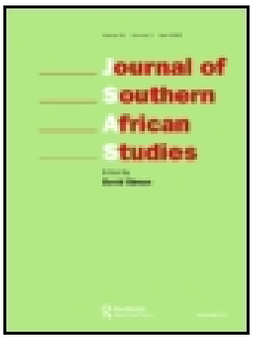

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*Doubly Elite: Exploring the Life of John Langalibalele Dube**

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The first president of the African National Congress, John Langalibalele Dube, is well known as the leading spokesman of his day of Natal's African Christian elite. This article shows that his membership of another elite, that of the Qadi chiefdom, is central to an understanding of the role he played in the 1920s and 1930s in brokering segregationist alliances between white and black interests. The Qadi chief provided critical support to Dube throughout his long career; Dube, in turn, brought much prestige to the chiefdom. Moreover, Dube's connections caused deep rifts and raised many political questions over the idea of Christians associating with traditionalists, not only on his own mission station at Inanda but throughout colonial Natal. Yet his membership of two elites was also of a doubly subjugated kind: Africans suffered inferior status in the eyes of both the state and the church. He fiercely resented and rejected this. Yet his simultaneous desire for respectability and acceptance prevented him from breaking free altogether of the order that entrapped him, and produced in him so many of the ambiguities that Shula Marks has extensively explored.

Introduction

Shula Marks published two key articles on John Langalibalele Dube in early issues of this journal. In the first of these she presented a prospectus for a biography.[1] She noted at the time that although the outlines of Dube's life were reasonably well known, there did not exist a proper biography of this key African nationalist figure. There are many hints in the article that she intended to fill that gap; it is our misfortune that her many academic commitments and prodigious output on the complexities of anticolonial resistance and early nationalism on a wider front have thus far prevented her from achieving this objective. A quarter of a century later, there is still no proper biography of Dube.[2]

It was in this article that she explored the idea of 'the ambiguities of dependence' inherent in the conduct of first-generation African nationalist leaders in South Africa. Their structural powerlessness in the social order necessitated deception and simulation: wearing masks as a means of survival. She portrayed Dube as a figure whose ideas had been

* Research for this paper was carried out while I was a member of staff of the University of Natal, Durban. The assistance of the South African National Research Fund is gratefully acknowledged. An earlier version of this paper was presented to the international conference of the African Studies Association of Australasia and the Pacific in Perth, Western Australia, in November 1999. Thanks to Luli Callinicos and John Wright for comments and suggestions. Thanks also to Esther Sangweni and Robert Papini for valuable insights.

1 'The Ambiguities of Dependence: John L. Dube of Natal', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 1, 2 (1974), pp. 162–180.

2 Writer and journalist R. R. R. Dhlomo (who had at one time edited *Ilanga*, the paper Dube founded) told Tom Karis in 1974 that he was working on a biography of Dube. That it was never completed in part serves as an indictment of the way in which apartheid deprived many fine intellectuals of the resources required for serious scholarship.

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outflanked by the times, the product of his life (1871–1946) spanning two very different eras of resistance politics. These themes were taken up and explored more fully in the 1978 publication of 'Natal, the Zulu royal family and the ideology of segregation'[3] and later in one of her best works, *The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal* (1986). Particularly in the latter, she probed in detail and with great flair and insight the critical set of alliances that Dube brokered, between the Zulu monarchy, the African Christian elite and white Natal-based parliamentary segregationists in the 1920s and 1930s.[4]

Marks's work on Dube has been the most sustained of the several studies that have evaluated his career – and found it wanting.[5] For example, Walshe judged his presidency of the ANC (1912–1917) as probably one of the least successful of his many positions;[6] Hunt Davis thought that he rather too enthusiastically embraced the compromising ideas of Booker T. Washington;[7] and Marable concluded that his political style was, in the end, a disservice to the freedom struggle.[8] Yet since that time, Dube's posthumous stature has grown enormously, not least because of the 1994 electoral victory of the ANC, of which he was not just *a,* but the *first*, president. Nelson Mandela chose Ohlange, the school that Dube founded in 1901, as the place to cast his vote in 1994: Madiba reaching out to Mafukuzela.[9] Again, when Thabo Mbeki became Mandela's presidential successor in 1999, he was introduced to the nation as 'a leader in the tradition of Dube, Tambo and Mandela'.[10] There are other grounds for assuring Dube a secure place in the pantheon of great South African leaders, as educationist, writer, editor, and missionary. These achievements received more emphasis in the past;[11] in the 1990s, however, he is remembered primarily as a political figure.

The relationship between a biography of Dube and Dube the modern icon is not unlike that between 'history' and 'heritage', as portrayed in contemporary debates. History, so it is claimed, has as its end the pursuit of verification and corroboration of evidence and of revealing and explaining complexity and contradiction. Heritage is said to have opposite goals, to secure the past and make it palatable by smoothing out the rough bits, forgetting the embarrassing bits and embellishing the bits that are important for present-day needs.[12]

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3 *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 4, 2 (1978), pp. 172–194.

4 Shula Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence*. Cope's more recent work has filled the story out from Solomon kaDinuzulu's side. See Nicholas Cope, *To Bind the Nation. Solomon kaDinuzulu and Zulu Nationalism 1913–1933* (Pietermaritzburg, 1993).

5 Marks has explained most clearly the immense problems for ANC national unity that Dube caused in later life, by resolutely keeping the Natal organisation separate from the radicalism he perceived to be diluting its mission (he was, for example, extremely hostile to the founding of the Youth League). It was only on his death and Luthuli's assumption of the presidency that Natal joined the ANC mainstream once more. See *The Ambiguities of Dependence,* p. 67.

6 Peter Walshe, *The Rise of African Nationalism in South Africa. The African National Congress 1912–1952* (London, 1970).

7 R. Hunt Davis, 'John L Dube, a South African Exponent of Booker T. Washington', *Journal of African Studies*, 2, 4 (1976). Hunt Davis notes that an earlier generation of scholars such as Edward Roux and the Simonses had similar problems with Dube.

8 Manning Marable, 'African Nationalist. The Life of John Langalibalele Dube', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Maryland (1976). None of these writers dealt with another problematic aspect of Dube's politics, very much shaped by his life-long residence in Inanda, his pronounced anti-Indianism.

