

# 'We Are Still Struggling': Storytelling, Reparations and Reconciliation after the TRC

by

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## **Introduction**

### **Healing and Reconciliation after the TRC**

Since the inception of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the twin projects of 'healing' and 'reconciliation' have gained prominence as key elements of a particular model of socio-political transformation being articulated in South Africa. Though by no means universally accepted, an emphasis on the ideas of healing and reconciliation formed the focus of much of the TRC's self-presentation, the government's support for the TRC and the media's representation of its work. As the most public, most publicised and best funded and supported of healing and reconciliation projects, the TRC provided both the impetus and the model for many of the parallel and subsequent projects in civil society that have tried to add to, complement, extend and critique the work initiated by the TRC. As Undine Kayser mentions, however, there remain 'few institutionalised post-TRC spaces for South Africans to practically engage with personal memories and the apartheid past' (Kayser, 2001, p. 3). This report considers one of those institutionalised spaces: the Cape Town Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture and the Western Cape Branch of the Khulumani Support Group that grew out of the work of the Trauma Centre.

Like the TRC, these two groups confront past memories of violence and abuse in an attempt to heal from and overcome the emotional toll these memories continue to exact. However, the contexts examined here are different to that of the TRC and the work, at least of the support group, is often oriented towards meeting longer-term economic survival and political advocacy needs as much as to enabling psychological recovery. Though the Trauma Centre facilitates a range of programmes that might be considered part of the broader project of healing and reconciliation, this report will focus on one of its programs, the Torture Project, and in particular, the now-independent victim support group that grew out of the work of that project. What follows is both a description of the development and current activities and organisation of these two groups as well as a consideration of the impacts of their work, the challenges they face and the broader issues they raise about the problems of bringing about personal, social and political change in post-apartheid South Africa. This report will focus on the work of the support group, and in particular, on the work and perspectives of the group's executive committee.

## **Cape Town's Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture**

Since the early 1960s, much of the work of supporting victims of the apartheid regime (outside of community and family networks) was handled by two key sectors of civil society, the churches and the anti-apartheid health workers. The Anglican Church in South Africa in particular played an instrumental role in providing support to political prisoners and their families. Equally important was the role played by progressive health organisations and workers. Starting with the death of Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko in 1977, and the public outcry over the complicity of medical doctors who covered up his torture and death, progressive health workers across South Africa formed pockets of resistance on two fronts: first, to protest against racial discrimination in the provision of health care; and second, to use their professional skills to treat detainees, torture survivors, and other victims of political violence.

In 1992, Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu was asked by health workers to permit the conversion of Cape Town's Cowley House - once a sanctuary for families of political prisoners on Robben Island and later a site for the reintegration programme for Robben Islanders - into a permanent mental health and human rights facility that would continue to provide counselling and support to political prisoners and their families. This led to the creation of the Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture which officially opened its doors in July, 1993 (Harper & Colvin, 2000, pgs. 3-4).

There are currently about 100 people per month using the services of the Trauma Centre, mostly through groupwork and individual therapy. Recently, the Trauma Centre has expanded its service to respond to victims of criminal (including domestic) violence and, on occasion, victims of natural disasters. Trauma Centre staff also see clients who have been indirectly affected by political or criminal violence (e.g. family members or witnesses).

### **The Torture Project and the Khulumani (Western Cape) Support Group**

The Torture Project is part of the Trauma Centre's Human Rights Violations Programme, which offers counselling to those affected by political violence. In some initial outreach work done to help plan new Trauma Centre programs, it became clear that the Trauma Centre was having trouble identifying and providing services to torture survivors in the Western Cape (Harper, 1998). It was decided that, in addition to setting up a program that could provide short- and medium-term, individual counselling to torture survivors, other kinds of activities would be necessary to identify torture survivors, encourage their use of Trauma Centre services and aid them in addressing their survival needs. These other activities fell into five additional areas:

1. Networking/consultation with other service organisations to design and implement useful and relevant services,
2. Advocacy on behalf of clients, principally lobbying government agencies in the areas of pensions, grants, housing, education and medical needs, and creating awareness of the issue of torture,
3. Ongoing outreach work to continue to identify under-served sections of the local population and track changing needs of clients,
4. 'Bridging activities' that were intended to serve as a bridge between the Trauma Centre and those individuals and communities with little knowledge of or

- experience with the kinds of mental health interventions the Trauma Centre was intending to provide, and;
5. Program monitoring and evaluation.

It is the development of these bridging activities that has so far formed the main work of the Torture Project and is the focus of this report. The principle bridging activity was the formation of a monthly victim support group that was originally facilitated by Trauma Centre personnel and came to be co-facilitated by the Trauma Centre and a committee of group members. Over the past two years, this group has undergone significant changes, debated and clarified its identity and purpose. In September 2000, it separated from the Trauma Centre to become an independent organisation but still works very closely with the Trauma Centre.

This group and the Trauma Centre's Torture Project are currently in a state of transition. New staff have rotated into the Torture Project and with them new emphases on training programs, smaller, more consistent support groups, outreach to under-served areas, racial, ethnic and religious groups and advocacy and support for survivors of current-day torture. Khulumani is also expanding and refocusing its energies towards advocacy, economic empowerment and ensuring its own sustainability.

## **Project methodology**

### **Research Question**

The Trauma Centre personnel, though diverse racially, linguistically and in terms of gender, are all educated in a similar school of psychological practice (psychodynamic psychotherapy as well as trauma therapy) and live, to varying degrees, in middle-class, socio-economic contexts. The members of the support group are overwhelmingly unemployed, black,<sup>1</sup> Xhosa-speaking South Africans who frequently have limited capacity in English, and little or no experience with psychological interventions or the socio-cultural perspectives that inform these interventions. Their expectations about what the post-apartheid government would offer them have largely been disappointed. These two groups have come together to try to determine what 'healing' from the past (and the present) might mean.

The research presented in this report forms part of a larger, doctoral dissertation research project in medical and political anthropology. The broad focus of this project is on the provision of mental health services to victims of political violence in post-conflict contexts. I am particularly interested in the intersections between the psychological work of 'trauma counselling' and the various personal and political projects of healing, reconciliation and/or 'transformation'. In the case of South Africa, this is not only a question of integrating psychological and political perspectives and agendas; it is also a question of cross-cultural healing and the negotiation of notions of self, suffering, community, the past and recovery across divides of culture, class, gender and race.

In this report, I am particularly concerned with examining key themes related to reconciliation that have arisen in the work of Khulumani and the Trauma Centre. I explore the evolving relationship between these two organisations and the specific ways each

organisation understands reconciliation.

## **Methodology**

### ***Sample size and selection***

For the purposes of this report, my sample is composed primarily of Trauma Centre personnel directly involved in the work of the Torture Project, formal and informal leaders within the support group and general group members. As a volunteer working with both the Torture Project and the support group, I have had ongoing, in-depth contact with all local, key participants in the process for a year. I have conducted informal interviews with all of the Trauma Centre personnel involved in the project, all of the support group leaders and about ten of the general members. I have also conducted formal interviews with four of the Trauma Centre staff, three of the group leaders and four of the general members.

### ***Methodology and instrumentation***

The research presented in this report forms part of a two-year, ethnographic research project based at the Trauma Centre. I worked as an outside researcher/volunteer from March 2000 until February 2001. I then became a volunteer 'fieldworker' for the Torture Project, a position that includes outreach to potential clients, networking with area organisations and evaluation and facilitation of current interventions, most notably the victim support group. The research methodology included participant-observation, informal and formal interviews, and a review of clinical and government documentation. Confidentiality is maintained for all participants.

### ***Limitations***

Besides the complications of working for, advocating and facilitating on behalf of the two groups that are the focus of my study (an often productive complication that comes with many anthropological projects), the main limitations of this report at this time are that (1) the research is still in progress and (2) the Torture Project and the support group are both in considerable states of transition. The findings, therefore, are necessarily provisional.

## **The Torture Project and Khulumani: Programs and Activities**

### **Introduction**

As mentioned in the introduction, there are six main focus areas guiding the work of the Torture Project. These are:

- Psychotherapy,
- Networking,
- Outreach Work,
- Advocacy,
- Monitoring and Evaluation, and;
- Bridging Activities.

