

Ross's anthology of Khoesan political thought, sprinkled with his comments informed by a lifetime of work on the topic, not only provides an invaluable resource to political scientists, sociologists, linguists and economists, but sets an example of how a master historian should practice their craft. In a time of underfunded archives and empirical scepticism, we need more historians willing to dig in and dig up.

*Cradock: How segregation and apartheid came to a South African town*

(University of Cape Town Press, Cape Town, 2019, 256 pp. ISBN 9780813940588)

**Jeffrey Butler**

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Local history is the stepchild of South African historiography. All too often it is a product commissioned by a committee to commemorate the founding of a town and the role of the community leaders in building up the place from a humble settlement to a prosperous town or city. Invariably the white community and civic leadership enjoy most of the attention. Much work is still to be done on the coloured or black communities confronted various crisis in the places they lived.

In 1977 Jeffrey Butler, just retired from the post of Professor of History at Wesleyan University in Middletown Conn., undertook a trip to Cradock in the Eastern Cape. The task he set himself was writing the history of the town that he left shortly after the Second World War. The focus would be on the way in which segregation and apartheid impinged on a South African town.

Butler's Quaker grandfather came from Britain to South Africa in 1876 and settled in Cradock where he and a younger brother founded the local paper *Midland News and Karoo farmer*. It carried the Reuters wire service and often published articles propagating better treatment of Africans and coloured people. Butler's uncle was the mayor of the town in the late 1930s and his father sat on the town council when the Group Areas Act was imposed on the town. His aunt was a nurse in the African township.

Butler joined the South African armed force that fought in the Second World War. Soon after the war he left South Africa, first to obtain a doctoral degree and then to embark on a career in academe, which culminated at Wesleyan University. His book on the Liberal Party and the South African war was acclaimed but Butler became primarily interested in the development of segregation and apartheid. The book that he wrote at the end of his career was one that he had long dreamed about. This book is a remarkable case study of how segregation and apartheid came to the town of Cradock where he grew up and of which he retained many fond memories.

Approaching Cradock in 1977 to embark on research for the book, Butler noticed two townships, one was for coloured people and the other one for blacks. Both were new to him: they were products of the apartheid order.

Near the centre of town he came across the “old location” which he remembered so well from the days of his youth. Inhabited by coloured and black people and a few poor whites, it was earlier an integral part of Cradock. He remembered it as “a dusty warren of small houses and huts, covered in the early evening by a fog of smoke and emitting a genial hubhub”.

In 1977 the old location was silent – “an empty ruin of mud plastered brick walls without doors or windows or a roof. It reminded Butler of photographs of French and Belgian villages that had been bombarded during the First World War.

What happened was that the city council, acting in terms of the Group Areas Act, had relocated all the coloured and black residents living together in the old location to newly established coloured and black locations”. They are situated quite a distance from the white town of Cradock. Subsequently the city council allowed those who were forced to leave received permission from the city council to remove doors, windows and timber from their old homes for re-use in their new houses.

In 2001 Butler suffered a debilitating stroke from which he did not recover in the seven years that remained of his life. The extensive, heavily documented work did not need any additional research but was far too long and dense to submit to a publisher. Two people stepped in to get the manuscript ready for publication. The one was Jeannette Hopkins, who was director of Wesleyan University Press and other was Richard Elphick, Butler’s colleague Wesleyan

and author of the outstanding study *The equality of believers: Protestant missionaries and the racial politics of South Africa*.

In his Introduction Butler poses the question that confronts the historian of any town or city in South Africa. To what extent was the problems connected to the delivery and management of municipal services in a way that was similar to those of countries not affected by a racial problem, and to what extent did the racial issue caused and compounded the problems?

Butler briefly compares Cradock to Indianola in Mississippi, whose history is the subject of John Dollard's, *Caste and colour in a Southern town* (1937). He notes the similarities, but George Fredrickson in his comparative study *White supremacy* (1981) rejects the comparison between apartheid South Africa and the order of segregation in the Southern states of the US. In the Southern case the essence of segregation "was not geographical or even spatial but rather an effort to maintain hierarchical social distance between racial groups that were too much involved with each other to be separated by sharply drawn territorial, cultural and economic boundaries".

Comparing the experience of the coloured people in Cape Province to the blacks makes much more sense than to compare the historical experience of the black in South Africa with the one in the US. Butler's chapter on the politics of liquor and beer shows the degree to which the interests of white people and coloured people corresponded and the extent to which blacks formed a more alienated community.