9 Mafukuzela ('One who stirs things up') is Dube's praise name. It may be noted also that a trust has recently been set up to refurbish Ohlange School and to reintroduce Dube's educational ideals. Nelson Mandela is its patron.

10 Then Minister of Welfare, G. Fraser-Moleketi, SABC 3 (Television) live post-election coverage, May 1999.

11 The construction of 'Dube the symbol' is a large subject in itself. Briefly, this process began shortly after his death (see the many obituaries, which stressed his contribution as educator and editor) and received a major boost with the institution of 'Mafukuzela Day' at Ohlange from the late 1950s. In time, this became 'Mafukuzela Week', with figures such as the Zulu king in attendance. Interview with Rev. B. K. Dludla, Durban, October 1999.

12 David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge, 1996) presents this sharp distinction between history and heritage – but notes, too, that the two are always inextricably bound together.

One can see this process unfolding in Inanda today, when one stops at Dube's grave and is told by the guide that he loved all people and especially his Indian neighbours. One would be hard put to find the evidence to support such a claim. Yet given the enormous symbolic importance of both Gandhi and Dube in the making of the new 'rainbow nation' – not to say the need for improved African–Indian relations in contemporary KwaZulu-Natal – it is hard to gainsay such comforting 'facts'.[13]

This article is about Dube's life, rather than his memory. Marks's work focuses on the contradictions that Dube's thoroughly patriarchal brand of politics, derived in part from his royal background, sometimes produced. I will try to indicate how a biographical approach[14] might assist in explaining some of these apparent contradictions, by focusing on one central theme of his life, which underpinned his politics and all his other activities as well. My argument is that Dube's distinctive contribution to public life was based on a dual life-long access to elite politics, as a leading member of the African Christian elite *and simultaneously* as an active member of the inner circle of one of the most successful chiefdoms in colonial Natal. Biographies of other nationalist leaders[15] reveal their deference to chiefs, more pronounced perhaps among earlier generations but certainly still a feature of late twentieth-century politics. One of Nelson Mandela's last acts as President was a national tour specifically to take leave of traditional leaders: kings, queens and paramount chiefs. Dube's association went further: it was a much closer one than the personal or symbolic. Before explaining this point, it is necessary to outline the commonly held view on convert-traditionalist relations in Natal, since these tend to be viewed as mutually exclusive affiliations.

African Christian–Traditionalist Relations in Colonial Natal

The literature on convert-traditionalist relations (or more exactly, non-relations) in colonial Natal from the 1840s onwards overwhelmingly conveys the sense that converts lived in isolation on their mission stations, islands in a hostile, or at best indifferent, sea of the great mass of African people in the region.[16] Those washed up on their shores had been fugitives, social misfits, dislocated and dispossessed. They practised a devout Christianity of head, hand and heart, living morally upright lives in modest, frugally furnished square houses, labouring hard in kitchen and field, classroom and chapel, to improve their chances in this world as well as the next.

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13 Gandhi and Dube were, for a time, neighbours. Dube lived at Ohlange from the turn of the century, while Gandhi founded his first *ashram* at Phoenix in the valley directly below in 1903. He lived there until 1913.

14 Although I am aware of the debates now surrounding the task of biography writing – including the validity of undertaking biography at all – I do not deal with these here. For a good selection of perspectives, see M. Rhiel and D. Sukhov (eds), *The Seductions of Biography* (New York, 1996).

15 See, for example, the indispensable barometer of early twentieth century African middle class attitudes, T. D. Mweli Skota, *The African Yearly Register: Being an Illustrated National Biographical Dictionary (Who's Who) of Black Folks in Africa* (Johannesburg, 1930); Anthony Sampson, *Mandela. The Authorised Biography* (London, 1999); Catherine Higgs, *The Ghost of Equality. The Public Lives of D.D.T. Jabavu of South Africa, 1885–1959* (Athens, Ohio, 1997) and Luli Callinicos's forthcoming biography of Oliver Tambo. Albert Luthuli, of course, renounced his chiefship (of the 'Klaas Goba' kind, spelt out below): see *Let My People Go* (London, 1974).

16 Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry* (London, 1979); Cope, *To Bind the Nation*; Norman Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics* (London, 1978); Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence*; Sheila Meintjes, 'Edendale 1850–1906. A Case Study of Rural Transformation and Class Formation in an African Mission in Natal', Ph.D. Thesis, University of London (1988) and H. Bredekamp and R. Ross (eds), *Missions and Christianity in South African History* (Johannesburg, 1995). This perspective is more pronounced in works dealing with the first generation of converts (c1840s–1860s) but would apply widely to such relationships in the first decades of this century. For missionary activity in southern Africa generally, the idea of two poles of consciousness – African and missionary/European – has been most forcefully argued in J. and J. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution. Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago, 1991).

They laboured, too, to define a new cultural milieu for themselves as well as their children; it was not an easy task. As James Matiwana of the Wesleyan Mission Station at Verulam said:

> We do use European food, such as coffee, sugar, bread and such like; butter also; we also use pepper and salt. We have given up our Native dancing, and attend tea meetings and the like. We have no social gatherings, except weddings and such like. The boys and girls have no games; they have given up our Native games; the boys do play at marbles sometimes …[17]

It was probably partially due to the difficulties of transmitting brand new mores that, when their children reached adulthood, they filled in some of the blanks in ways not liked by missionaries, who noted certain 'lapses' in moral rectitude and a return to certain old practices, such as *ukulobola*.[18]

The cultural as well as the physical transition required of early Christian converts was undoubtedly enormous: it meant 'a fundamental alteration in lifestyle'.[19] What struck Meintjes about Edendale, for example, was the similarity of its 'pattern of family and educational life … to colonial family life and even life in rural village England', rather than to anything in the homesteads that converts had abandoned.[20]

Converts felt extremely isolated as they struggled to create a new identity: Jacobus Matiwane of Verulam told the 1881 Commission that 'the outside Natives look upon us as a separate people'. This was the term that converts generally used to refer to traditionalists: the 'outside people'. The very notion of traditionalists being the outsiders (rather than themselves) indicated a certain confidence in their new-found 'inside' sanctuary, a belief shared by the lowliest as well as the loftiest members of convert society that their status had been, or would be, much improved by identification with the Christian mission. Some believed as passionately as any labour-starved white settler that the locations preserved a barbarous lifestyle and that the land ought to be broken up for freehold.