In the next few sections, I will briefly elaborate on the first five of these areas. The bulk of the discussion, however, will be focused on the sixth and most developed of these areas, the bridging activities, of which the growth of the Khulumani support group has been the most notable success.

## **Psychotherapy**

The Torture Project is part of the larger Human Rights Violations Program in the Trauma Centre's Counselling Department (the Refugee Project is currently the other part of the Human Rights Violations division). External referrals come predominantly through self-referral from people who have heard about the Torture Project in one way or another. The Torture Project also continues to receive referrals from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other local NGOs and government agencies.

The range of therapeutic treatment options includes one-to-one work (crisis, brief and long-term psychotherapy, as well as supportive psychotherapy), group work, couple therapy and family therapy. In addition to psychotherapy, some clients are assisted with practical problems, including filling out residency documents and referrals to social welfare and health organisations.

### ***Basic therapeutic approaches: Psychodynamic psychotherapy and trauma theory***

The therapeutic work that happens through the Torture Project, whether in individual counselling, the activities of the support group or its outreach work, is grounded in mainstream principles of psychodynamic psychotherapy. Though the Trauma Centre employs a range of mental health workers besides psychologists (e.g. social workers and complementary therapists like massage therapists, aromatherapists, etc.), the primary service it provides is a standard form of psychotherapeutic intervention that most often takes the form of short- to medium-term therapy based on psychodynamic theory (typically Kleinian and Lacanian psychoanalysis). Its therapeutic approach is further informed by developments in the last twenty years in the psychiatric and psychotherapeutic diagnosis and treatment of 'trauma' (Van der Kolk et al., 1996). The incorporation of this trauma theory in the Centre's work can be seen in the 'trauma debriefing' that takes place with new clients, the psychopharmacological regimens that clients undertake (through referrals to outside psychiatrists), and the course and style of the therapy sessions. In practice, however, funding insecurities on the part of the Trauma Centre, the difficulty in establishing and maintaining client relationships and the pressing nature of clients' survival needs often make developing consistent psychological interventions a considerable challenge. In addition to the approach outlined above, which guides the Trauma Centre's overall work, the previous co-ordinator of the Torture Project outlined a number of concepts drawn from Lacanian psychoanalytic theory and his previous therapeutic experience that were used to shape the development of this project during his tenure (he left the position in December 2000). Two of these concepts are outlined below.

### ***The 'co-constructed therapeutic framework'***

The Torture Project's therapeutic approach emphasises the importance of working with clients to find out what kind of intervention will be beneficial:

All of the work in the Torture Project is based on the idea that the therapist and client population need to jointly co-construct the therapeutic framework in which the work will take place. This proposed co-constructed therapeutic framework will often be more effective if it draws upon both what is already working within the community and what is familiar to the individual.

It needs to be borne in mind that the goal is not always to get clients into one-

to-one, long-term work. There is a respect for different modalities of therapeutic work as well as for healing frameworks, which fall outside the scope of traditional, Western psychotherapy. For example, in some cases, working with the community, often in the form of group work, will be an effective treatment in its own right. (Harper & Colvin, 2000, pgs. 3-4)

Much of the work of the Torture Project has in fact focused on group work, most notably with the support group. In what ways this work has been 'co-constructed' or therapeutic in the sense meant by facilitators is an important and, as yet, unanswered question.

### ***'A space to think'***

Many of the ideas for intervention coming from the previous project co-ordinator have been oriented around the concept of therapy as fundamentally concerned with providing a 'space to think'. In terms of both Lacanian psychoanalytic theory and trauma theory, 'thought' is described as a key to the recovery and maintenance of mental health (in Lacan, this is rendered as symbolisation, in trauma theory, as either *narrativising* traumatic memory or *binding* unbound trauma). The coordinator describes it as follows:

The aim of this work is to create a space to think. Reaching out is an attempt to identify and access those sites of thought which are still functioning. At an interpersonal level, these sites could include practices within the community that enable thought to occur. At an intra-psychic level, it could be those mental spaces not flooded with trauma. The work aims to bring about a thoughtful experience where the client can begin to bind and contain unbound trauma and open up mental space to think about and process the trauma. (Harper & Colvin, 2000, p. 4)

The therapeutic process outlined here consists of several steps. Investigate the background of the community in question. Identify the specific groups one wants to access, negotiate entry and spend time socializing and identifying problems from several points of view. After identifying available community, government or private resources, begin co-designing a therapeutic program that allows space to think in ways that are familiar and productive to clients. As with most trauma therapy, the emphasis is always on the traumatic event(s) itself and trying to find ways to live with traumatic memories without repeating them (Harper & Colvin, 2000, pgs. 4-6; fieldnotes 2000).

### **Networking**

There are very few organisations offering specialised therapeutic assistance to ex-political prisoners and survivors of human rights violations. It was therefore deemed very important for the Torture Project to make contacts with other agencies, organisations and individuals that might support its work in direct or indirect ways. This has involved ongoing work with veterans of the political struggle, community organisations, various social service NGOs in the area, religious organisations, key individuals (often known as 'gatekeepers' into the community) and refugee groups (Harper & Colvin, 2000, p. 5; fieldnotes 2000). One of the major contacts the Torture Project has had is with the Institute for the Healing of Memories. This institute grew out of the work of the Trauma Centre and its facilitators have offered several weekend workshops to members of the support group. In its advocacy work (described below), the Torture Project has also worked with many local NGOs and religious

groups in its campaign for reparations.

### **Outreach**

The Torture Project began with the process of connecting with impoverished communities and finding out what they regard to be the key issues they are faced with. The outreach work began with a three and a half month internal pilot study in 1998. The aim was to broaden the understanding of the torture 'community' and put in place both an informal and formal network structure. Based on the results of this study, the 'bridging activity' (which eventually became the Khulumani support group) was initiated (Harper 1998). Outreach work is continuing in order to respond to the needs of those survivors of torture with whom the Torture Project has not yet made contact. These include the employed (since the vast majority of current clients are formally unemployed), the 'coloured' population, victims of present-day torture and members of Parliament, many of whom are themselves survivors of torture.<sup>2</sup>

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The monitoring and evaluation of this project has consisted mainly of the work of four volunteer researchers (two local, two foreign) who have been working on various research topics at different points of time throughout the course of the project. Two of the researchers are psychology students and two (including myself) are graduate anthropology students. In addition to internal reviews periodically facilitated by these researchers, there has also been a report compiled by Kirtesh Dullabh (one of the psychology students) on expectations surrounding the storytelling work done in the support group (Dullabh 2000).

Additionally, some pre- and post-counselling evaluation surveys were designed and distributed to clients. These surveys are being compiled and evaluated by Colette Gerards, another of the volunteer researchers.

### **Advocacy**

Early on in the work of the Torture Project, it became clear that most of their clients had serious, pressing survival needs that were not being adequately met. Trauma Centre staff realized that even short-term counselling might turn out to be ineffective for these clients, if not at least some of these needs were attended to. Even for those clients who were managing to eat, sleep and secure access to medical and educational services, the government often failed to deliver on essential services (like regular payment of pensions, disability grants, housing subsidies, etc.). Compounding these problems were the issues of special pensions and reparations for clients, many of whom are ex-combatants and/or victims of gross human rights violations.

The following activities are examples of the efforts undertaken by the Trauma Centre staff:

- Producing and distributing an educational pamphlet on signs and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder,
- Organising a public awareness event on International Torture Day,
- Contributing to various radio interviews and press articles,
- Presenting papers at conferences and talks, and;

- Running two workshops with organisations working with refugees.

From the beginning, however, the Trauma Centre took the position that support group members should run their own advocacy work whenever possible with the Trauma Centre performing a supportive role. Though the group (now Khulumani Western Cape) still relies on the Trauma Centre for some financial, organisational and strategic support, they have increasingly taken over the advocacy work. For the first year and a half of the Torture Project, a senior counsellor at the Trauma Centre worked as a facilitator for this advocacy work, but those functions have now been taken over by the group itself.

### **Khulumani (Western Cape) Support Group**

The centrepiece of the Torture Project's work for the last two years has been the victim support group that meets once a month in a church adjacent to the Trauma Centre. This group has evolved from a 'bridging activity' designed as an outreach for the Trauma Centre services to an independent victim support group (as the Western Cape branch of Khulumani) that works in partnership with the Trauma Centre. It is seeking its own funding, has its own Constitution and executive committee, a membership of over 2 500 people and is planning and implementing advocacy and development projects for its members.

