

Oral history conference: Southern Africa in the Cold War, Post-1974

Date: 30-31 January 2009

Venue: Monash South Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa

Organizers and hosts: Dr Sue Onslow, LSE IDEAS and Dr Anna-Mart van Wyk, Monash South Africa

A small oral history conference co-hosted by The Southern Africa Initiative at LSE IDEAS and the International Studies Section at Monash South Africa, took place from 30-31 January 2009 on the Monash South Africa campus.

The conference, entitled *Southern Africa in the Cold War, Post-1974*, was a unique combination of a small group of select international academics and active participants in the domestic and regional conflict between the various African liberation movements in Southern Africa (i.e. Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa), the white minority governments of South Africa and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, and former Soviet and Cuban representatives.

Political conflict in Southern Africa in the later part of the 20th century possessed both a domestic and an international dimension. For the supporters of African liberation from white minority rule, support from independent African states, socialist regimes in Europe and Asia was vital; so too, the Portuguese regime in Angola and Mozambique, the Rhodesia Front in Rhodesia, and the National Party government in South Africa sought to exploit their geopolitical, economic and ideological importance to the West. The Cold War therefore provided a vital backdrop to this regional struggle, both in terms of perception and propaganda, as well as the reality of military conflict and alliance patterns.

The Conference was intended to address the interaction of the domestic dimension of the struggle of black liberation with regional and global affairs. It was explicitly designed to discuss documentary data from the Liberation era from multiple perspectives. By presenting documentary material from the white governments and their armies, as well as archival material from liberation forces, it promoted discussion and debate between all parties. Thus, the conference's overall purpose was the examination of multiple historical narratives and their cross-fertilization.

The conference was sponsored by the Aluka Project, the Nordic Afrika Institute and the Journal of Southern African Studies. Sessions were chaired by Professor Iain Edwards (Monash South Africa), Professor Brian Raftopoulos and Professor Tilman Dederling (Unisa). Academic papers, selected documents and questions were prepared by Professor Vladimir Shubin (Russian Academy of Sciences), Dr Sue Onslow (LSE and King's College London), Professor Chris Saunders (University of Cape Town) and Dr Thula Simpson (University of Pretoria).

Non-Academic Participants included: Mr Ben Amathila (Namibia), Mr Pik Botha (South Africa), General Jannie Geldenhuys (South Africa), Professor Ben Magubane (South Africa), Mr Wilfred Mhanda (Zimbabwe), Dr Wilbert Sadomba (Zimbabwe), Professor Vladimir Shubin (Russia), Mr Dave Steward (South Africa), Ambassador Andrei Urnov (Russia), Ambassador Angel Villa (Cuba), Professor Richard Wood (ex-Zimbabwe) and Mr Vic Zazerej (South Africa).

Dr Anna-Mart van Wyk,
Lecturer and Section Head: International Studies
Monash South Africa
Tel. +27 11 950-4075
E-mail: anna-mart.vanwyk@arts.monash.edu

Dr Sue Onslow,
Cold War Studies Fellow
LSE IDEAS
E-mail: s.onslow@lse.ac.uk



Dr Anna-Mart van Wyk (Monash South Africa) and Dr Sue Onslow (LSE IDEAS)



Front (left to right): Mr Wilbert Sadomba, Mr Wilfred Mhanda, Ms Proscovia Svärd, Dr Sue Onslow, Dr Anna-Mart van Wyk.

Back (left to right): Mr Ben Amathila, Ambassador Andrei Urnov, Mr Dave Steward, Mr Glenn Cowley, Prof Chris Saunders, Mr Pik Botha, Mr Sifiso Ndlovu, Prof Ben Magubane, Prof Tilman Dederling, Dr Thula Simpson, Prof Vladimir Shubin.

