual burial of Dalindyebo was a furtive affair. But it opened up a more public discourse on the unsettled alliance between ethnicity and politics. The legitimacy of cultural practices themselves became a field of political discourse as traditional ideas as to what constituted a proper burial for a king became increasingly mobilised to challenge a present political order.

A fundamental irony here was that practices presented as static, unchanging, and unadulterated, were certainly not so. We learn from J.B. Peires that in pre-colonial South Africa among the Xhosas

> " the dead were buried sitting or standing, accompanied by their weapons, their pipes and snuffboxes and various other items which they would be needing in the afterworld".[30]

Peires also observed that when in the middle of the eighteenth century, a terrible small pox epidemic struck Xhosaland, ordinary funeral rituals collapsed. Whereas before the epidemic the Xhosas had buried their dead,

> "from that time they shrank from touching dead bodies and, as a result, the dying were carried outside and left to expire in the bush. People fled from the sight or sound of death and in most cases the corpses

were not recovered but left to the dogs and hyenas"[31].

Peires does make a distinction between the Xhosas and the Thembu. He notes, however, that they were very closely related and shared the same fundamental system of beliefs, language, and political and economic practices which went beyond intermarriage. Indeed, both the Xhosa and the Thembu people participated the Great Cattle Killing of the 1850's, a phenomenon which Peires argues was understandable in terms of the participants understanding of death and resurrection. The point in all this is simply to insist that Thembu burial practices were not unchanging. Moreover, once one looks at the Christian elements within much of the Thembu burial rituals, one sees clearly that these rituals had been subjected to processes of transformation.

One should note that those who contested the burial of Dalindyebo by Matanzima rejected this, not on the grounds that it was 'modern' and not 'traditional', but rather on the grounds that it was 'improper'. However, once one frames and elevates a concept of the traditional against which a particular social phenomenom will be judged, it at least implies a notion of the modern against which it is necessarily opposed. This kind of opposition between the "traditional" and the "modern", tantamount to a statement on the sacred and the profane respectively.

What is particularly fascinating in all of this is the conscious intervention of a modern liberation movement in re-appropriating and utilising the complex of ideas surrounding a "proper" Thembu burial to launch a devastating attack on the present political order. This may appear as irony, and, perhaps rightly so. The ANC opposes political mobilisation along ethnic lines. But the contradiction might be more apparent than real. The opposition to the creation and manipulation of ethnic identities need not preclude a respect, and indeed, a defence of those values which transcend ideological persuasions, and are rooted within a cosmological conception of the place of the physical body within the universe. But the historian needs to remain alert to the fact that these too have been the product of specific historical experiences.

It should be noted, however, that in the person of Dalindyebo lay the perfect embodiment of the wedding between the traditional and the modern. He was both a Thembu Chief and a member of the ANC. It was this that made it possible for a modern liberation movement to defend a traditional practice. In effect, Dalindyebo had written the script which would inform the ways in which the struggles around his body would be conducted.

The Second Burial

The demise of Matanzima was sudden. In 1987, less than a year since his surreptious burial of Dalindyebo, Bantu Holomisa,

a young military general of Thembu descent removed Matanzima from office. He was replaced by one of his former cabinet ministers, Miss Stella Sigua. Within a year she too was removed by Holomisa who then installed himself at the head of the Transkei government.[32] With a new government in power, the issue of the reburial of Dalindyebo was to become one of the centre pieces of Transkeian politics. How and why this took place will be a major excercise in this final section.

One of the first signs of the political resurrection of Dalindyebo was the removal of Zondwa Mtirara as King of the Thembu. Zondwa had succeeded his to the throne. But whereas his father had been installed on the throne by Matanzima, Zondwa was removed by a meeting of thousands of Thembu in July 1989, at Bumbane, "the place of kings". The son of Dalindyebo, Buyelekhaya was named king in absentia.[33] The political pendulum had swung.