#### **Initial Group Development**

To begin reaching out to ex-political prisoners and torture survivors, the Trauma Centre began by holding monthly meetings. Group membership was not only limited to ex-political prisoners or torture survivors. Lists of people who had testified at, or been involved with the TRC were consulted. More recently, newsletters and personal communication have served as the main methods of reaching new members. Over time, the group came to include direct and indirect victims of apartheid, who had suffered the destruction of homes, torture, detention, violence and loss of loved ones. These meetings were facilitated by Trauma Centre staff and a translator was present at every meeting. At the end of every meeting, those in attendance were invited to come to the Trauma Centre during the next month if they felt they needed more individual attention.

From the beginning, the meetings have been organised into a two-part structure. The first part of the meeting is devoted to advocacy issues and the second part of the meeting is reserved for storytelling. The main issues raised during the advocacy section have been final reparations, special pensions, education, housing and employment. The storytelling section has been less of a structured psychological intervention and more of a spontaneous chance to tell stories of suffering to people who had experienced similar circumstances. As it became a more formalised part of the monthly meetings, the Trauma Centre facilitators focused on 'healing through narrative' and developed a set of 'rituals' that were intended to lend some consistency and meaning to the process of storytelling (these are described below).

At the second meeting, it was decided that a committee should be elected from the group members to co-ordinate the advocacy issues on behalf of the group. A committee was elected and though it has been through a number of personnel changes and challenges, it continues to perform its advocacy role and report back to the general membership at every

monthly meeting.

The meeting attendance has fluctuated between 6 and 150 people, though recently the meeting size has stabilised and the typical meeting has 60-70 people. Nearly three-quarters of the attendees are female, a fact that sets this group apart from several other 'victim groups' in the area that restrict membership to veterans or ex-political prisoners, most of whom are male.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Monthly Meetings**

The monthly meetings are held on the last Saturday of every month in the fellowship hall of the church adjacent to the Trauma Centre. The meetings usually run for about four hours. Out of the typical 60 to 70 participants, there are about 40 or 50 group members who are regular members and they tend to spend the first few minutes of the meeting greeting each other and those who have come to the meeting for the first time. Once the chairs are arranged in a big circle around the fellowship hall, members are slowly called together and eventually a member of the committee who has been chosen to chair the advocacy section of the meeting calls everyone to order.

During the advocacy section of the meeting, the agenda is usually composed of reporting on previous advocacy activities and planning for upcoming advocacy events. Though Trauma Centre staff are on hand throughout the meeting to answer questions or make suggestions, this first section of the meeting is led by the committee. When planning for big events like marches or commemorative celebrations, this is the chance for the committee to bring their planning decisions to the general membership for their approval before finalising the event. During this time, members are also encouraged to raise concerns or voice ideas and suggestions of their own for discussion.

The advocacy section of the meeting usually lasts about two hours after which the group breaks for lunch. The Trauma Centre buys and prepares food and tea for everyone in attendance. Platters of cheese and meat sandwiches are passed around as are bags of apples and oranges and for about half an hour, the hall comes alive with conversation.<sup>4</sup> Most of the men leave the room to take a smoking break and a crew of women who regularly attend take over kitchen duties in the small kitchen that is part of the fellowship hall.

After lunch, the storytelling section of the meeting begins. This part of the meeting is facilitated by two counsellors who work with the Torture Project. After everyone has retaken their seats in a large circle, one of the facilitators brings a large candle into the middle of the circle and asks who would like to light it. The idea for the candle was raised by a group member who mentioned that a candle would often be lit at meetings during the struggle or when commemorating those who had died. The facilitators also explained that they felt that the candle served to create a kind of 'sacred space' around the activity of storytelling. The lighting of the candle is typically followed by the singing of a song or two.

After the singing ends, the facilitators begin by explaining the storytelling process for those who are new to the group that month. They explain that they have discovered in these meetings that many people feel better after being able to share their stories of suffering with others who could understand them. They say that they want to make it possible for anyone

who wants to share a story to be able to speak. On occasion, the facilitators will have a short activity, exercise or theme that they introduce for the session that month as a guide for the storytelling. One month, for example, the facilitators asked for stories of pleasant memories in an attempt to encourage people to speak about more than just their suffering. At other times, they are asked to speak to the person next to them about their reactions to the day's stories. More often than not, though, they will simply open the floor to anyone who wants to volunteer to speak.

During each meeting, there are typically between three and seven people who speak. Though there have been meetings where people have become upset, broken down crying or become very angry, the stories are usually fairly short and the speakers calm and measured in their narrations. The stories are most often about persecution at the hands of the police and the loss of loved ones either in violence in the townships or in police custody. It has been noted that when women testified before the TRC, they tended to speak about the suffering of others rather than their own suffering (Ross 2000). A similar pattern has developed in these meetings. In contrast to women's stories, the men most often speak of detention and torture. All of these stories, however, tend to begin with a brief introduction of the speaker, continue through a summary of key events and people and end on a distinctly tense and unresolved note. These stories are 'tight' in their construction, reduced to the essential elements needed to make the point--what happened, to whom, where and when. There is little exploration of why these things might have happened or of what life is like in the present. Frequently, speakers will explain that they either have too much to say or not very much to say, but in either case, they say they will keep things short.

During the storytelling, there is little intervention from the facilitators beyond encouragement to continue when the emotions of storytelling become difficult to bear. After the story, one of the facilitators will typically ask a few questions about details of the story or about what the present condition is of the speaker or their family. These questions are often followed by some very quick comments from either facilitator about what might be going on psychologically with those telling or listening to these stories. These comments are not designed to be interpretations of stories or analyses of individual storytellers--rather they are supposed to be general commentaries on the overall nature of psychological trauma and recovery. In this way, they are reminiscent of the commentaries provided by TRC commissioners during the human rights violations hearings: after a speaker's testimony, various commissioners would highlight and interpret certain parts of the testimony as reflecting broader truths about the apartheid state, the nature of violence and suffering or the importance of a human rights culture and respect for the rule of law.

After these comments, the floor is opened up again and new people continue to come forward to tell their stories until the close of the meeting. At the end of the meeting, another song is sung and often a prayer is offered by one of the group members. With the end of the meeting, most of the members who live far away rush down the hill to the train station to catch the last train home. Trauma Centre staff, committee members and those who live nearby remain behind and catch up on social matters and clean up. Trauma Centre staff later meet by themselves to discuss the day's work and plan for the next month's meeting.

#### **The Newsletter**

After every general meeting, the proceedings of the meeting are compiled by committee

members and Trauma Centre volunteers. These meeting minutes are put together into a newsletter along with important announcements or requests and are mailed to all the members of the group. This entire process ideally takes place during the first week after the meeting and the newsletters are in the mail at the beginning of the second week. The newsletters serve several purposes. They:

1. Maintain contact with members not in attendance,
2. Update members on advocacy projects,
3. Provide a forum for publishing and publicising the stories that are told during the storytelling section, and;
4. Act as a way to introduce potential new members to the group.

Since the early editions of the newsletters were put together by Trauma Centre volunteers with little free time or money, they were sometimes late and almost always in English. The newsletter is still facilitated by Trauma Centre volunteers, but funding and organisation has improved. They are now published entirely in Xhosa, while an alternative English translation is also available.

The newsletters have proven to be an invaluable part of the group's work. Besides their usefulness as a means of communication between the committee and the general membership, many group members have said that they feel a sense of accomplishment when they see pictures and read stories concerning their advocacy work. They also appreciate being able to present their own stories and read those of others who have lived through similar experiences. Finally, many new members have come to the group from having seen a copy of these newsletters.

#### **The Executive Committee**

Much of the work of the group falls on the shoulders of the executive committee members. They usually meet two or three times a month outside of the general meetings to discuss plans and allocate responsibilities before the next monthly meeting. These committee meetings have been organised in the past by a Trauma Centre staff member who would reserve the necessary meeting space, arrange food and transport money and make important phone calls. Committee members have, however, increasingly taken over responsibility for organising and chairing these meetings. Now that the group has launched itself as a chapter of the national Khulumani organisation, the committee has taken on the advocacy responsibilities much more directly and now meets without Trauma Centre staff.