Yet this term also indicated a certain fearfulness of 'outsiders', a sense of being caught inside their self-made stockade. Converts were dependent on their resident missionary for many kinds of resources, not least of which was protection – against the actions of outsiders and, later, against the increasingly hostile colonial establishment. Both senses, of sanctuary and stockade, tended to reinforce the distance between convert and traditionalist, which in turn acted as 'a powerful spur to material and educational advancement': from their ranks, a prosperous land-owning, farming, entrepreneurial class grew.[21] Other forms of association – political, economic and social – are thought to have followed the same contours as the wide cultural gulf that separated convert communities from traditionalists.

Dube's 'Inside' Background: The Inanda Mission Station

Founded in 1847 by the missionaries Daniel and Lucy Lindley, the Inanda mission station was one of the most successful of the American Zulu Mission[22] stations in Natal. Until the late 1850s, the local Qadi chief regarded the influence of these stations as a threat to his

17 James Matiwana, *Evidence Taken Before the Native Affairs Commission* (Colony of Natal, 1881), p. 387.
18 M. Dinnerstein, 'The American Board Mission to the Zulu, 1835–1900', Ph.D. Thesis, Columbia University (1971), Chapter 7.
19 Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence*, p. 46
20 Meintjes, 'Edendale 1850–1906', p. 136.
21 Norman Etherington, 'Natal's First Black Capitalists', *Theoria,* 45 (1975), pp. 29–40.
22 The name given to the Natal field of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, founded in Boston in 1810. The most complete account of its work in the Natal region remains Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics.*

status and resolutely refused even to listen to Sunday services (although he no doubt had spies in the audience).

John's grandmother Mayembe (baptised Dalida) was, in fact, the Lindleys' most valued convert. For the first two years of their work in Inanda, there had been no local converts. Matters changed rather dramatically in 1849, however, when Mayembe, a widow of the Qadi chief Dube, had sought refuge at the mission to escape an arranged *ukungena* marriage to a brother of her late husband. It is possible that such a marriage would have provided her son Ukakonina with cattle for his *lobola*, since he was reaching marriageable age. She took with her to the mission not only her children (including Ukakonina, baptised James, a brother to Chief Dube's successor Dabeka) but also eight head of cattle, which the Qadi chief felt belonged to him.

In order to give formal, institutional protection to Mayembe, a rare convert among the rare, the Inanda church was founded in January 1849. Some of its original members were to head leading convert families in the colony; the Dubes would be the most prominent. At their prompting, the mission moved from its original hilly location to more open terrain in 1856, so that the small community would be better able to grasp a variety of economic opportunities. 'Some of our best men are so deep in worldly affairs that I hardly see how they can creep out from under the load they are carrying', remarked Lindley.[23] Among the most prosperous were two early converts who had entered the transport riding business, James Dube and Klaas Goba.

From the 1870s, the applications for Exemption from Native Law of converts from Inanda comprise one of the very few surviving sources of personal information about these people. In most cases, this is the only source that they themselves compiled, even though it was tailored to the requirements of the rather prosaic official form. Completed forms reveal a quite narrow band of occupations – preachers, carpenters, wagoners, storekeepers, teachers. Wives of applicants, and women applying in their own right, were not required to furnish their occupation, it being assumed that they did not have one, since they were dependants of a male guardian – either husband, father or missionary.

In nearly every case, men's occupation was given as a combination with that of 'farmer': it was taken for granted that no-one could reside on the mission station, or reserve, and not be able at the very least to grow or raise one's own subsistence requirements; most raised more besides. Yet the term 'farmer' was more than a descriptive one. It was deliberately chosen to distinguish them from 'Native cultivators' (a term in general use to describe traditionalist agriculture), thereby associating themselves with other commercial (white) farmers. It was therefore a cultural expression as well as an economic one. Ironically, the sociological category 'peasant', used by revisionist scholars from the 1970s to capture their special socio-economic location, pulled them away from the very identifications they were themselves so carefully trying to create.

Although evidence is lacking, they probably employed labour, but until the early twentieth century, this was on a very small scale and was mostly disguised as 'family' labour. Like their traditionalist counterparts, Christian cultivators organised work parties for weeding and harvesting, although rewarded them with sweet potatoes rather than beer. Most importantly, these various callings also indicate what was noticeable across convert society in the colony: a capacity to slip the clutches of white settlers and their clamorous demands for labour.

Dalida herself never remarried. James and his wife Elizabeth had nine children, the best known of whom was John Langalibalele (born 1871), named after the Hlubi chief whose innovating spirit James admired. By the early 1860s, James was in charge of the mission's

23 Quoted in Edwin Smith, *The Life and Times of Daniel Lindley* (London, 1949), p. 398.

day school. In 1869, he was closely involved in the founding of Inanda Seminary, the first secondary school for African girls in southern Africa. He was ordained in the year of John's birth and appointed pastor of the Inanda church after Lindley departed in 1873. Christians and traditionalists alike respected him: 'he appears to know the spiritual condition of every one, converted and unconverted', noted Lindley.[24] In all likelihood, James played a central role in thawing the relations between the mission and the local chief, Mqhawe (Dabeka's son), from the late 1850s, after years of tension. He died in 1877.

Dube's 'Outside' Background: The Qadi Chiefdom

The Inanda Station was situated in the heartland of the Qadi, a large chiefdom that had suffered greatly in the process of consolidation of the Zulu kingdom and then prospered under British colonial rule, at least in its early phase under Theophilus Shepstone.[25] Mqhawe, who led the Qadi from the early 1840s until his death in 1906, was an able leader whose qualities accounted for much of Qadi success. A very close relation of Dube's, he presided over an inner circle whose members were acutely aware of the forces of destruction and opportunity that had shaped their destiny. They articulated this understanding in numerous ways, from the declamation of chiefly praises to the elaboration of strategies for future Qadi survival. Dube was a vital heir to this historical knowledge.

