

Listening to the Rivonia Trial

Courts, Archives and Liberation Movements

27 September 2018

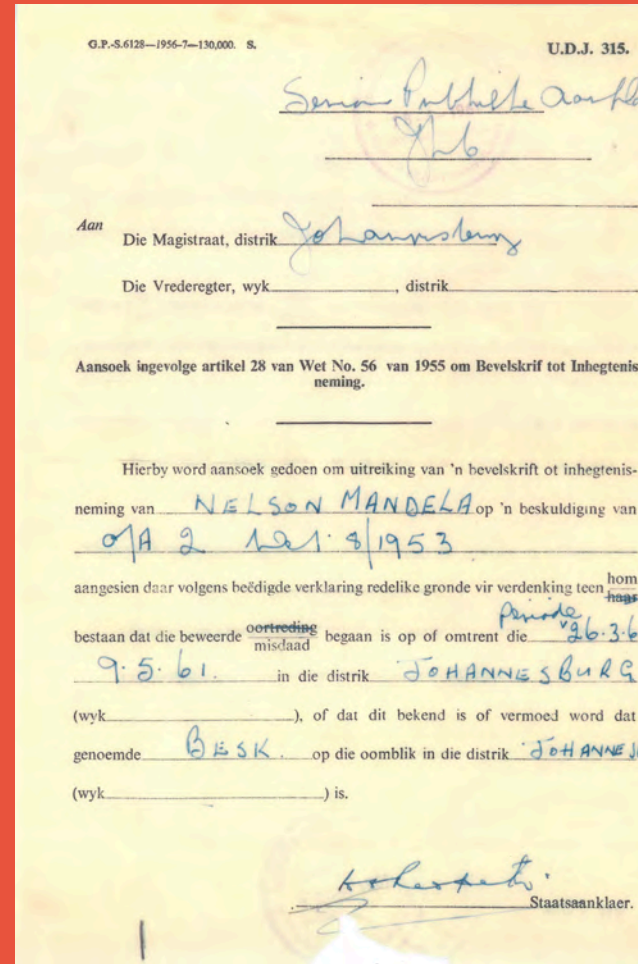
University of the Witwatersrand

Graduate Seminar Room, Southwest Engineering Building, East Campus

The colloquium, hosted at the University of the Witwatersrand as part of the opening and study of the apartheid archives in South Africa, intends to reflect on the contemporary and historical significance of the recently-restored Rivonia Trial sound archive and other legal archives, through a comparative reach into the experiences of colonial and repressive regimes in other parts of Africa. New perspectives on liberation movements and emancipatory politics will be at the heart of the panel discussions. A presentation of the processes of mapping the Rivonia Trial sound archive will serve as a point of departure for the study of archives elsewhere: the act of collecting, mapping, digitising and restoring the archives raises ethical questions that, in turn, become historical questions. These processes also shed light on the technical challenges of heritage management which hamper accessibility to such heritage for

future generations. Furthermore, the capacity of archives to negotiate the future by remembering the past finds expression in the struggle to speak about human rights violations and questions of social justice. Finally, archives in their legal capacity can serve as a tool for liberation, a belief shared among different actors in Africa and elsewhere.

The colloquium is organised by the Wits History Workshop and IFAS-Research, in partnership with the French National Audiovisual Institute (INA), the Institut Français, the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC), the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA), the Nelson Mandela Foundation and the CNRS (French National Centre for Scientific Research).



Coffee and tea || 8:45-9:15
Welcome and opening remarks || 9:15-9:30

Panel 1 || 9:30-11:00
Processing and Mapping the Rivonia Trial Sound Archive

Chair | **Razia Saleh** (Nelson Mandela Foundation)

Henri Chamoux (Sound Engineer and Researcher, CNRS, LARHRA)
Digitising the Rivonia Trial Dictabelts with the Archeophone Phonograph

Quentin Geffroy (Sound Engineer, INA)
Restoring the Rivonia Trial Recordings

Sarah Bruchhausen (PhD Fellow, Wits History Workshop)
The Rivonia Trial and Emancipatory Politics: Listening to an Apartheid Archive

Nkwenkwezi Languza (Head of the Sound Preservation Section, National Archives and Records Service of South Africa)
Freeing the Voices of Freedom: Trials and Triumphs in the Preservation of the Rivonia Trial Dictabelts

Coffee and tea break || 11:00-11:30

Panel 2 || 11:30-13:00
Archives and the Fight for the Past

Chair | **Nomzamo Zondo** (Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa)

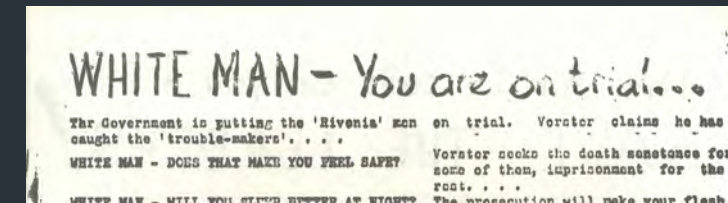
Agnès Magnien (Director of the Collections Department, INA)
Individual and Collective Responsibilities in Collecting, Selecting, Describing, Securing and Giving Access to our Memory

