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South African Liberation Struggle Living Archive Collection

- **CRAIG MATTHEW**, Project Director
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Meeting: 84 Preservation and Conservation Core Activity
Simultaneous Interpretation: Yes

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Project Partners:

- Digital Imaging South Africa (University of KwaZulu Natal)
- SAHA (South African History Archives)
- Doxa Productions
- The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Unesco (Doxa Productions' Liberation Struggle archive has been included on the Unesco Memory of the World Register in June 2007)

The Liberation Struggle Living Archive Project intends to preserve crucial audio-visual archives and to develop resources on the history of the South African liberation struggle into a digital format and to make them accessible and to utilize these digital archives to create interactive knowledge environments..

The Liberation Struggle Living Archive Project is a joint initiative between Doxa Productions, the CHR at the University of the Western Cape and DISA (Digital Imaging South Africa) at University of KwaZulu Natal.

With the democratization of South Africa, press freedom and freedom of speech are now considered to be secured rights and in this context, archives are considered as important repositories of history and memory. Audiovisual material is a fundamental source of knowledge on the history of the last century of South Africa and even more so when film makers acquired light electronic news gathering video equipment and were present at major turning points of the struggle for liberation from the system of apartheid.

Yet, much of the audiovisual archival material of the post colonial liberation struggles in South Africa is not digitized and is degenerating. Despite the identification of this problem by authorities and institutions, there is lack of attention given to methods of making these knowledge repositories preserved and accessible.

Under the Apartheid regime in South Africa, due to the developed infrastructure of the country and a semblance of democratic process, the foreign media were able hold up a mirror for the world to witness what was happening within South Africa. Some local filmmakers were also able to document many nuances of the unfolding history of the country. However, it is worth remembering that many of the local inhabitants, both black and white, never saw that footage and are still unaware of what really happened in the country of birth of their forefathers and themselves.

As South African journalists for international networks and agencies during the 1980, Doxa Productions' Craig Matthew filmed the day to day events in the Cape Province as well as other significant events in the rest of South Africa, Angola, Mozambique and Namibia. For the following twenty years, Doxa Productions has strived to preserve, maintain and develop a unique audio-visual archive.

It is the first-hand realization of the fragility and the uniqueness of these important historical records that motivates us to nominate the 'Liberation struggle Living Archive collection' to the Memory of The World Register.

Doxa Productions, in collaboration with its partner institutions is planning further phases to extend the digitizing process to include other audiovisual collections which could form part of the Liberation Struggle Living Archive Collection.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

- **Doxa Collection** : DOXA Productions, 11 Blackwood Close, 7806 Hout Bay, South Africa
- The Doxa collection comprises 674 tapes starting off on the U-matic and the Betacam SP format from the early eighties to 1994. The material was shot and archived over the years by Craig Matthew.
- The tapes are logged and numbered. (see Doxa inventory annex 1).
- The Doxa collection comprises both original tapes and copies.
- Since July 2006, the Doxa collection has been moved from the Doxa's office to a more secure location at the University of the Western Cape. Although they are no temperature controls, this temporary storage provides improved conditions especially in terms of the fire hazard. Early 2007, the collection will be moved to an dedicated storage room within the Centre for Humanities at UWC.
- The archive holds some unique material, which documents key events during the struggle against the Apartheid government as these unfolded in the Western Cape specifically The struggle against Apartheid and in particular, the history of the African National Congress and the Black Consciousness movement are vital major aspect of this footage.

Referees:

- Dr Premesh Lalu, History Department, University of the Western Cape
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- Dr Dale Peters, University of KwaZulu Natal

Authenticity is established in that these original audio-visual records are visual sequential recordings of events. In the Doxa Collection, a large percentage of the tapes are the original raw footage shot by Craig Matthew together with dubbed material safeguarded when the fear existed that the event would be wiped off the original tape at the offices of international news networks and agencies.

World significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability:

Nelson Mandela's audio-visual biography is substantial in that his life history follows the milestones of Apartheid and through the audio-visual attention he received throughout his life (even when he was the absent person at the gates of the different prisons that were his living quarters for more than a quarter of a century). The Liberation struggle Living Archive Collection includes footage of Nelson Mandela's release, of his Presidential Inauguration, of his speeches... The world has followed his release from 27 years of imprisonment but knows a little about what events led up to this event. People all over the world (more so than in South Africa itself) were fed sound bites and probably have a notion of what Apartheid was. Yet there is so much more to find out about it and can be found in The Liberation struggle Living Archive Collection

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission attempted to enter into the depths of the dynamics and psychological damage of Apartheid to try and find a way of righting wrongs and still avoid the proverbial 'bloodbath' that all colonized countries have had to pass through in order to obtain freedom. This unique process is an important component of the Liberation Struggle record. The Doxa collection includes extensive footage of the TRC hearings.

World significance is evident as the collection documents the last ten years of the struggle against Apartheid and its resolution, which has been one of the salient historic dramas of the late 20th century. The aftermath with the election of President Nelson Mandela and his ensuing role as one of the great statesmen of the world holds significance for billions of world citizens.

The collection we are submitting to the Memory of the World Register documents all these crucial events and offers a unique audiovisual sample of the recent South African history. There is no doubt therefore that the 'Liberation Struggle Living Archive Collection' and its audio-visual records are significant, unique and irreplaceable.

Main leaders of the anti-Apartheid struggle are part of the 'Liberation Struggle Living Archive Collection' audio visual archive - Steve Biko, Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu - just to mention a few, are represented by this archive. What they said, how they fought the Apartheid system, how they evolved over the years or how they were killed (as in the case of Steve Biko killed by the police in 1977) in the prime of their life and at the prime of their intelligence, is recorded.

An important part of the Doxa Collection relates to the theme of Desmond Tutu and his personal journey.

The criterion of subject and theme is also represented, as 'Apartheid' is a unique socio-political phenomenon that unfolded over time and was recorded in many of its aspects from its implementation to its end. The systematic and legalized institution and implementation of Apartheid is a unique phenomenon that lends itself to endless study. It was an attempt at solving cultural differences by enforcing separation in the cruellest manner. The problem it addressed is universal; the lessons from its implementation have universal significance. The audio visual preservation of its manifestation is one way of gaining an understanding into its logic and cruelty.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is also a prime example of one of the themes that fully justify the nomination to the Memory of the World Register. Chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, it was documented audio-visually and is a legacy for the future. Desmond Tutu himself has been an icon of the struggle against Apartheid. (See tapes 25 to 48 Doxa Inventory, Tutu section)

Some rare events are documented in the Doxa collection : funeral of the Guguletu Seven (Seven young men who were shot by the police in Cape Town as terrorists in a massive bungling by the security forces) , clashes with police during different events and commemorative marches, the Defiance Campaign which intensified the struggle against Apartheid and brought President F.W. de Klerk and the National Government to a point which resulted in the unbanning of the ANC and the releasing of Nelson Mandela (See Doxa inventory tapes 447 to 449). The Doxa collection also comprises a unique and valuable historical record of the South African alternative culture during the eighties and nineties concentrating specifically on music.

At this stage, it is difficult to conduct an extensive expertise of the threats for the collections and financial support and assistance is necessary to determine what is in urgent need of digitization. Nevertheless, some issues can be raised. For instance, because of the short life span of video tapes, the integrity of the older U-Matic and Betacam material is an issue (drop-out) but can only be addressed through a systematic technical appraisal.

Threat

Fire hazard and temperature variations are a reality for the Doxa collection as the building where the material is kept is not designed for this use.

An urgent need is to move the Doxa Collection to a repository (the Centre for Humanities Research at UWC).

- The Doxa collection is owned by both Doxa and other agencies. We are busy consulting with these organizations through our partner DISA (Digital Imaging South Africa) to obtain approvals to digitize the material. Disa provides us an expertise in terms of copyright and ownership.

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5.3 Legal status:

(a) Category of ownership

The material is owned by commercial corporations.