#### **Advocacy Activities: Reparations, Special Pensions, Social Services**

The executive committee has, in the last year, spearheaded various advocacy projects. The largest and most visible of these were two marches to Parliament that were designed to protest the government's failure to respond to the issue of final reparations for TRC-defined victims. At the first of the marches, held in April 2000, approximately 120 group members marched to Parliament, sang songs and presented a petition of over 2 500 names showing support for victims' rights in the fight for reparations.

The group, however, was effectively ignored by the government. Neither committee members nor Trauma Centre staff were able to find out from the President's office what was

being done about their concerns. Three months later, in June 2000, they were able to arrange a meeting with Frank Chikane, director of the President's office, where they listed their concerns and presented Chikane with the details of three urgent, individual cases. He promised to get back to them about what his office might be able to do for these three people and for the victims in general.

Once again, that was the last anyone heard from the government. Around this time, the issue of reparations was beginning to gain attention in the media and in academic and NGO circles. This new exposure combined with the anger at Chikane's silence served to galvanise many members of the group and, when they launched themselves as a branch of Khulumani in September 2000, they were ready to take these issues further. A second march was organised to take advantage of the climate of concern over reparations. At the second march, the group invited other local NGOs involved in the reparations issue, and together they again marched to Parliament. About 200 group members met at St. George's Cathedral, had a brief commemoration service and proceeded to march to Parliament with representatives of other NGOs and church groups. It was only three months later that the government finally began to respond to the question of reparations, in a few lines in Trevor Manuel's annual budget speech.

Other advocacy activities have included sponsoring events on 26 June, International Torture Day and on 16 December, the national Day of Reconciliation. These events have been designed to be (1) chances for group members to meet and socialise, (2) commemorations of lost loved ones, and (3) outlets for creating awareness of the issue of torture and human rights violations in the broader public.

Over time, reparations have become the primary focus of this group's advocacy work. As the government has, in their eyes, continued to stall, they have become increasingly angry over this issue and motivated to pursue further ways of pressurising the government to provide the recommended (by the TRC) and promised (by the government) reparations. Recently members have also expressed interest in developing training and income-generating projects as another way to meet members' needs. At present, however, the fight for reparations is claiming most of the group's attention and resources.

#### **Other Activities: Drama Workshops and Rural Outreach**

The group has also become involved in other activities designed to help members in various ways or reach out to new members. In December 2000, a graduate student in performance studies facilitated a five-day drama workshop for interested members of the group who might want to take their stories and put them together into a dramatic production. This workshop was a great success and ten group members were able to craft a production that was performed for the Trauma Centre, and later in the month at the 16 December celebration, for about 300 people. The members of this new drama group plan to take this play to schools in the area as a way of educating students across both generational and racial boundaries about apartheid.

Part of reaching out has also included finding new members in the rural areas. Khulumani and the Trauma Centre have both been interested in accessing people in these areas. Working relationships in the rural areas have been very difficult to maintain, mostly because of lack of adequate funding. As a result, the outreach efforts to the rural areas have

been careful to lower expectations about what Khulumani or the Trauma Centre might be able to do. Nonetheless, the group in particular has felt that it is important to establish some kind of network in these areas and committee members, along with Trauma Centre volunteers have established a monthly visit to these areas to meet, share concerns and ideas and simply let rural members know that even if the resources are not there to provide services to these areas, they are being thought about in the city.

## **Key themes related to reconciliation**

### **Healing, Reconciliation and Justice**

#### ***Too much, too early...***

One of the difficulties in using the work of Khulumani and the Trauma Centre to think around the question of reconciliation is that neither group specifically identifies reconciliation as a priority for its members. Throughout the life of the Torture Project and the support group that grew out of it, the concept of reconciliation has been present, but often indirectly. Most Trauma Centre personnel identify their work broadly as 'healing'--one facilitator said storytelling and the emotional change it brought about was important because it 'reminds people of what Khulumani is all about'. Most committee and group members of Khulumani identify 'empowerment' and 'justice' through fighting the government for victim's rights as their main agenda. In the context of a discussion of the death of a committee member, a fellow committee member said:

Our role here in Khulumani is to chase the government in reparations ... we must continue our meetings in this approach and this is not the time to form committees sub-committees and go to funerals, though yes we need should do something for H... but we must keep chasing the government. We must continue the struggle, the struggle that she was on. This is how we should honour her. (F.T., February 2001 Monthly Meeting)

In fact, this group has come to understand itself as largely based on the idea that the question of reconciliation is premature. The group has come to function as a group of victims who are not happy with the way things have turned out for them, a group that maintains that asking victims to heal and to reconcile is asking too much, too early. Of course, like many other groups that take a critical perspective on reconciliation, in their elaboration their criticisms, they inevitably outline their vision of the various dimensions of a true and lasting reconciliation, of what needs to happen before real reconciliation can become possible.

#### ***Justice delayed and denied***

In the broadest terms, this feeling that the question of reconciliation is premature is organized around the concept of 'justice' and specifically around the concept of a justice that has been denied to victims. Many members have explained to me that for them, that there can be 'no reconciliation without justice'. In the group's activities, press statements and meetings, there seem to be two definitions of justice at work. The first and narrower definition of justice is grounded in notions of individual rights and contractual obligations. Most pertinently, it involves the fight for reparations and special pensions. Reparations, in particular, are linked to the promises made by the TRC to individual victims as well as the government's legal obligations to provide for victims.<sup>5</sup> The broader definition of justice is

focused on structural, material and social transformations: the reconstitution of the social bonds within and between communities, economic empowerment, access to educational opportunities, affordable housing and security. In either case, the group's primary concern has become the delay and/or denial of these two brands of justice. This concern with 'justice' has not always been a primary focus of the group, but as the group has moved away from the Trauma Centre and into a more self-consciously political role, the lack of justice for victims has become one of its main organising principles. It is in this search for justice--in particular, in the broader version of justice-as-transformation--that we might begin to see their vision of what a reconciled society might look like.

### ***A working definition of 'reconciliation'***

Before venturing further into Khulumani's assessment of the obstacles to reconciliation, let me first lay out what I refer to in this report as the 'standard' model of reconciliation. There is certainly no one, single theory of reconciliation dominant in South African society. What I will characterise as the mainstream model of reconciliation is an amalgamation of the perceptions of group members as to what they see as the dominant discourse surrounding reconciliation. Most often, this model of reconciliation is associated with the TRC and involves:

- A focus on victim healing, psychologically (through catharsis and the work of therapy) and theologically (through forgiveness),
- repentance of the perpetrator,
- the payment of a token sum of reparations to victims,
- amnesty to perpetrators in return for disclosure of apartheid atrocities,
- an encounter between perpetrator and victim mediated by the technique of autobiographical storytelling (on both sides) as well as rational, 'civilised' communication (an appeal to reasonableness and 'speaking nicely' as one member described in a sarcastic tone),
- expression of and allegiance to the ideals of 'ubuntu' as well as to the ideas of a universal, liberal humanism,
- ceding of the right to retaliatory violence or significant material redistribution,
- a critique of racial categories and a crossing of sociocultural boundaries,
- equal access to social, political and economic rights and the institution of structures that would protect these rights, and;
- a politics of compromise and conciliation.

There is of course no basic agreement among group members on what those who promote reconciliation are advertising or even who these groups or individuals might be. These facets listed above are simply some of the more prominent dimensions of the reconciliation discourse that members mention.

### **Three Forms of Reconciliation**

In the next few pages, I outline what might be called three forms of reconciliation as a way of organising and focusing many of the group member's disparate comments on reconciliation. The separation of the concept of reconciliation into these three forms is an artefact of my and other's analysis of the concept. It is not the group's own typology. All three forms assume 'reconciliation' in general to be concerned with changes to a system that will re-establish prior or establish new stable bonds and relationships. The first kind deals

with those changes that take place within the individual that are said to be a necessary component of reconciliation writ large. The second variety works on the level of intersubjective (between persons) relationships and asks how do relationships between individuals and communities need to change to promote reconciliation. The third form describes those changes to the social, political and economic structures thought to be vital to reconciliation.