Long before the rise of the Zulu kingdom, the Qadi had been a subordinate chiefdom in the large Ngcobo paramountcy, entrenched in the Thukela valley. It was among the first to be incorporated into the kingdom under Shaka.[26] Under their chief Dube, the Qadi survived the first two decades of Zulu authority reasonably intact.[27] But then, in the autumn of 1837, the polity (including Chief Dube himself) was crushed between Dingane's 'upper and nether grindstones'.[28] The survivors of this attack scattered southwards to the vicinity of Port Natal, led by Dube's son Dabeka. Certain homestead heads who had been close to the chief in the Thukela valley ensured a thread of continuity; they seem to have formed the nucleus of the elite around the chiefly lineage in Natal.

As with other immigrant groups, the men were drafted into a militia organised by white traders at the Port for protection against the Zulu king. After Dingane's killing of the Retief party in April 1838, the 1,500 militiamen marched out on an expedition against the Zulu king. It was a disaster; among the many casualties 'there died Dabeka kaDube, the Qadi chief'.[29] Twice, then, in as many years, the Qadi had suffered defeat, dispersal, the untimely deaths of their leaders and the loss of a large number of men at the hands of the Zulu army.

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24 Smith, *The Life and Times*, p. 403.

25 For an overview of 'Shepstonism', see John Lambert, *Betrayed Trust. Africans and the State in Colonial Natal* (Pietermaritzburg, 1995).

26 Carolyn Hamilton, 'Ideology, Oral Traditions and the Struggle for Power in the Early Zulu Kingdom', M.A. Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand (1985), p. 475. Traditions are, it is now accepted, 'complex intellectual productions that draw selectively on the different layerings inherent in any text' (Isabel Hofmeyr, personal communication); the complexity of Qadi traditions does not fully emerge here but is dealt with at some length in H. Hughes, 'Politics and Society in Inanda, Natal: the Qadi Under Chief Mqhawe c1840–1906', Ph.D. Thesis, University of London (1996).

27 A.T. Bryant, *Olden Times in Zululand and Natal* (London, 1929), p. 493, and Jantshi in C. de B. Webb and J. B. Wright (eds), *The James Stuart Archive Volume 3* (Pietermaritzburg and Durban, 1976), p. 183.

28 The most likely explanation for this attack was Dingane's deep distrust of Dube, who had been very close to Shaka. Killie Campbell Africana Collection, Zulu Tribal History Competition, Ngcobo, ' The Qadi tribe' (1950). Other sources on Qadi history include Madikane Cele, Mandhlakazi kaSitshi and Mtshapi kaNoradu in *The James Stuart Archive*; M. V. Gumede, 'History of the Qadi Tribe', MS (1970); M. Fuze, *The Black People and Whence They Came* (Pietermaritzburg and Durban, 1979); A. T. Bryant, *Olden Times*; J. Stuart and D. M^{c}K. Malcolm (eds), 'Epilogue' in *The Diary of Henry Francis Fynn* (Pietermaritzburg, 1969) and Cele and Ngidi entries to the Zulu Tribal History Competition.

29 Fuze, *The Black People*, p. 170.

They were displaced yet again during the Zulu attack on Port Natal in the wake of the Dlokweni battle. These were bitter experiences, which moulded their attitudes towards both the colonial authorities in Natal and the independent kingdom beyond its borders. It is small wonder that Mqhawe, Dabeka's heir, would be singled out for his 'zeal and courage'[30] in the field in the Anglo-Zulu war.

The Qadi, numbering probably less than a thousand and possessing few cattle, initially settled in coastal forest on the northern banks of the Umgeni, about two miles from the mouth.[31] Mqhawe, born in the late 1820s, was still too young to become chief and a regent acted in his stead. Atkins describes very vividly the many social and economic problems that refugees encountered in Natal and the various means they adopted to overcome them.[32] The Qadi probably had similar concerns: two of the most pressing were the 'reaccumulation of cattle funds'[33] and adequate land for grazing and cropping, in order to regain social stability.

An episode in 1843 gave the Qadi ready assistance in acquiring cattle, which proved a turning point in their fortunes. The new Zulu king, Mpande, was making every attempt to secure his position north of the Thukela. One of those whom he considered a threat was Mawa, a powerful representative of the older order in the kingdom. When Mpande moved against her, she fled into Natal with a number of followers and a large herd of royal cattle. Kofiyana kaMbengana kaGwayi, a colonial government *induna* who was on close terms with the Qadi, was instructed to seize the cattle. Most seem to have been distributed among those who had assisted in their confiscation; the Qadi, and probably the chief in particular, benefited greatly from this booty. 'It is with those cattle that we had established ourselves, we of the white men's country', as Madikane Cele, a close advisor to the Qadi chief, put it.[34]

Now in a more favourable position to rebuild their polity, the Qadi needed suitable land. They moved upstream beyond the old (and mostly abandoned) Boer farms of Piesang Rivier, Groeneberg and Inanda to the Umzinyathi River, a tributary of the Umgeni. This was good cattle country, with ready access to flat areas for gardens. They displaced weaker, smaller chiefdoms into craggier areas, those that the government demarcated as the Inanda location in 1847. Being outside the 'protection' of the location, Qadi land would at some point be vulnerable to privatisation. Thus, the declaration of this land as a mission reserve attached to the Inanda station in 1856 served to secure the Qadi heartland as much for the chief as for the missionary.

Apart from the land issue, Mqhawe had found much reason to work with the mission since the low point between them in 1849, when Dalida had defected from the Qadi domain. Lindley assisted him in acquiring farm implements and horses; he and other missionaries acted as scribes for him in dealings with the government; James Dube assisted him to establish a transport riding business. In addition, even though the chief was not able

30 State Archives, Pietermaritzburg, 1/1/35 872/1879, Secretary of Native Affairs Papers (SNA), Inanda Magistrate's Report 1879.

31 Killie Campbell Africana Collection, Armstrong Papers, KCM 25650, G. S. Armstrong, 'Family reminiscences'; J. Robinson, *Notes on Natal: An Old Colonist's Book for New Settlers* (Durban, 1872), p. 3.

32 Keletso Atkins, *The Moon is Dead! Give Us Our Money! The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic, Natal, South Africa, 1843–1900* (London, 1993), especially Chapter 2. Her discussion focuses on the particular difficulties of refugees arriving *after* Natal became a British colony. As such, it underlines the good fortune of a group such as the Qadi in having arrived before this event. The sequence was of great importance, as those arriving prior to British rule were not technically regarded as refugees, subject to strict legal controls over entry and residence, but were accorded the retrospective status of 'aboriginal inhabitants'.