The Cradock town council treated people from the two communities living in the old location in a similar fashion. In compliance with the Native (Urban Areas Act of 1923 the town council established a Location Advisory Board made up of three blacks and three coloureds. The book opens with a chapter on an incident in 1925 when eighty men (41 African, 18 coloured and 17 "Hottentot") were arrested for spending the night with a resident in the location without a permit requiring a monthly fee of 1.5 shillings. Some of them were young adults visiting their parents. It created a storm of protest especially from coloured people.

Butler's *Midland News* supported the protestors' objection to the taxing of sons living at home with their parents and their resentment of the "gross indignity" inflicted by being arrested in their parents' home on a wet Sunday morning. This incident a revealing conflicting one. It shows the white

authorities groping for ways to control the location's residents and fumbling attempts to increase the council's revenue. The farming lobby put pressure on the town councillors to find ways of channelling labour to farms. But wages of farm labour were shockingly low – an *aalmoes* one official described it.

In the breaking up of Cradock's old location in the era of apartheid the white leadership was intent on preventing any possibility of coloured and black people forming a common front against whites.

In the final chapter of the book Butler dwells briefly on a burning issue in South Africa. Did apartheid as a policy radically differ from the pre-1948 order of segregation? Butler sides with those that believe that it did but does not go deeply into it. In 1948 the NP introduced what can be called communal apartheid of which the introduction of race classification and segregated residential areas were the most important acts.

Before the election of 1948 the United Party government had begun to establish townships for coloured people and it is an open question whether, if victorious in 1949, would have reversed this policy or would have travelled further along this road. It is difficult to see the party of Gen. Jan Smuts imposing racial classification on coloured people.

The other part of apartheid was homeland apartheid. After the 1948 election the Dutch Reformed Church took the lead in identifying the homelands as forming the solution for addressing the issue of black political rights.

In 1950 the federal council of the Dutch Reformed Church sent a resolution to DF Malan, the Prime Minister stating that no nation would ever be satisfied without a voice in the government of its country. The DRC's Federal Council declared that to deprive the black people of South Africa of this right was a policy destined to lead to serious conflict. The resolution concluded with the view that the only solution lay in the ultimate total separation of whites and blacks. Malan's replied in sober terms: "If one insists on total apartheid then everyone would admit that it is an ideal situation... but this is not the policy of our party. It is not achievable, and it does not help any party to try and accomplish the impossible".

The New Year's message that Malan, sent out in 1954 almost represents the antithesis of apartheid. It declared that South Africans of all groups had a duty to accept each other's right to exist and continued: "South Africa is our common heritage and belongs to us all". Two years later the ANC's 'Freedom

Charter voiced the same sentiment that South Africa belonged to all its peoples and made the phrase its own.

The great value of Butler's books lies in the portrayal of a town grappling with numerous issues for which there were few if any simple solutions. The resources were far too limited and the choices too few. Although no one identified it at the time the finding of constructive solutions was impeded by an electoral system that did not reward parties and leaders seeking moderate solutions and broad-based economic growth.

Jeffrey Butler was the ideal person to write this history of his hometown. The book illuminates the quality that made Butler such a unique person, colleague and historian: compassion. Richard Elphick in cooperation with Jeannette Hopkins have performed a magnificent service in editing and abridging the manuscript in such a way that it now stands as the best model of the kind of history of a town that our complex society truly needs.

*Ralph Haynes: Godfather van die Wes-Rand*

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Ralph Haynes was 'n bekende Suid-Afrikaanse misdaadsfiguur uit die Wes-Rand. Hy is veral bekend vir die lang lys van misdade waarby hy betrokke was. Vandaar die waarskynlik motivering vir die boek oor *Ralph Haynes: Godfather van die Wes-Rand* deur Izak Du Plessis.

*Ralph Haynes...* is nie Du Plessis se eerste publikasie nie. Eintlik vloe hierdie boek uit die laaste hoofstuk van sy vorige boek getiteld *Boereverneukers*.<sup>15</sup> Du Plessis argumenteer dat Haynes 'n soort "Godfather" figuur van die Wes-Rand was wat 'n ondergrondse, georganiseerde misdaadstruktuur saam met ander ondergrondse misdaadsfigure bestuur het. Hul hoofdoel was om

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15 I Du Plessis, *Boereverneukers Afrikaanse swendelaars, swierbolle en swerkaters* (Penguin Random House, Kaapstad, 2017).