### ***Intrasubjective***

Changes that happen within the person (intra-subjective changes) are most often characterised as 'healing'. This term healing can be 'psychological' (where the victim is reconciled with violent and intrusive memories of trauma and manages to integrate them into the psyche) or theological (where the victim forgoes a destructive vengefulness by forgiving the perpetrator and subsequently being released from the anger associated with their violation). In the initial discussions surrounding this survey of reconciliation projects, the phrase 'healing and reconciliation work' became a way for different researchers to describe the individual projects they were involved with. The idea, however, that healing of the intra-subjective kind mentioned above is somehow naturally or necessarily linked to the broader project of reconciliation has come under increasing scrutiny within the Khulumani group.

The most common refrain from members when asked about healing (usually implying psychological healing in this case) and its place in reconciliation is that healing cannot be separated from the immediate problems of survival:

How can they expect us to feel better when we are hungry? (Khulumani Member, October 2000 Monthly Meeting)

I don't want to speak of this reconciling until I have my pension and food to eat. (Focus Group with Khulumani Members, May 2000)

Some argue that the idea of healing is meaningless in the context of ongoing victimisation through poverty. Others argue that it is possible for them to go about the work of healing themselves from the anger and hurt of their violation, but that this process has little to do with reconciliation. They will readily agree that the failure of victims to heal could undermine the whole process of social reconstruction. They add, though, that this kind of individual healing is not the main agent of reconciliation. And they bristle at the idea that some outsiders (non-victims) consider it their responsibility to heal themselves and so contribute their part to the task of reconciliation:

They want us to do all the work while they do nothing. Why must I make them feel OK? They want us to say that we are better, that we are happy and that everything is OK (M.U., 14 February 2001).

Instead, these members separate out individual healing from the moral, social and structural changes that are thought to form the next steps necessary for reconciliation:

Things will not be better until they [perpetrators] are sorry, until they repent. They can go on with their lives, but they are not sorry. (Khulumani Member,

November 2000 Monthly Meeting)

What does it matter if I get counselling but can not feed my children? We need jobs in addition to counselling. (Khulumani Member, January 2001 Monthly Meeting)

I used to have a great anger ... I could not sleep good and I used to hate all white people. Now, with counselling, I am better, I am OK, but there is still this thing, this thing of reconciling. I don't know how it is going to happen. Things are not good still. I am better, but things are not so good for everybody. (L.N., November 2000 Monthly Meeting)

Many members feel that the lion's share of the work of reconciliation has been unfairly placed at their feet. While most agree that they have suffered in ways that require some kind of healing, they will often firmly separate that healing from the work of reconciliation. They consider it unfair that having been victimized once already, they are now asked to heal themselves as a part of reconciliation when the perpetrators are not even, in their eyes, the slightest bit repentant.

This questioning of the discourse of healing has increased during the course of my involvement with the group. When the group was begun by the Trauma Centre, it was explicitly designed to provide a healing and therapeutic space for victims of torture. As the group, its committee and the Trauma Centre have moved slowly apart, the role of 'healing' in the group's work and in reconciliation in general has come under increasing pressure and scrutiny. Group members have been shifting the burden for reconciling from their own healing transformation to the moral redemption of the perpetrator (through confession and repentance) and the establishment of structural, economic changes that will secure victim's material and social well-being. The effect has been to encourage a separation of the process of healing and the process of reconciliation in the work and discourse of the group.

### ***Intersubjective/Community***

This second form of reconciliation involves the reconstruction of social bonds between individuals within a particular group, between individuals of different groups and between groups or communities in conflict. Most models of reconciliation and most of the definitions of reconciliation elicited from group members operate at this level of sociopolitical change. Though reconciliation is most often described as the establishment of goodwill and cooperation between different racial groups (most notably between the white and black communities), the main concerns of Khulumani group members seem to revolve around social, cultural and political divisions within the black community. When asked about reconciliation within their communities, they list the usual divisions between ANC and IFP supporters, between MK and APLA ex-combatants, between residents of formal and informal settlements and between communities and the black policemen and 'witdoeke' that 'policed' some of the local communities during apartheid. These tensions continue to divide some communities and represent an important domain of reconciliation for group members.

Of more immediate concern to many of the group members and especially ex-combatants and their families are the divisions and animosities that arise within families over the return of ex-combatants. Many of these men [I have not spoken with any black, female ex-

combatants] return to families that judged their involvement in the struggle and the educational opportunities they sacrificed as misguided. Many of these ex-combatants are dealing with psychological difficulties in addition to the unemployment that affects most black South Africans. Several group members report that their families and the families of their friends tell them 'you went off to fight and now you have independence, but where are you now? What good was it?' (L.N., 26 January 2001) They report that they and many of their colleagues have been 'rejected' by their families and others in their communities. Speaking about the ex-MK soldier who was hired to attack busses in Khayelitsha in 2000, one member said:

See this is what happens, these men, they are rejected by their families, they do not have any feeling for them because they say they are useless and must get a job. Many of them will kill themselves. Some take up the crime and some take up the alcohol. Because they feel they are no longer men. This is what is the problem with the man who shot the busses. (L.N., 26 January 2001)

These problems occur not only between families and their returning relatives. These ex-soldiers describe problems in their relationships with women as well, and say that their masculinity has been 'undermined' by their inability to provide for a family or even the demands of a sexual relationship:

It is hard to find a woman who understands you, who can treat you nicely when you are feeling bad about your life and your struggles. Many of us, we can just take one woman, then another woman and maybe make children but then they do not want us. They say the same things as our families do--why did you struggle, why did you give up your education? I want someone with an education, who can achieve some things. They say we are not men. (I.N., 7 October 2000)

These members all point to the divisions between ex-combatants and their partners, their families and their communities as a major challenge for reconciling divisions within the community.

In terms of reconciling divisions across racial groups, most members argue that unfortunately, white South Africans have not 'changed their hearts'. When speaking of perpetrators in particular, they repeat the view that the great majority of perpetrators have not repented and are still living a good life without any trace of remorse. When speaking of the white community in general, they frequently use the concept of 'understanding' and the white community's lack of understanding as an index of the still-present division between the two groups:

Most whites, they do not understand us. They do not understand our lives and our suffering. They can not feel our pain. Even D. [a white ex-MK soldier] who is a comrade, he fought with us, but he cannot understand our pain. They do not want to come to our houses to see our suffering. And they won't learn Xhosa. (K.N., 15 November 2000)

Visiting the township homes of members was also used as an index of white attempts to

understand black life. Any white person that had visited a group member in their township was held up as a very positive example of the kind of thing South African whites should be doing in order to foster reconciliation. Spending the night in the township was the ultimate in investment in understanding township life and the few times I and other foreign researchers stayed with group members in their homes were also some of the few times that these members spoke spontaneously and hopefully about reconciliation with white South Africans:

If only more people would stay with us and get to know us, then they would understand, they would have feeling in their hearts for us. We are really the same, but the old government has separated us and we have forgotten this. We do not understand each other and there is a bad feeling because of this problem. (L.N., 8 October 2000)

This kind of optimism and specific details about inter-group reconciliation are rare things to observe in the life of this group. It is significant that these reactions were elicited around the issues of crossing linguistic and geographic boundaries. These boundaries remain some of the more entrenched and obvious signs of continuing segregation in South Africa. South Africans of all ethnic and racial classifications work together, watch sport together, share similar public and media spaces together, but the number of white South Africans who have crossed the more difficult linguistic and geographic boundaries in a significant way remains extremely small. As a result, these particular borders seem to hold a great symbolic weight for group members when asked to imagine how reconciliation with white South Africans would need to unfold.

### ***Economic/Structural***

When group members speak about what needs to change before their lives will improve, before there can be any true reconciliation, they outline a set of changes that I have brought together under the term of 'structural reconciliation'. Structural reconciliation here means the construction of new, more equal and more just social, political and economic structures. This means that highly segregated networks of sociality and responsibility must be opened up and cross racial, ethnic, generation and class lines (gendered divisions are rarely mentioned as part of the problems of reconciliation). It means that the ways political power is organized must be refashioned in a way that gives all South African equal access to representation and decision-making (this means going beyond simply assigning equal political rights and insists instead on recrafting how and where power is produced and reproduced). Finally, it means reworking the highly unequal relations of production and consumption that constrain so many South Africans into lives of poverty and unemployment.

Of course, the group members do not describe these changes in quite these terms. Most often, they explain that 'real change' is the only thing that can make things better between all South Africans. Under this rubric of 'real change' they include:

- affordable housing and health care,
- free access to education for their children,
- the provision of special pensions, disability grants and regular pensions without delay or discrimination,
- better access to the organs of government (i.e. the reduction of bureaucratic red-

tape, corruption and lack of transparency and communication between citizen and state),

- equal protection from crime, and;
- and most importantly and frequently cited, meaningful training and employment.