The crowning of Buyelekhaya in absentia was soon followed by calls for the reburial of his father. The return of the Thembu throne to the son of Dalindyebo and the calls made for the reburial of Dalindyebo were the clearest indications that the issues which had divided Dalindyebo and Matanzima had not yet been resolved.[34] The final act of Matanzima, the stealing of Dalindyebo's body had not after all been the coup the grace. Instead, the calls for the exhumation and reburial of Dalindyebo were vivid demonstrations of the authority of Dalindyebo reaching from beyond the grave. His legitimacy as king to the Thembus had been undiminished. In essence, the Thembu had reappropriated their dead king, restored his royalty, and, reconfirmed for themselves that they were alone the ultimate repository and guardians of Thembu practices. They publicly proclaimed that only they could confer or withdraw legitimacy on Thembu practices and persons, and revealed as futile Matanzima's attempt to usurp their role. One is reminded here of the lament of the Shakesperean tragic hero, Brutus, "Caesar dead is more powerful than Caesar alive."[35] Well might Matanzima had said the same of Dalindyebo.

The exhumation of the king was doubly crucial since it had been rumoured that the king's corpse had been mutilated, an act considered to be sacrilegious. The belief that the king's corpse had been handcuffed and shot in the head proved unfounded.[36] The prevalence of these beliefs, however, indicated the degree of alienation which existed between Matanzima and the Transkeian people. More important, perhaps, is that these beliefs point to more deeply held beliefs about the sacredness and inviolateness of the body. The king was found to have been buried in an unsealed coffin, wearing socks but no shoes. This was not the same cofffin in which the body had been brought from Zambia. The robbing of the dead body was thus a matter of concern, though less traumatic than the rumours about a mutilated corpse.

The exhumation of Dalindyebo's corpse took place on the 8th September, 1989 in the presence of hundreds of witnesses. The grave digging took five hours at the end of which the Deputy Paramount Chief performed a ceremony to appease the Thembu ancestors. He intoned that the king had been incorrectly buried in a pauper's graveyard and had to be removed to a place reserved for kings. Earlier in the day, while the digging was still continuing, an interdenominational Christian service was held to celebrate the exhumation of the corpse.[37]

The exhumation of Dalindyebo and the performance of two forms of religious worship revealed the essential ambiguity which underlay the calls for the reburial of Dalindyebo. Exhumation as such is without a customary precedent in Thembu history, and is, in fact, a phenomenon associated with the intervention of the modern state into Thembu affairs. The appeasement of the ancestors at the site of the exhumation clearly demonstrated how cultural practices can be adapted or extended to accommodate new realities.

The simultaneous existence of the "traditional" and the "modern" was even more apparent in terms of the two forms of religious worship which were both conducted at the graveyard. The task, however, is to understand why this was possible. Firstly, we know that the hundreds of persons who attended the exhumation of Dalindyebo were not all of the same religious persuasion. This is also equally true of those who attended his re-burial. Their common denominator was their opposition to apartheid. And for the Thembu people, this would be buttressed by their knowledge that despite their religious differences, Dalindyebo remained their king. As such Dalindyebo served as a unifying figure that could simultaneously contain the varying and seemingly contradictory elements around his burial. Once again, Dalindyebo was a co-author in the production of the meanings which we can give to his burials.

It is useful to contrast the fears that Dalindyebo's corpse might have been mutilated, and thus desecrated, with calls for a post-mortem to be conducted on his remains. By definition, a post mortem involves what some would consider to be a form of mutilation. Yet in this instance, this was not considered to be sacrilegious but, in fact, was called to determine whether such sacrilege had taken place. The appeal to modern medical science to validate more deeeply held notions about the sacredness of the body is very illuminating. The tradional and the modern became engaged in a taut interchange with each other, mediated, indeed controlled by the political exigency of the moment, the establishing of Matanzima's guilt. Are we, in fact, witnesses to the resuscitation , or perhaps, the undying strenght of a fundamental African belief that death is never a chance occurence and that the rites of burial become the moment for the

establishing of guilt and the apportioning of blame? One week later, at the actual funeral ceremony, a speaker asserted that Matanzima was responsible for the death of Dalindyebo; the mourners agreed.