(b) Accessibility

For the moment, there is no possibility of public access to the Doxa collection. The digitization of the collections and the transfer of the digitized material on internet and CD-Rom will provide both preservation and accessibility.

(c) Copyright status

All of the documentary heritage is subject to copyright. All the copyright owners have been identified.

(d) Responsible administration

At present the custodians are legally responsible for safekeeping of the material, but in the future, the plan is for the identified institutional partner (the Centre for Humanities Study at UWC) to be the repository while digital copies will remain with the owners.

6. MANAGEMENT PLAN

Doxa Productions is currently building a management plan based on crucial partnerships with DISA (Digital Imaging South Africa, NGO specialized in digitizing and making digital resources accessible on-line under the theme ‘Struggles for Freedom in Southern Africa’) and UWC (University of the Western Cape). Different funding opportunities are being explored are to fine tune and achieve this management plan.

Here is the draft management plan for a two year project (January 2007-December 2008):

Restoration, inventorying, cataloguing, packaging :

As said before Doxa collection has an inventory. On this basis, Disa`s experts will shortly examine the collection and decide on what material needs to be digitized first and whether some of it needs to be restored first.

Digitization strategy

A digitization unit will be established at the University of the Western Cape and a group of 10 students will take part in the digitization process together with DISA technicians. DISA and the French Audiovisual National Institute (INA) have provided us with technical expertise.

The server Raid storage medium is one of the identified platforms for storing the digitized audiovisual content and at the same time providing fast and efficient access to this material for researchers and archivists.

The rest of the items in the digitizing unit consist of all the necessary formats where the source material exists at present, plus other technical items needed for monitoring and completing the digitizing workflow :

- U-Matic Hi-Band Players
- Beta Cam SP BVW60P Player
- VHS Player
- Multi-format interface
- Dv-Cam HVR 10 E Player
- Scanner
- Monitor
- Wave form monitor
- Metadata PC workstation
- Software
- Air conditioning
- Multi-format digital interface and time base corrector

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its Plan Images Archives (PAI) has agreed on a contribution of €50 000 to help financing a complete management plan and a digitizing unit (see annex 5 preservation budget).

Storage requirements for digitized and original material

The Centre for Humanity Research will become the central repository for the digital masters. Established in 2006, The Centre is a well-equipped facility for promoting research in the humanities. Privileging cutting-edge scholarship, it provides a congenial and stimulating environment for researchers and helps promote research agendas in the humanities at UWC. The Centre also hosts the African Program in Museum and Heritage Studies and the jointly hosted International Exchange on Institutions of Public Culture with Emory University in the USA. The digitized material will be made accessible to both the students and the wider public. The digitizing unit will stay at UWC to be used in the future digitization of other collections.

Access strategy

A joint proposal (with DISA and UWC) has also been submitted in April 2006 to the National Research Foundation of South Africa to make the Collection accessible through the creation of educational interactive CD-Rom built on the digitized material and the creation of a base of content for the on-going use of researchers and educationalists.

The digitized content will also be incorporated directly into the DISA database; while physical collections will remain uniquely part of their institutions, such collections will become accessible through the DISA portal. In this way, collections depicting Southern Africa's fascinating social and political history will be brought together in a thematic research resource under the DISA umbrella, and will become accessible online internationally with an access to the metadata information linked to the footage.

CONSULTATION

The project was submitted for the 2005 round to the International Advisory Committee of the Memory of the World Programme. Since then, Mandy Boatametse Gilder at the SA National Committee has been consulted as well as Ray Edmonson during the FIAT-IFTA Regional workshop in Johannesburg in October. Given their advice the application has been reshaped and finalized to be resubmitted to the committee for the 2006 round.

Archives in support of the Liberation Struggle Living Archive Collection

Public archives with interest in the project

The National Film, Video and Sound Archive (Pretoria)

The National Archives of Namibia (Windhoek)

The Mayibuye Centre (Cape Town)

The Film Resource Unit (Johannesburg)