



NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

The 27th of April marks 24 years since the dawn of democratic rule in South Africa and it is this day that provides us with an opportune moment to reflect on our journey thus far and think critically about the road ahead. At the IJR, we take this moment of reflection rather seriously as we engage in a number of discussions, interventions and initiatives that interrogate the very societal issues we face as a country. While freedom day marks a significant day in our country's history, one has to remember that there are many who cannot enjoy this very freedom. Injustice is omnipresent and with growing discontent and valid anger, people are rising up and boldly challenging the status quo. In the country of the 'haves' and the 'have nots', inequality, in all its treacherous manifestations remains a lived reality for most and is echoed along lines of race, class and gender (to name a few). And it is the persistence of these perpetual systems of power, privilege and poverty, that

towards attaining. It is with this in mind that I leave you with the following: How can we influence social change in the different spaces we inhabit within society? How can we challenge violent attitudes and behaviours, in our spaces that oppress and dehumanise people? How can we engage with our history, from a decolonial standpoint, so that we can better understand the issues we are currently faced with and so that we can find collective and intersectional solutions to these very complex issues?

“True freedom will come the day we are emancipated from a societal system that only serves to benefit a few; the day freedom is not only ensured to those who can afford it and those who inherited it but to all”

On this Freedom Day, I urge readers to think boldly about the abovementioned and I hope that the articles below encourage us all to

the hope of true freedom remains a distant dream; one that we all should work hard

think differently about how we navigate this world. – *Jodi Williams*

ARE SOUTH AFRICANS SATISFIED WITH THEIR FREEDOM?

As South Africans celebrate the 27th April as the day that brought about political freedom for all citizens, there is value in asking how free do South Africans feel 24 years later? While Freedom Day commemorates universal political freedom, it is important to evaluate the economic context of freedom in questioning whether or not South Africans are free to live the lives they want to and whether different groups experience greater freedom than others? Mikhail Moosa, the Research and Policy programme intern at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, explores the extent to which South Africans feel satisfied with their freedom by using the South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) 2017 survey findings in hopes of providing tentative answers to these pertinent questions.

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PERPETUATING GENDER – IS IT A BOY, OR GIRL?

Besides the ‘how many months are you’ question posed to pregnant women, there is the, ‘what gender is your baby’ concern. Imagine for a second that the response to the latter is, ‘it’s a boy’. What follows from there is a conversation on whether the mother is ready for the trouble that a boy brings. This is expressed with a smile suggesting that the trouble is good, necessary and is to be accepted because, “boys will be boys”. All pertaining to the universally accepted notion that gender roles are socially constructed and structurally upheld to benefit a muscular man. They hold that girls are to be vulnerable, in need of a male saviour and are objected sexually. Boys are to be dominant, aggressive in their hustle and are often described in political language to be ‘absolute and resolute’. Siphokuhle Mkancu, intern for the Communications and Advocacy programme at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, challenges one of the simplest, subtle and yet ingrained ways in which patriarchy manifests and the reinforcement of gender roles during adolescence and thereafter.

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THE FLUIDITY OF COLOUREDNESS

Coloured identity is fraught with ambiguity and often inhabits a shape-shifting shadow world, floating and flowing between arbitrary apartheid racial categories - an identity neither here nor there. While racial classifications under white supremacist South Africa appeared definitive and rigid, coloured people frequently drifted between them depending on their proximity to any of the regime’s racial groupings. The architects of apartheid officiated the term ‘Coloured’ as a derogatory label used to denigrate peoples of mixed ancestry. They then lumped together these heterogeneous folk presenting them as a single community. Today there is an intense interest in the nature and history of Coloured identity. Danielle Hoffmeester, a Project Officer in the Sustained Dialogues programme at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, interrogates how coloured

identity is emerging from the stereotypes of the past and constructing a new identity, remaining true to the notion that an understanding of the past is crucial to the formation and socialisation of the future.

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SARB'S INSIGHTS ON VOTING, POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND POLITICAL EFFICACY AS WE CELEBRATE FREEDOM DAY

South Africa annually celebrates 27 April as Freedom Day, commemorating the first post-apartheid, non-racial and democratic elections held on 27 April 1994. Almost a quarter of a century later, and in the lead up to the 2019 national elections taking place next year, this is an opportune time to consider the status of democratic political culture in South Africa. As “citizen participation ... is at the heart of democracy ... democracy is unthinkable without the ability of citizens to participate freely in the governing process”, Elnari Potgieter, a Senior Project Leader in the Research and Policy Programme at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, reflects on the SA Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) Survey findings pertaining to political efficacy and political participation ahead of the 2019 National elections.

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LIBYA'S NEAR-GENOCIDE

The historical record of the world has seen many cultural, ethnic and religious groups of people lost or destroyed by years of conquest, colonialism or plain genocide. This trend does not exclude Libya – we all know of the horrific acts committed by Muammar Gaddafi's regime – however what has been largely unknown is the historical oppression of the indigenous Tebu group. Their land and cultural heritage were stolen and destroyed; they were given a national identity and allowed to ascertain new homes only to see them ripped away; they played a key role in liberating the Libyan state from its oppressors; but still they remain marginalised and stateless. Kimal Harvey, an intern for the Peacebuilding Interventions programme at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, questions this gross violation of human rights and traces the historical occurrences that led to the dispossession of the Tebu people in Libya.

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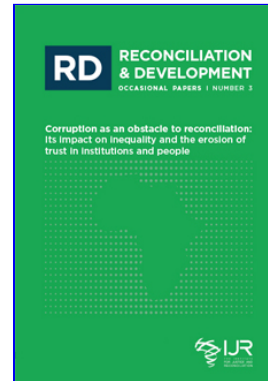
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY DOES NOT ALWAYS SECURE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

In the post-Apartheid dispensation, we speak the language of “economic value”, the language that, if spoken and written, grants you access to education and employment opportunities. While many have embarked on a journey of reclaiming indigenous languages through numerous ways and means, the language that remains the language of access and opportunity is that of the colonial tongue. Our lingua franca, as it is for most of the world, is English. The South African people is faced with myriad of challenges. This is known and acknowledged. One such longstanding issue is the issue of language. The Decolonising Concepts

project team at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation explores the nexus between language, access, opportunity, the political and economic lexicon of the market economy and how, given the nature of these systemic barriers, language can be a greater tool for reconciliation within the field of Transitional Justice.

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