A more salient point to observe is that in the contests surrounding the burials of Dalindyebo, notions of what is sacred and what constitutes "proper" treatment of the body become changed. Dalindyebo's reburials thus offer us a glimpse of how attitudes towards death and burial, and more generally cultural norms are shaped and changed by human beings in both conscious and unconscious ways.

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Observers were unanimously agreed that Dalindyebo's reburial on the 1st October, 1989 was a critical moment in the political history of the Transkei, and was potentially a landmark event in the the history of South Africa as a whole. This reading prevailed because of the large presence of the African National Congress, then still a banned organisation. The mourners were numbered in the tens of thousands. The black, green and gold colours of the organisation were every where; on the tee-shirts of the mourners, on the banners and flags flying all around, on the badges of the marshals. Indeed, the very coffin in which Dalindyebo rested was magnificently draped in the colours of the banned organisation. And the pall bearers were uniformed in the colours of th African National Congress.[38]

The ceremony itself was a choreography of defiance as the mourners swayed and danced to the impassioned strains of their anti- apartheid songs. And in the interlude {if interlude it was} the explosion of song and dance was only punctuated by the powerful political rhetoric of the various speakers, heralds to another triumphalist performance of song and dance. Indeed, Matanzima would remark that Dalindyebo had been buried by the ANC and that he would not have tolerated the "toyi-toyi" dancing seen at the funeral. We know, of course, that in the first place, he would not have permitted the funeral.

The major speakers at the funeral and their very oratories were further indication of the ANC's control of Dalindyebo's funeral. Dr.K. Mgojo of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa delivered the sermon. He said Chief Sabata was a heavy weight boxer and that those who opposed him were lightweights. He likened him to a soldier who fought to free his people from the bondage of oppression. He compared him to the biblical character Joseph who had suffered hate and vengeance from his brothers because he was too powerful for them. His powerful sermon was as much about politics as it was about the spirituality of the human body, and indeed, it was the way in which these were combinde together that gave particular power to his address.[39]

Peter Mokaba, President of South African Youth Congress used

the funeral to denounce the homeland system.

> "The homeland system must be put in a paper bag locked in a strong room of the Union Buildings. have witnessed today is the beginning of bigger to come in our goal to defeat apartheid". [40]

Chief Dalagubho said that Dalindyebo had been involve the constant struggle against apartheid and for that he ha suffered constant harassment. Mr.Alfred Xobolo said that Dalindyebo had refused to accept the self government of th Transkei and that the subsequent independence had disgrace people of the Transkei. Glowing tributes to The dead Chief the African National Congress, the United Democratic Front. Mass Democratic Movement The Congress Of Traditional Leader Congress of South African Trade Unions and, a host of other apartheid organisations, were read at the funeral.[41] Perhap most telling statement of the ANC's political triumph at th funeral was the presence of Dalindyebo's son, Buyelekhaya, had returned to the Transkei to attend his father's funeral Recognising the ascendancy of the ANC in the Transkei, The Mail headlines trumpeted, "ANC Groomed King Returns To Transkei".[42]

It is here again that we receive a welcome reminder of nexus between local ethnic politics and the larger national liberation struggle. Buyelekhaya's return to the Transkei a King of the Thembus gave him, and ultimately the ANC, a posi of critical importance. Yet the political issues involved w far beyond the confines of Transkei and reverberated on the larger national stage.

Perhaps the most fascinating political development at t reburial of Dalindyebo was the speech delivered by the milit leader, General Bantu Holomisa. Certainly, he delivered the important political speech. He had already allowed the ANC t conduct Dalindyebo's reburial without the restrictions which Matanzima had placed on the first burial. And in the bombshe speech which reverberated right across South Africa national political stage, Holomisa stated that he was willing to hold referendum in the Transkei to allow the people to decide whet they wished to be reincorporated into the larger South Africa body politic. By this single move Holomisa threatened the en edifice of grand apartheid which was premised on the division South Africa into ethnic "homelands". Every major newspaper reported on this major challenge to the Verwoerdian dinosaur. Being the largest and the first "homeland" to obtain its "independence", Transkei's rejection of such a status would ra serious implications for the survival of the "ethnic" states.