One of the most common refrains from group members when asked about reconciliation and how things are progressing in South Africa is that 'things have not changed, we are still like prisoners, we are poorer than we were before'. They argue that white South Africans have 'not changed their hearts' and that they 'are living the same as before, while we still have nothing' (C.Y., 28 August 2000). Their responses to the question of change are typically followed up by a qualification that although democracy has not lived up to their expectations, they, of course, do not prefer apartheid to democracy. Confirming the evils of the apartheid past, however, does not prevent them from (and perhaps even encourages them to) characterising the current government as having abdicated its responsibility to its people. 'Apartheid' remains, in fact, a powerful symbol that is used to criticize the failures they perceive on the part of the government and the sense of abandonment they feel by their former comrades:

This thing with the government now, they do not care about us. It is like during apartheid, they treat us like dogs because now they are living in their big houses and driving BM[W]s and think they are better than those people who they know still in the townships. Trevor Manuel, you know this guy ... I know him too, I was in Phillipi with him and he wore these funny shorts and everyone used to laugh about it, but he was with us against the Boers, he was in the trenches with us. But now, he has forgotten that we know him and he calls us actors when we speak about our pain. [referring to the speech Manuel made wherein he described many victims who testified at the TRC as 'actors' worthy of Oscars awards] (L.N. II, 25 November 2000)

Thus, the lack of structural change is explained by most members as a combination of white's refusal to give up social and economic power as well as the abandonment they perceive on the part of their former comrades. Structural reconciliation then has to be negotiated between black and white South Africans who continue to control the economic domain as well as between the ruling and 'middle class black elite' and those black South Africans still living in conditions of poverty and neglect.

For group members, this focus on structural reconciliation and specifically on economic reconciliation outweighs all of the other kinds of reconciliation. This is not to say that they rank this kind of reconciliation as more important or more fundamental than other kinds of intra- or inter-subjective reconciliation. They simply argue that without changes of the kinds they mention, nothing 'really changes'. The good intentions of some whites, the equal protection under the law, the organisations like the Trauma Centre that offer support services--though important, and in some cases vital to creating a new social bond, none of these things, they argue, have, in the end, translated into better conditions of living.

The fight for reparations is another example of this demand for economic justice, even if that justice is partial and ambiguously conceived. Group members describe reparations as important for two reasons. Firstly, reparations would provide a vital, tangible source of support for families who lost a breadwinner or other means of support (educational

opportunities, etc.) as a result of apartheid human rights violations. Secondly, reparations are described as an index of the government's commitment to take care of its own, that is poor, black South Africans still suffering the effects of apartheid:

They promised us reparations. I have a letter from President Nelson Mandela so how can they say no? They must give us reparations because we will never believe them again if we do not get reparations. It is because they don't care about us, I think. They know that many of our people are dying because they don't have these reparations. How many more of us must die before they do what they say they should [would] do. (L.M., 3 November 2000)

Besides describing the effects of continued structural violence on the elderly and on families without sustainable means of support, some group members have also focused on youth in particular and argue that if things don't change soon, then 'the youth will be lost'. They describe a situation of growing distance between those involved in the struggle and the youth who had no experience of the struggle. Many of these youth, they say, ask us 'why did we bother, why did we fight so hard when we still have nothing' (L.N., 7 October 2000). These members outline a situation where ongoing structural inequalities threaten not only the well-being of children and youth who must find ways to live with this inequality, but also the very meaning of the struggle within the community. Similar to portraits of returned soldiers who are rejected by their families or girlfriends as having sacrificed for nothing, these parents and elders describe themselves as increasingly alienated from their youth.

As with the intra- and inter-subjective modes of reconciliation outlined above, structural reconciliation has come slowly to the group as one of its organising concerns. This is not to say that members have only recently become aware of the need for improving their economic or political positions. Rather, the identification of the need for structural change has increasingly become one of the central aims of the group as it has come into its own as an independent group. As a Trauma Centre-organised support group, the problem of survival needs was always on the table, but it was something that the Trauma Centre was also always unable to resolve. Its early newsletters are marked by repeated announcements that the Trauma Centre was not able to provide material assistance to the members of the group. The fight for reparations was probably the key galvanizing step in shifting from a primarily therapeutic conception of the group to one that has balanced the healing and support dimensions of its work with much stronger demands for economic and political change that would benefit its members.

### **Defining a Victim-Centred and Victim-Driven Politics of Reconciliation**

There are any number of ways one might choose to imagine what reconciliation is, what its various conditions and dimensions are, who it involves and what kinds of changes and processes it prescribes. One of the strongest of recent trends within the group has been the elaboration of a victim-centred and victim-driven politics of reconciliation. This approach to reconciliation places the struggles of victims at the centre of the problem of reconciliation and asserts that the moral authority of the victim requires that victims themselves be at the centre of policymaking, strategizing, communication, etc around reconciliation. It also holds that reconciliation is first and foremost a political struggle, not primarily a moral, theological, psychological or social process (though these dimensions

are accorded a place in their thoughts on reconciliation). This perspective on reconciliation has evolved out of group member's feeling of alienation from the discourse of reconciliation surrounding them as well as their fear that those most prominently involved in the business of reconciliation are invested in depoliticising what the group has come to regard as a political struggle.

### *A victim-centred, victim-driven process*

By a victim-centred reconciliation process, I mean a process that redirects its energy and attention (and resources) from perpetrators to victims. Almost all of the group members I have spoken with have at one time or another maintained that the perpetrators are the only ones to have tangibly benefited from the TRC process. A press statement released by Khulumani for one of its marches captures this sentiment:

What has become painfully evident is that the perpetrators are benefiting more from the TRC. They have lawyers defending them free of charge, they receive amnesty, and they either maintain their jobs or receive huge golden handshakes. (We are still waiting for the public prosecution of those who did not request amnesty to begin.) On the hand, survivors are insulted, kept in the dark, have no work and continue to live with their pain and suffering. (Khulumani 2001)

As the statement above illustrates, the continuing victimisation of victims of apartheid violations through the structural violence of poverty and the related everyday violences of unsafe communities only heightens the claim that victims should be at the centre of concern in any process of reconciliation. The idea that the TRC is a 'perpetrator-friendly' institution is commonly expressed. It is added that many victims are neglected by those now in government. The image of the returned exiled activists now in positions of political prestige and power becomes a way of framing this sense of neglect:

These ones in power, they have no feeling for our people because they were not here, they did not feel our suffering. I am not saying that no they shouldn't be here. They can help us because they have education, but they only care now for themselves. Once they get the big car and nice house, then they forget us. (I.N., 7 November 2000)

Committee members also explain that placing victims at the centre of the process is not enough. In arguing that reconciliation must be a victim-driven process, they explicitly reject the idea that victims should 'drive' the process through the work of healing themselves (see the section above on intrasubjective reconciliation). Instead, they argue for a process where victims provide the primary input in decision and policy-making, strategy and communication. That is, they want to be the ones guiding and motivating any campaign for reparations, any recommendations for reconciliation, etc.

This emphasis on a victim-driven process was sharpened and defined during the beginnings of the fight for reparations when the group learned of the Cape Town NGO Working Group on Reparations. This group is composed of a loose association of local NGOs (Healing of Memories, the Trauma Centre, Justice and Peace Division of the Catholic Bishops Conference, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, etc.) that provide services to or advocate on behalf of victims. They had been meeting occasionally during 2000 and when Khulumani launched itself in September 2000, the Khulumani committee quickly became

aware of the work of this group. The main concern was that Khulumani, the only functioning victim group in the Western Cape (to their knowledge), were not being consulted in this group's fight for reparations:

I mean, this is so typical. They sit there in their nice, little offices and decide what they are going to do for us. (F.T., 21 February 2001)

How can they do this thing without asking us what we would like? They are not the victims so how can they say what should happen. I think this thing is very wrong. (O.H., 3 November 2000)

When the NGO Working Group, or its respective member organisations, tried to solicit the opinion of victims (for example, through organising 'focus groups' of victims in order to provide victims a 'voice'), they have been rebuffed on the charge that the process would still remain driven by NGO and not victims' interests. One committee member said that the group should be asking the NGOs how they would like to help and what they thought were the main issues around reparations. He pointed out that the group could then lay out its agenda and if the NGOs were interested, they could come on board as support organisations.