33 Atkins, *The Moon is Dead!*, p. 28.

34 Madikane in *The James Stuart Archive Volume 2*, p. 56.

unilaterally to place new followers on mission reserve lands – this was the prerogative of the missionary in charge – Lindley in his time routinely consulted him.

Because Mqhawe, like other chiefs, was left with much latitude by the colonial administration,[35] he was disposed to accept both its restrictions and demands; moreover, he was able to augment his position by turning most of these to advantage. For Lonsdale, this was 'the central paradox of the politics of control': that conquest, even in its most oppressive forms, could permit the enlargement of chiefly power.[36] This does not mean, however, that Mqhawe enjoyed the undiluted benefit of British rule; although a chief, he was still an African colonial subject. Yet a combination of circumstance and shrewd calculation meant that the Qadi elite were highly successful in consolidating their position, both in their own terms and in relation to other chiefdoms.

Where Mqhawe differed from many other hereditary chiefs was that in his pursuit of effective authority, he not only relied upon 'tradition' and essentially retributive measures but made efforts to secure tangible benefits for his followers. Chiefly success had some 'trickle down' effect, in that he organised the reallocation of some resources, largely derived from commoners in the first place, in the broader interest. He thereby retained a higher degree of legitimacy than was probably the case in chiefdoms whose leadership was perceived as ineffectual in dealing with their followers' most pressing needs, partly because they did not possess a decent resource base to begin with.

By the 1870s, Mqhawe rightly saw that land shortage would soon seriously upset relations both within the chiefdom and with its neighbours. Consequently, he began exploring the possibility of buying land on behalf of the chiefdom, on which he and his close circle could allocate sites without reference either to magistrate or missionary. In late 1875, with the help of Bishop Colenso, he located a suitable farm of just over 9,000 acres, on the south bank of the Unkomanzi River, west of Pietermaritzburg.[37]

The money to buy it was raised largely from a so-called tribal levy, which dated from this time.[38] In terms of the Deed of Transfer, the farm, called Incwadi, was ceded to Mqhawe and his heirs on behalf of the Qadi. A Board of Management, whose members were listed in a schedule attached to the Deed, was to oversee its affairs. These names represented virtually the entire inner circle of the chiefdom: several of Mqhawe's senior relatives, most of his brothers and older sons, and his own appointees, such as Madikane Cele and Ukakonina (James Dube).[39]

Bringing Dube's Two Backgrounds Together

Previous writers have suggested an unusual set of relationships at Inanda, of an abiding link between chief and convert. Etherington was able to find only two exceptions to his general conclusion that chiefs in Natal either put up a determined resistance to Christianisation (the overwhelming majority), or wished to draw closer to missionaries but feared ridicule or worse from their subjects. One of these was Mqhawe, who had managed to accommodate the missionaries without doing damage to his chiefly status: 'By 1881 Mqhawe was able to report that the advent of Christianity in his vicinity had done nothing to interfere with his

35 For extensive accounts of colonial rule in Natal, see John Lambert, *Betrayed Trust;* Shula Marks, *Reluctant Rebellion. The 1906–1908 Disturbances in Natal* (Oxford, 1970) and David Welsh, *The Roots of Segregation. Native Policy in Natal, 1845–1910* (Cape Town, 1970).

36 John Lonsdale, 'The Conquest State of Kenya 1895–1905' in Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley. Conflict in Kenya and Africa Volume 2* (London, 1992), p. 31.

37 SNA, 1/1/29 872/1877, Colenso to Colonial Secretary, 18 January 1876.

38 State Archives, Pietermaritzburg, Chief Native Commissioner (CNC) Papers, Box 127 22/154, 'Report on Nooitgedacht', 14 December 1948.

39 This schedule must have been drawn up prior to James Dube's death in 1877, even though it is dated 1878.

chiefly authority, and that Christian and heathen members of his tribe intermingled without friction. No other Nguni chief could make that statement.'[40] Mqhawe was clearly very good at presenting himself as unperturbed by the advent of Christianity; his statement glossed over some of the awkward problems he had experienced as a result of its arrival. Yet his ability to absorb the shocks and to turn the seemingly disadvantageous to his advantage meant that there was, by the 1880s, more than a grain of truth in it.

There is another hint, in previous research, that relations at Inanda were exceptional. When Dinnerstein was doing fieldwork there, she noted that:

> Even in the 1960s, the people at Inanda think of themselves as Qadi and Ngcobo, and the chief has ties of kinship with most families in the area. The most progressive people, in fact, are related to the chief and the people are unwilling to give allegiance to a Christian chief.[41]

It would seem then that the convert–traditionalist divide was a somewhat more complex matter than ordinarily portrayed, as the station community itself became deeply discordant precisely over the matter of relations with traditionalists. One section, led by the Dubes, maintained close and mutually supportive links with the Qadi elite; as Dinnerstein observed, this was the faction that prevailed in local politics for a century afterwards. Another, led by the Gobas, determinedly set itself against the 'outside' people. Both sections shared certain cultural aspirations, yet each found a different mode of dealing with the ambiguities inherent in their position. This unfolding process must be seen against the background of closer government control over African colonial subjects from the 1870s.

At the same time, Marks notes that 'deculturation' among the converts in Natal was not quite as complete as first appearances would suggest, although the example she cites, that of Pixley kaIsaka Seme, could serve merely to reinforce the particularity of Inanda.[42] Among the Qadi, there were several cases of convert-traditionalist marriages, as well as of converts holding *ukwomulisa* feasts. The Inanda Location Supervisor complained that convert women planted their maize in as haphazard a way as their traditionalist sisters, and refused to learn the blessings of straight lines.[43] Various forms of assistance bridged the divide, too: for example, the pastor Maziyana Nyokana periodically lent his gun to his traditionalist son-in-law, Benikalukuni.[44] Such associations were clearly important in affecting cultural mixes and outcomes, and were certainly not unique to Inanda. What is at issue, however, are deliberate associations over and above day-to-day contact between family members, and kin ties that were turned to political purpose.

