IFLA International Newspaper Conference


11-13 April 2012
BnF, Paris

With the support of:
The National Library of South Africa and the Digitization of the Early Years of the Black Press

Douwe Drijfhout
National Library of South Africa

• Cape Town campus (1818)
• Pretoria campus (1887)
• Newspapers on microfilm
• Original print copies
South African Press

- Segmentation: society/press
- Race – not language, religion or culture
- Unique status
- Oldest, most extensive and varied collection
Stages: Black Press

- 1830-1880: Christian Missionaries
- 1940-1960: From Protest to Resistance
Definition

• According to readership
• African, Indian & Coloured audience
• Not all owned or edited by
• Bi-lingual: English +
• Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Sotho
1830-1880

Christian Missionaries

- Two publishing centres
- Lovedale Mission Press (Presbyterian)
- Morija Printing Works (Paris Evangelical)
- Lovedale -> Xhosa
- Morija -> Sotho
Publications

- Umshumayeli Wendaba (1837)
- Indaba (1862)
- South African Outlook (1870)
- Isigidimi Sama-Xosa (1873)
- Lovedale News (1876)
1880-1930
Independent Protest

• New generation
• African nationalist newspapers
• Black literary tradition
• First political bodies
John Jabavu: Imvo Zabatsundu (1884)
Leaders

• John Jabavu: Imvo Zabatsundu (1884)
• Walter Rubusana: Izwi Labantu (1897)
• Solomon Plaatje: Koranta ea Becoana (1901)
• John Dube: Ilanga lase Natal (1903)
• Mahatma Gandhi: Indian Opinion (1903)
• Abdullah Abdurahman: APO (1909)
Rubusana & Dube
Abdurahman & Gandhi
Union of South Africa 1910

- Black civil rights: British Parliament
- Anti-Union protest delegation
- Jabuvu, Rubusana, Abdurahman
- The Great Betrayal
Discriminatory Legislation

- Restricting African voter rights (1892)
- Pass regulations bill (1905)
- Ownership of land (1913)
- Urban Areas Act (1923)
1940-1960
Protest to Resistance

- Great Depression mid-30s
- Critical years
- Trek to cities
- 1948-election
Govan Mbeki: Inkundla ya Bantu (1938)
Apartheid

- Institutionalise segregation
- Re-tribalize Africans
White business interests

- Potential market
- White enterpreneurs
- Black commercial press
Bantu World

• Bertram Paver – 1932
• Argus Group
• From elite to mass audience
• Black creative writing
The Guardian

- Non-African generation
- Mobilized resistance
- Organized labour
- Fighting mouthpiece of African aspirations
- Banned often
Ruth First
Digitisation at NLSA

- 1997-2009: DISA
- Implement digital technologies in libraries
- Socio-political interest
- SA Freedom Struggle
- DISA: training and support
- Journals (40+)
- Archival collections
- 220 000 images/pages
Reprographic Services
Future plans

- SA historical newspapers
- Approx 7.5 million pages
- Black Press
- 200 000 pages
Thank you!

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