What emerges here is a portrayal of the reconciliation process as a terrain of conflict over symbolic capital and the appropriation of the experience and moral authority of victims. The organisations of the NGO Working Group are seen as inappropriately speaking for the victims and claiming the symbolic capital associated with the fight for reparations. That is, in the words of another committee member 'they want to look like they care about us, like they are so good because they are helping victims, but they are not talking to us' (N.C., 21 January 2001).

### ***Reconciliation as political practice***

The problem of the relationship between Khulumani and the NGO Working Group is not simply a matter of who gets to take centre stage in the fight for reparations or the process of reconciliation in general. It is also a matter of conflicting (as the group perceives it) political interests. The NGO Working Group, broadly characterised by several members as 'white, liberal NGOs', is seen by many to have essentially conservative, 'status quo' political interests:

They are not going to fight for real change. I think they are OK and they try to help us some, but they do not understand us and they will not fight so hard for us. I think they want to make themselves feel better. (M.U., 21 February 2001)

This perception of differing political interests and energies was seen first in the group's relationship to the Trauma Centre. The Torture Project staff designed the initial advocacy work of the group to (1) help members meet the basic survival needs necessary to begin effective counselling and (2) as a therapeutic activity in itself, giving group members a *feeling* of empowerment, achievement and purpose (R.E., 23 November 2000). What seemed to be missing, group members later pointed out, was that there was little conception of political activism as an important activity in and of itself separate from its therapeutic potential. As discussed below in the section on storytelling, advocacy and therapy gradually

began separating themselves out in the group's work with the committee taking responsibility for the 'political' work and the Trauma Centre responsible for the storytelling.

This difference between the group's political perspective and that of the NGOs it works with has reinforced an overall perspective on reconciliation as a political struggle to be carried out without any illusions about the interests and motives of those involved. Central to this politicised definition of reconciliation has been the identification of the government as the seat of responsibility for changing the lives of victims. Again, this feeling that a political engagement with the government is an important and necessary dimension of reconciliation is intensified by the feeling many of these victims harbour of having been sold out by former struggle comrades. The government is therefore deemed responsible, not only since it set the TRC and associated amnesty in motion (cf. the narrow definition of justice described above); it must also answer for the fact that though struggle veterans are now in control of government, these veterans have forgotten their comrades who continue to suffer lives largely unchanged materially. When one committee member was told that Frank Chikane, the director general of the President's Office and prominent struggle activist, could not believe that he [the committee member] was on 'the other side' of the reparations struggle, the committee member replied that he could not believe Chikane was on 'the other side'. He made it clear that it was Chikane's job to explain why he found himself in conflict with victims and not the other way around (F.T., 6 March 2001).

The politics of organisations like those working in the NGO Working Group are variously characterised as 'liberal' or as based on a 'welfare model'. Some believe these organisations only have their own reproduction and legitimation at heart. The fight for victims' interests and for the changes necessary to effect a lasting basis for reconciliation remains conceived of as primarily a political battle outside the political scope of the NGOs. If Khulumani and those organisations offering to help have, conflicting political interests, this must be even more true, group members argue, for the institutions and communities not involved with victims.

This is not to say that Khulumani offers a well-defined alternative political platform. As with any group, there are differences within the group in political styles and agendas. The group contains a mix of populist, communalist, socialist and liberal approaches that sometimes grind against each other. Nonetheless, their recent political activities have formed a coherent plan of action against the state and they have consistently maintained that reconciliation is a political struggle centred on and driven by victims--a struggle that won't end without 'real change' to the political and economic structures that shape the quality of victims' lives.

### **Storytelling and Reconciliation**

#### ***The many lives of stories***

Storytelling has emerged as a key concept in the various models of reconciliation proffered in post-apartheid South Africa. In addition to idealised transactions of confession and forgiveness between victim and perpetrator, storytelling was one of the cornerstones of the TRC's model for reconciliation. The human rights violations hearings consisted principally of storytelling from victims followed by the moral and political interpretations of these stories by Commissioners. The other projects described in this survey of healing and reconciliation projects (NPAT, Centre for Ubuntu, Healing of Memories, [Quaker Peace](#)

[Centre](#), and Khulumani) all incorporate storytelling into their interventions. Each of these projects, in one way or another, argue that telling their story helps individuals heal themselves, overcome some of their hurt and anger and feel ready to engage with an Other that was once their oppressor. Most add that the whole truth of what happened must be made public and accepted as truth before any reconciliation between former enemies can honestly and openly be negotiated.

At the first meeting of this support group that the Trauma Centre organised, visitors apparently stood up and began telling their stories without any prompting from the facilitators. Since then, storytelling has remained a central part of this group. Over the two years that this group has been coming together, storytelling has typically occupied about half of the meeting time and at each of these meetings, these stories have been duly recorded and re-presented in the monthly newsletter produced after each meeting. In considering what role these many stories play in the group's imagination of reconciliation, it has become apparent that victims' stories operate in the group in multiple and sometimes contradictory fashions.

Sometimes stories are seen to act as means of individual, emotional healing, the kind of healing many inside and outside the group argue is necessary for a lasting reconciliation. Sometimes they are perceived to be irrelevant to the problems of real reconciliation, problems rooted in socio-economic conditions. At other times, stories become valuable objects and commodities that can help to secure real changes in these socioeconomic conditions. These transactions, though, are not without their dangers. Stories that circulate from private and local worlds into public spheres can carry dangerous knowledge about their tellers and about those in the story. This knowledge can sometimes make reconciliation more difficult. Sometimes, though, it is these tense boundaries that stories are thought to have a unique and valuable ability to bridge.

### ***The healing balm of storytelling***

From the perspective of the Trauma Centre, the primary rationale for storytelling is that it is a form of 'healing through narrative'. Storytelling is intended to enable a kind of emotional, intra-subjective reconciliation that is considered by facilitators to be a necessary precursor to more inter-personal forms of reconciliation. Though most trauma therapies explain that recovery from trauma only happens through this 'narrativization of memory' (Antze & Lambek, 1996), less technical, more accessible language is used to describe the benefits of storytelling to group members--getting something 'off one's chest,' 'letting go of the pain' and anger, 'sharing' the story and 'making it safe,' etc. Once the victim is freed from the trap of repressed and repeating memories, they are said to be (more) ready to re-establish the social trusts and relationships that were rent by violence.

In a similar fashion, most of the members describe the storytelling work of the group as deeply 'healing' in some way. When explaining why they find it therapeutic, some describe the feeling of having a 'weight of my chest' after storytelling. Others say that storytelling gives them a chance to 'cough out' what has been bothering them. Most, however, explain that they appreciate the chance to tell their story to people who have shared similar experiences. They report that this 'makes us stronger'. The 'us' here references both the individuals involved as well as the group itself. Their focus is often less on the internal, psychological dynamics at work in telling a long untold story and more on the social space and relationships created by that storytelling:

We come to tell our stories because it makes us strong in our hearts to know there are other people like us and it helps us to work together and not fight amongst ourselves, because, you know, the victims, the victims have been forgotten and so we can come together like this and remember that we are all suffering. (Khulumani Member, February 2001 Monthly Meeting)

The response to the storytelling has been, in general, very positive, and some group members have even explained that it has been the key activity that has made the difference in their healing and being able to reintegrate into their community:

Before I came to Khulumani, you know and to counselling with D., I was so sick, I could not even walk, I had to use a stick and had pains in my back. Now when I tell my story, I don't get sick like I used to, it [storytelling] makes me feel stronger. I am so much better now because we can get together like this and share our stories. (L.N. II, 27 October 2000)

Though some members, especially those on the executive committee, do emphasise that telling their story has not done them any good in light of their continuing social and economic suffering (Dullabh, 2000), most group members seem to participate in the storytelling with a kind of solemn enthusiasm.