As noted earlier, James Dube assumed the pastorship of the Inanda mission station in 1873. However, the AZM conference was still not entirely convinced of the wisdom of African leadership in church matters and it was unwilling to engage in such an experiment on one of its most prestigious stations. Accordingly, it appointed a white successor to Lindley, the Rev. Stephen Clapp Pixley. His supervisory position at Inanda was not very clear while James Dube was alive. He was also somewhat overshadowed by the indomitable principal of the girls' seminary, Mary Edwards, who had always maintained excellent relations with Mqhawe.

On the station, Pixley favoured the general AZM policy of appointing a convert

40 Etherington, *Preachers, Peasants and Politics*, p. 70.
41 Dinnerstein, 'The American Board Mission', p. 82.
42 Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence*, pp. 54–55. Writers who have discussed both Dube and Seme at length, in studies of nationalist politics in Natal in the early twentieth century, have on the whole failed to make any connection between them: both their families were caught up in the same station's convert politics. Seme, however, chose the broader South African terrain on which to pursue his political ambitions, while Dube remained firmly rooted in Inanda.
43 SNA, 1/1/122 45/1890, Fayle's Diary, 11 January 1890.
44 SNA, 1/1/246 101/1897.

headman (rather than pastor) as leader of the station's converts, over whom the (white) missionary could have some control. In the immediate wake of James Dube's death, he encouraged those who supported this approach and, somewhat later, in the 1890s, was to develop a strong dislike for John Dube. Pixley's one outstanding characteristic was his length of service at Inanda: nearly forty years. Through all his long reign, Mqhawe thus had only two supervising missionaries with whom to deal, which simplified his task of trying to understand 'the missionary mind'.

There was a temporary dip in the chief's contact with the mission on James Dube's death in 1877, when he made a final bid to recover the cattle he believed had wrongfully been removed by Dalida Dube 28 years earlier. However, Pixley, who thought Mqhawe 'an intemperate heathen man', ensured that the property of James's widow Elizabeth would be secure from customary law, even though James had not been exempted.[45] A few years later, Mqhawe had evidently mended his relations with the Dubes, claiming that 'I have his [James Dube's] children with me and I do not take *ukulobola* for them',[46] although the incident set the tone for future dealings between himself and Pixley. Mqhawe's position was protected more by Pixley's assiduous policing of the mission reserve (at least until the 1890s) than because of any particular rapport between missionary and chief. In this respect, Mqhawe deeply regretted Lindley's departure.

From the late 1870s, AZM policy favoured a broad *cordon sanitaire* around converts, in order to protect them from the heathenish influences of traditionalists. In contrast to Lindley, Pixley welcomed the AZM's firmer stance. The so-called Umsunduze Rules, published in 1879, adopted a hard-line attitude to customs ranging from those associated with marriage (*ukungena* and *ukulobola*) to imbibing alcohol.[47] In their place, a Christianised pseudo-tribalism (the promotion of a communal sense of solidarity, hierarchically ordered and presided over by a 'chief', whose authority would be unquestioned) was to be encouraged.

Colonial legislation assisted towards this end. In terms of the Native Administration Act of 1875, the general effect of which was to strengthen a 'tribal tradition' in the governance of Africans in Natal, provision had been made for the appointment of *izinduna*, or headmen, from among the ranks of station converts. Instead of their being gradually incorporated into a common colonial society, African converts were being encouraged to look upon themselves as polities akin to 'tribes', reflected in the official use of the term *Amakholwa* ('believers') 'in the same way as any other tribal or clan name then current.'[48]

The first such headman appointed on the Inanda station, in 1879, was Klaas Goba. His jurisdiction as headman was confined to the mission glebe, where in the late 1870s some 100 families of converts had their homes and land.[49] He began styling himself 'Chief Klaas', a position validated by Law 19 of 1891, the Natal Code, although the curiously self-contradictory debate about whether an 'exempted Native' could actually hold the position of chief continued. As befitting his elevated position, he felt that his jurisdiction should extend to the whole mission reserve. Mqhawe had exercised singular chiefly authority over this land for 50 years; as long as Goba had confined his attentions to the glebe, Mqhawe had not been much bothered by him. Goba's expansionist designs, however, inaugurated a long and bitter contest for local dominance between them.

Pixley entered the fray on Goba's side. Without reference to Mqhawe, for example, he

45 SNA, 1/1/29 896/1877, Pixley to Acting Secretary of Native Affairs, 21 November 1877.
46 Mqhawe, *Evidence Taken Before the Native Affairs Commission* (1881), p. 229.
47 State Archives, Pietermaritzburg, ABM (American Board Papers), A608 A/1/7, 'Rules for the Regulation of the Churches Connected with the AZM'.
48 Meintjes, 'Edendale 1850–1906', p. 283.
49 SNA, 1/1/35 872/1879, Inanda Magistrate's Report 1879.

started allowing newcomers onto reserve land and allotting them gardens already cultivated by Mqhawe's followers, provided they acknowledged Goba as their chief. He tried to confiscate a garden from one of Mqhawe's people for the use of his station 'policeman' (as Pixley called him, and who was also used by Goba) as a reward not only for reporting drunkenness among Qadi on the reserve to the Verulam magistrate, but also for encouraging some of Mqhawe's followers to *ukuvalelisa* – that is, to pay a 'leaving' fee to Mqhawe and to join Klaas Goba.[50]

To compound matters, Pixley began proselytising work among other chiefdoms in the Inanda location, among Kamanga's and Dhlokolo's people, which Mqhawe read as an unwarranted partition of loyalty. More practically, it meant that converts from these two chiefdoms were coming to live on the Inanda reserve.[51] Pixley's view was simply that Mqhawe was a poor loser:

> The Gospel has had some success among this chief's people and now when the time comes to decide on which side a man is to be in future Umqawe finds many of his people wish to valelisa … this whole matter of Umqawe's complaints comes from jealousy. This Reserve he calls his. This Station is his. This school is his so he says I am his missionary … Let him reign alone in his heathenish customs …[52]