To understand Holomisa's action, one has again to be aler to the absolute lack of political credibility enjoyed by all Transkeian leaders. Indeed, this crisis of legitimacy has bee

body. His reburial was certainly his most triumphant moment in thirty years of struggle against Matanzima and the South African government. One can find no fault with David Beresford's assessment of Dalindyebo's reburial. It was "as much a political celebration as the burying of a king".[47]

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1.All the major newspapers in South Africa reported on the circumstances surrouding the burial and reburial of Dalindyebo. The Daily Despatch offered the fullest coverage of the burials. However, The Weekly Mail and The Star also gave excellent coverage of the events. See in particular the issues of the Daily Despatch from the 9th September, 1989 to the 6th October,1989. For all othe newspapers, see issues from the 24th of September to the 6th October.

2.This is in fact the larger study in which I am engaged, an investigation of the debates, negotiations and contests which take place around the burial of the dead in South Africa, where race, culture and politics coalesce together to createpatricular experiences of burial in South Africa.

3.I obtained this information by way of personal communication. A search of the Tehran Times in 1979 would enable one to explore the politics and sociology of mass funerals in pre-revolutionary Iran and would offer an interesting comparative framework within which one can examine the South African experience of the 1980's.

4. BBC report; 28 th august,1990.

5. This paper was presented at the AES panel on "The Political lives of Dead Bodies", American Ethnological Society, 1990 Spring meeting,Atlanta, April 26-29.

6.BBC International service. Report in August, 1990.

7.Report in The Sunday Tribune, May 1990.

8. BBC International Service, September,1990.

9.David William Cohen is currently working on the funeral of S.M Otieno. "Silences of the Living,Orations of the Dead; The Struggle in Kenya for S.M. Otieno's Body" an unpublished paper presented at

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11. P.Aries, The Hour Of Our Death, New York, 1981.

12. Max Gluckman, The Allocation of Responsibility Oxford, 1977.

13. M. Bloch and J.Parry, Death and The Regeneration of Life, Cambridge, CUP 1982.

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15. Glazier, Land and the Uses of Tradition among the Mbeere of Kenya, 1985.

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17. The most informative work on the struggles between Dalindyebo and Matanzima is that of Barry Streek and Richard WIcksteed's Render Unto Kaiser:A Transkei Dossier. I have relied extensively on this work for the background information in this paper.

18.ibid. p310

19. ibid. p311

20. New Nation, 15th October, 1989.

21. Streek and Wicksteed. pp3-110 detail the the dubious manner in which the Transkeian authorities claimed a mandate for its independence.

22. ibid. pp 308-332

23. ibid

24. Weekly Mail, 6th October, 1989

25. Daily Despatch, 2nd October, 1989

26. Sunday Star, 1st October, 1989.

27. Daily Despatch, 6th October, 1989.

28. See Government gazette no. 9884 of 31 July 1985. Indeed, a preponderance of the gazettes issued under the State of Emergency

in South Africa were directed at the control or prevention of mass funerals.

29. Daily Despatch, 6th October, 1989.

30. J.B.Peires, The Dead Will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle Killing Movement of 1856-57, p.31. Ravan Press, 1989.

31. ibid.

32. I thank Lerato Balang gor first supplying me with this information.

33. Weekly Mail, 6th October, 1989.

34. See the Daily Despatch, 9th September, 1989.

35. William Shakespeare, Julius Caesar, Penguin edition, 1974.

36. See the Sunday Star, 1st October, 1989, and The Citizen, 9th September, 1989.

37. Daily Dispatch, 9th September, 1989.

38. See The Star, The Daily Dispatch, and The New Nation for a sense of the colour and energy of the funeral.

39. Daily Dispatch, 2nd, October, 1989.

40. Business Day, 2nd October, 1989.

41. ibid.

42. Weekly Mail, 6th October, 1989.

43. The Star2nd October, 1989.

44. I thank Lerato Balang again for this information.

45. New Nation 6th October, 1989.

46. Daily Dispatch, 2nd October, 1989.

47. Weekly Mail, 6th October, 1989.