Yasmin Sooka (Executive Director, Foundation for Human Rights, Former Commissioner of the TRC)
Access to the TRC Archives and the Link to Accountability and Reparations

Leyla Dakhli (Researcher, CNRS, Centre Marc Bloch)
Tunisia, Between Memory and Justice, the Aftermath of the Revolution of 2010-2011

Sylvie Thénault (Senior Researcher, CNRS, CHS)
The Archives of Colonisation in Algeria: A Political and Scientific Problem

Lunch || 13:00-14:00



Panel 3 || 14:00-15:30
The Law and Liberation Movements

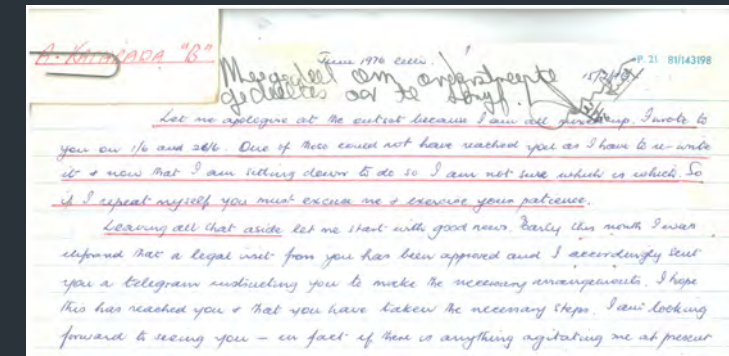
Chair | **Arianna Lissoni** (Wits History Workshop)

Chaymaa Hassabo (Postdoctoral Fellow, Centre for Social Change, University of Johannesburg)
Law and Revolution in Saad Zaglul's Memoirs

Tembeka Ngcukaitobi (Advocate, Author)
Title TBC

Meredith Terretta (Associate Professor, University of Ottawa)
The Heart of the Matter: Changing Definitions of Death, International Anti-Apartheid Advocacy, and Transformative Law

Closing remarks || 15:30-16:00



On the Rivonia Trial Sound Archive

The Rivonia Trial (1963-1964) was a defining moment in South Africa's history and liberation struggle. At the time, the trial was carefully recorded on Dictabelts, a now obsolete audio recording format. Nearly 250 hours of the trial proceedings were recorded on 591 Dictabelts, kept by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSSA). In the 1970s, Dictabelts had fallen into disuse and, consequently, countless Dictabelt recordings of other apartheid-era trials – invaluable records of history and heritage – were not accessible to researchers and the general public.

In 2012, NARSSA approached the French Institute of South Africa (IFAS) and the French National Audiovisual Institute (INA) to start a process of digitisation and restoration of the entire Rivonia Trial sound archive, which is now complete. At the same time, INA has been offering ongoing training to NARSSA sound technicians, so that South Africans may have their own agency over thousands of Dictabelts dating from the apartheid era, which are yet to be restored and studied. These archives – a treasure trove of memory – should therefore not remain hidden away. Efforts to (re)gain access to historic records is a process that revives the universal impetus of archives for research, art, culture, the law and beyond.



Drie gevangenes wat besig was met tuinwerk
Three prisoners who were busy with gardening activities.

Handwritten notes in French and Afrikaans, likely related to the trial proceedings or archival work.

Date: 10 Mars 1964. Subj: Rivonia. 1975/16.

15. I don't recall the other specifically -! letter -? On page 6 - I didn't hear I know what was happening -! On page 5 - you wouldn't be - 6 months? "Stay away - necessary" -? Page 6 there at the bottom - "felic myself - hear - bawab?" Physical touch?

16. You have mentioned Castro Cuba? 18. libraso - pamphlet discussion and letter -? who certainly? 14. Communist party on committee? one banned - CTORG! Declared illegal? That is so! 15. Placeu prateris -? 16. Pansoo - not volunteered -? 17. Certain promises - 90 days? Pansoo -? Yes it was! My wife would be arrested! 18. He can write - meeting? 19. He can write - meeting? 20. He can write - meeting? 21. He can write - meeting? 22. He can write - meeting?

23. Speaking on the 14th July - Rivonia -? 24. Discussion 90 day - with comrades -! 25. Mountainview - moved to frontally? Required -? 26. Rakhnada account 65! 27. Who built -! 28. Who bought - struts - cables?

29. My lord I am a married man with four children -



Rivonia Trialists at Victor Verster prison.

arts & culture Department of Arts and Culture REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

ina

IFAS

INSTITUT FRANÇAIS

Hanns Seidel Foundation

CHS XX^e siècle

CNRS

LARPPA

#Mandela100
www.ifas.org.za/research



International Colloquium

Listening to the Rivonia Trial

Courts, Archives and Liberation Movements



All images © NARSSA