Pixley's nostrum, to which Klaas Goba fervently subscribed, was that the reserve should be divided into private lots for purchase, with continued supervision by the missionaries to safeguard against any abuses by unsuitable occupants – again, not the sort of policy to find favour with Mqhawe. Pixley had approached the SNA several times on this issue in the 1880s. His view was that, 'if possible I would have these lands sold and titles given with restrictions, to individual settlers, giving preference to the present occupiers.'[53] Goba for his part organised various 'agitations' in support of the scheme, including petitions and speeches. He told the Lands Commission, 'We are looking forward to the fulfilment of the promise that these Reserves are going to be cut up, so as to give all of us blocks of land. We are quite willing to pay for them, if payment is required.'[54]

Although the Christian chief gave him trouble, and the missionary was ill disposed towards him, Mqhawe had other lines of communication into the Lindley mission station that served his interests better. While the Dube children were growing up on the mission, Mqhawe's main support there was Mary Edwards. She was willing to help him partly because she had followed Lindley's lead on such matters, and partly because Mqhawe was, in turn, happy to have any number of 'kraal schools' in the Qadi domain. In matters where he considered that her 'voice' would carry more weight than his own, he requested her assistance. Thus, in 1886, she wrote on his behalf to the SNA about the border dispute with Chief Kamanga in the location, plainly presenting his case: 'It seems hard for so many [Qadi] to be removed especially when the poles are so difficult to obtain.'[55] Although on occasion Pixley himself wrote such letters on the chief's behalf, he ceased to do so from the 1890s.

Certain converts similarly assisted Mqhawe over the years. Among the leading families who associated themselves with the chief were the Mdimas, the Mavumas, the Semes and the Celes, all of whom formed a close-knit support around John Dube. Thus, Nokutela Mdima, a teacher at the Seminary, wrote letters dictated by Mqhawe on matters such as food shortages in the chiefdom.[56] The manner in which he called upon these mission

50 SNA, 1/1/193 1306/1894, Statement of Mankuza.
51 SNA, 1/1/289 1161/1900, Pixley to Samuelson, 14 August 1903.
52 SNA, 1/1/193 1306/1894, Pixley to Samuelson, 31 May 1895.
53 SNA, 1/1/312 5145/1895, Pixley to Colonial Secretary, 31 October 1895.
54 Goba, *Evidence to the Lands Commission 1900–1902* (Colony of Natal, 1902), p. 239.
55 SNA, 1/1/91 597/1886, Edwards to Secretary of Native Affairs, 6 August 1886.
56 SNA, 1/1/123 505/1894, Umqawe Dube per Nokutela Mdima to Secretary of Native Affairs, 3 March 1890.

residents to perform certain kinds of tasks suggests that (whatever their views on their role) he was incorporating them as another layer of functionaries of the chiefdom. In this light, his claim to Pixley and the Inanda magistrate that the mission was 'his' was more than the wild imagining of which they had accused him.

The two-way challenge between the chief and Goba turned into a three-cornered one with John Dube's attainment of adulthood in the 1890s. On completion of his education at Adams, Dube had accompanied W. C. Wilcox, an AZM missionary and one of his teachers at Adams, to the United States, where he had graduated from Oberlin College in Ohio with a teaching qualification.[57]

The brief period in between Dube's return from Oberlin and his fundraising visit to the United States (1892–1897) was to have a deep impact on relationships at and beyond Inanda. In January 1894, he married Nokutela Mdima. Not long after, the Dubes set out for their own mission field, where John could be 'bishop' in the way Lindley had been at Inanda half a century earlier. The difference was that Dube could exercise authority over his 'parish' independently of the proffered AZM supervision, for it was the Qadi farm, Incwadi, and he had Mqhawe's backing instead. Mqhawe would not have missed the nice inversion of roles: that he, a non-Christian, could unilaterally send out missionaries to the heathen, something that Pixley, even less Klaas Goba, did not have the power to do.

For the Dubes, it was a unique opportunity in 1890s Natal. On their arrival, Nokutela later recalled, 'Our hearts went up in prayer to God as we looked and saw nothing but kraals with no sign of Christian civilisation' (she was possibly adding dramatic effect for her American audience).[58] It is striking how closely their own missionary conduct and experience corresponded to those of the early American missionaries, despite their desire for autonomy from them. Their first Sunday services attracted interested crowds, 200 strong; a first priority was to establish a day school, achieved soon after arrival; and Nokutela began teaching the women sewing and other domestic crafts. Where they departed markedly from the white missionary model was the rapidity with which the Dubes won converts: within a year, they had a baptised congregation of 27.[59] With the assistance of Nokutela's brother, John, and his wife, they set up three schools and two churches in all, and planned to establish an industrial institution at Incwadi. A few years later this was opened in Inanda, on land supplied by Mqhawe, so that Dube could perform his pastoral duties as well as tend to school affairs. Mqhawe was on the first board of trustees.

In 1895, from his base at Incwadi, Dube made a bid for the pastorship at Inanda. The problem was that although he had gained unrivalled experience, he was not ordained. The other candidate for the post was properly qualified: Cetywayo Goba, pastor at the Umsunduze station and son of Klaas. Predictably, Klaas objected to Dube's candidacy, not only on the grounds of family solidarity but because he knew that a victory for Dube would strengthen Mqhawe's influence on the station. The prospect also went against a belief held deeply by both Gobas that, as Klaas expressed it, 'The opinion of the Natives living on the glebe, nearly all of whom are kolwas, is that there should be a white missionary over the black missionary in case of any difficulty.'[60] Cetywayo echoed, 'The Natives here very much prefer a resident white missionary.'[61] Dube had already shown himself to be unwilling to submit to white tutelage.

Pixley, with the backing of the AZM, insisted that both candidates in the Inanda

57 On Dube's period in the USA, see Marable, 'African Nationalist'; R. Hunt Davis, 'John Langalibalele Dube' and Marks, *The Ambiguities of Dependence*.
58 Killie Campbell Africana Collection, Nokutela Dube, 'The story of my life'.
59 Marable, 'African Nationalist', pp. 70–73.
60 K. Goba, *Evidence Given before the Lands Commission*, p. 238.
61 C. Goba, *Evidence Given Before the Lands Commission*, p. 241.

pastorship contest step down. Goba complied; Dube refused. The ballot went ahead, the result of which was close: 109 votes to Dube and 98 to Goba. There was deadlock until the conference of the AZM declared the ballot null and void on technicalities: many had voted who had not been eligible to do so, and Dube was not qualified.[62] Pixley was very bitter: 'they [Dube's party] went forward in a spirit of division… the spiritual life of the church was lost and all our hopes for a year of prosperity were blasted'.[63]

The atmosphere at Inanda was still heavy when the Dubes returned to the United States, mainly to find financial support for their industrial school. With the help both of Mqhawe and of the American Committee (his New York-based fundraisers), and showing determination to strengthen his own political position, Dube also organised (or assisted in organising) places in American colleges and universities for his younger brother Charles, his brother-in-law John Mdima, Mqhawe's son and heir Mandlakayise, Madikane Cele's sons Mabhelubhelu and Qandeyana, and his close friends Pixley and Lindley Seme.[64] Before he returned to Inanda in 1899, Dube was also ordained. In 1900, he became pastor of the Inanda church, although he relinquished the position in 1908. Much later, on his retirement from Umsunduze, Cetywayo Goba was appointed chaplain of the Seminary.

There is a fitting symmetry to this local *cause celebre*, the son of James pitched against the son of Klaas for control of Inanda's converts. Each family represented a tendency that, by the mid-1890s, had become very clearly visible. The Gobas were more closely aligned with white control, willing agents in the creation of a pseudo-tribalist social order designed to be malleable and submissive. Dube represented a more unpredictable tendency (to the status quo in church and state at any rate), whose adherents were desirous of greater independence, so that they themselves could control the practice and perpetuation of all they had been taught on the mission stations. That they were able to realise their goals was in no small measure due to the sustenance they continued to draw from elements within the traditionalist order.[65]

Splits and alliances between converts and traditionalists at Inanda were, then, no simple matter of Christianity pitched against heathenism, of the integrity of the chiefdom threatened by the onward march of Christian soldiers. Instead, the Christians' ranks became deeply divided over the very issue of relations with the Qadi chief, which in turn shaped the fortunes of both the chiefdom and of different sets of Christians. These distinctly different responses had political ramifications that reached far beyond Inanda, and well into twentieth-century nationalist politics.

It is difficult to reconcile Dube's location in the old elite with some of the attitudes he expressed in his speeches and writings. He held harsh views on the beliefs and institutions of 'outside Natives', which seemed to sit uncomfortably alongside his association with the Qadi elite and later with the Zulu monarchy. For example, he wrote that: 'The African … comes into life and passes his days in darkest degradation and ignorance. He learns the superstitions and all the vices of his people.'[66]

He fervently believed that Christianity would bring light; he told an impressed Rider Haggard in 1914 that it 'is spreading in the country districts and is likely to continue to

62 Marable, 'African Nationalist', pp. 81–83.
63 Pixley to Smith, 8 September 1896, cited in Marable, 'African Nationalist', p. 83.
64 M. V. Gumede to H. Hughes, 30 January 1987.
65 There is a small but interesting footnote here. After years of decline, Inanda Seminary has, since 1998, been given a new lease of life, due to the extraordinary commitment of some of its ex-pupils. Among the many difficulties they have encountered was one Mr Goba, who suddenly appeared and insisted that all the Seminary land was his and the new committee had no rights over it. He even tried to prevail on the present Qadi chief, Mzonjani Ngcobo, to intervene on his behalf. He was, however, unsuccessful in these attempts. Personal communication, Esther Sangweni.
66 J. L. Dube, 'Are Negroes better off in Africa?', *The Southern Workman* (August, 1904), p. 583.

spread. The institution of polygamy, which is the great obstacle in its path, will probably be solved to a great extent by economic pressure.'[67]

Dube's Christian commitment should not be underestimated. Yet antipathy towards 'tribal ways' was mitigated by other convictions. First was his firm belief in regulated, careful, elite-led social change (he proudly called his grandfather Chief Dube a 'moderniser'). He was able to see, as did liberal ideologues of the 1920s and 1930s such as C. T. Loram and C. Wheelwright, that certain elements of the old order might usefully be shored up in an effort to achieve precisely what Dube always envisaged: a slow, managed, 'top-down' transformation to modernity. Second was his sense of race pride – of celebration of his 'outside' past – which he had imbibed from Booker T. Washington[68] and which is particularly evident in his novel, *Umsila waShaka*. So although he was indeed a 'master of the mask', speaking in the appropriate register to the appropriate audience, the convictions that drove him were more than mask-deep: a Christian to the core, he never forgot his roots – or the close congruence of interest between him and the chiefly elite.

Conclusions

What this article has set out to show is that Dube's entry into public life, as the leading spokesman for the African Christian elite, was predicated on his intimate association with the Qadi elite, which was to provide critical support throughout his long career. The matrix of relationships at Inanda, from the arrival of Daniel Lindley and the rule of the 'exceptional' Mqhawe onwards, goes a long way towards explaining the key role that he played much later, in constructing the alliance at the heart of Marks's study. By the time the threat of grassroots radicalism in national political life lent urgency to converts' support for the Zulu monarchy, Dube had spent at least three decades conducting the type of alliance that he was so effective in brokering on a larger scale in the 1920s. For him at least, there was no sudden shift from stand-off to amity towards traditionalists.

While this relationship afforded Dube a great deal of manoeuvre vis-à-vis both missionaries and colonialists, there is the fundamental point that his membership of two elites was also of a doubly subjugated kind. He was keenly aware of the way in which colonial rulers viewed African subjects as 'children', and of the reluctance in the church to give full reign to African talent and leadership. He was a proud and immensely capable leader himself; much of what drove him was his rejection of the inferior status that had been designed for him by whites, and he fought against it all his life. Yet his simultaneous desire for respectability and acceptance prevented him from breaking free altogether of the order that entrapped him, and produced in him so many of the ambiguities that Shula Marks has so deftly revealed in her work.

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67 Haggard travelled abroad as a member of the Dominions Royal Commission, looking at the future of the empire. The commission was abandoned on the outbreak of war; his visit to South Africa was therefore in a private capacity. This excerpt is from a forthcoming volume on this visit to be published by the University of Natal Press.

68 R. Hunt Davis, 'John L Dube'. This element of race pride did not only emanate from foreign teachings; Dube's own perspective on colonial race relations fed such a sense very well.