### ***Storytelling and socioeconomic change***

This appreciation of the healing power of stories does not diminish the fact, however, that storytelling is also a complex and ambivalent exercise within the group. The main tension group members express around the question of storytelling is the inability of the work of telling stories about the past to have an impact on their socioeconomic needs in the present. This questioning of the usefulness of storytelling in responding to economic deprivation has been most clearly visible during the process of separation between the Trauma Centre and the group. As these two groups divided into two co-operating, but independent structures, storytelling came to be seen as the province of the Torture Project facilitators and reflective of their social and political perspectives and interests:

They [Trauma Centre facilitators] just want us to be victims and tell our stories so they can help us. I am sick of telling my story. It makes them feel good to show that they are helping us. They don't really want to change things and what good does telling our stories over and over and over do? They are just white professionals who want to keep their jobs. (O.H., 22 January 2001)<sup>6</sup>

In comparison, the political advocacy functions that were taken on by the group came to stand in an uneasy contrast to storytelling. Most of the group members have been galvanized by events in the fight for reparations and improved social services for victims. As I have outlined above, they explain that the focal point of their work is securing some kind of social and economic justice for victims. In this context, storytelling came to stand, if not in opposition to the requirements of justice and reconciliation, at least as a contrasting, less relevant and potentially distracting issue:

We will decide now when and how we want the storytelling, but we can't let it interfere with our work. Yes, storytelling is important, but let's now get so stuck

on it ... we can't forget our real mission ... reparations. (F.T., 14 February 2001)

As the roles of the Trauma Centre and Khulumani have become increasingly clearly defined, the anxiety over storytelling has gradually subsided. In the early stages of the separation, the defense by Trauma Centre facilitators of storytelling as a core activity of the group was held as evidence by the committee that the Trauma Centre was trying to unfairly exert its authority over the group. As relations between the groups have started to settle, storytelling has receded as a key point of contention between Khulumani and the Trauma Centre. It remains, however, an activity that occupies an uneasy and ambivalent position between the various modes of individual healing and the prominent demands for structural change.

***What kind of thing is a story?: objectification and commodification in storytelling***

This does not mean, though, that the work of stories and the political work of securing economic change are so easily separated from each other. The sidelining of storytelling during the separation of Khulumani and the Trauma Centre is not just about a split between the psychological and the political. The frustration with storytelling also appears to be the result of a disillusionment with the ways stories have become objects and commodities put to work in the fight for economic change. This disillusionment stems not from the frustration that stories are improperly or impersonally being transformed into 'things' so much as the fact that their expectations of the power of these things, these stories to bring them material benefit have been greatly diminished:

It does no good ... I tell my story to the TRC, I tell it to the Trauma Centre and still I have nothing. I am so frustrated. Why do they want to know my story if they don't do anything for me, they give me nothing except, oh, we are so sorry, Mrs. H... no, I will not tell my story again. They are just laughing at me. (O.H., 18 October 2000)

For many, the storytelling work is clearly based on the TRC model of testifying to suffering and abuse. In fact, in the beginning of the project, many thought that this group was part of the TRC and that the Trauma Centre was in control of resources that might be made available to them once their testimony was duly recorded and processed. Even when most members came to understand that the Trauma Centre had no material connections to the TRC, they continued to associate the storytelling facilitators were asking them to perform with whatever resources the Trauma Centre did control. In both cases, stories became something that could be traded with those who were asking for the stories for access to the resources these solicitors controlled. As the fight for reparations continued without progress and as it became clear that the Trauma Centre was only in the business of providing counselling and nothing else, members became increasingly frustrated with the lack of power their stories had to secure access to economic resources or opportunities.

This frustration was repeated in similar ways when group members would apply to various government agencies for help with social services like pensions, bursaries, etc. These letters, forms and applications were sometimes filled in by members themselves and sometimes Trauma Centre staff would assist with these forms. In either case, almost every piece of correspondence would include a section where the 'story' of the applicant was included. Sometimes this information was requested, but in the vast majority of cases, it

was irrelevant to the specific situation. Invariably, these applications were rejected, not because of any inadequacy in the story but because the applicants were not technically qualified for services or support under existing legal guidelines. Group members, however, would ask, 'didn't they read my story ... do they not care?' The moral force they expected their stories to carry was inevitably diffused by what many called 'the weapon of bureaucracy'. They argued that their stories should convince those in government to provide them with their requested benefits, but that the government cleverly used bureaucracy as a 'weapon' to keep these services from them.

When Khulumani initiated a membership drive after its launch, a similar mobilisation of personal stories in the hopes of securing material benefit took place. On the membership form, there were three lines provided for applicants to tell how they had been affected by apartheid. Many of these forms came back with one, two, sometimes three sheets of paper stapled to the back, detailing in meticulous handwritten words their 'story'. It was subsequently discovered that many of those who had applied to join the group thought they were getting on a 'list' that would qualify them for reparations from the government. Their stories were included as ways to insure their identification as true victims and their qualification for this list, a list which of course never existed except as a membership roster.

This concept of storytelling as a process in which something is created (a 'story') and transacted for some benefit was further elaborated when outside researchers, journalists, foreign aid organisations and victim groups came to the group and wanted to 'collect' the stories of victims. Group members were sceptical (with good reason) of the benefits they would get from these outsiders and quickly came to see their stories as a commodity that could be put to use in a new way to secure material gain. There have been lengthy discussions during the monthly meetings about how to charge outside researchers. There were questions about what the 'market price' for a story was and how long an interview this might entail. There were also debates around the very real problem of how to choose among group members who would be interviewed and how the proceeds would be distributed (to the individual, to the group, or both). In these discussions, the 'story' became not only an 'object' vested with a kind of moral force that could be exchanged within networks of social and moral obligation (i.e. traded to perpetrators, bystanders, government officials, likeminded victims, etc.); the story also became a commodity, something that could be literally sold outside of these close, personalised and historically grounded networks, into the impersonal networks of international academic production, development and humanitarian agencies, heritage industries and the global media.

Some of the effects on *group member's* of the objectification and commodification of storytelling have been:

- feelings of empowerment for taking 'control' of their stories, for not being pushed around by outsiders and simply dispensing their story on command,
- the expectation of future benefit through their perception that stories might not only be useful when making claims against the state or a perpetrator, but might also have an 'exchange' value in an open market for stories, and;
- an anxiety over alienation from the story. That is, if I sell my story, do I still own it and who can reproduce 'my' story. In what sense does it remain 'my' story? What if someone takes 'my' story and tries to send a different message than I think they should. What if I, the unique individual, disappear from the story?

The group eventually decided to charge outsiders on a case-by-case basis and make all of the proceeds available to the group at large. Discussions about relationships with outside researchers have died down, but there remains a general scepticism among members as to the value in working with outsiders and the benefits that can be realistically expected.

Some of the effects on *the stories themselves* of the objectification and commodification of stories have been:

- a regulation of the narrative content and structure of stories wherein what sells and what doesn't (with a South African bureaucrat or with an American graduate student) becomes a part of shaping the stories people tell,
- the evolution of the idea that victims have a single story, 'my story,' a unitary, bounded and unchanging narrative that incorporates all of the things that are considered important in the story of a victim, and;
- a shortening of stories into easily consumable pieces of information that fit within the lines of a membership form, grant application, TV interview or case history. (One of the most common ways of introducing stories to the group is to say 'I won't speak long. I have a long story, but I will make it very short'.)

This pledge to shorten stories could, of course, reflect a more communal approach to storytelling characterised by desire to let others speak, to downplay the differences between one's story and the story of others and to downplay the importance one might attach to one's story. However, I think the need to present stories in short, packaged and predictable formats is also an illustration of how an object can be shaped and disciplined in response to the demands of the 'marketplace,' whether that marketplace is the closed space of the monthly meeting, the public spectacle of the TRC, the rarified circuits of academic knowledge production or the global information markets of Reuters or CNN.

There have been a number of ways, however, that the group and the Trauma Centre have responded to and tried to counter the objectification and commodification of stories. From the Trauma Centre's side has recently come the position that victims can not and should not be reduced to their trauma. The motivation here is therapeutic ('reintegrating' trauma into the personality involves making the patient aware that there is life outside and beyond the trauma) but it effectively serves to counter the reductionism implicit in the transformation of stories into things to be bought and sold. From Khulumani's side, the recent decision to explore setting up a museum commemorating the victims of the Nyanga Bush War (where many members lost their houses to police arson) is an example of a reassertion of members' ownership of their stories. Any museum project, by definition, involves the objectification of memory, but the important difference here is that members themselves are undertaking the project and retaining control over how their stories are represented and circulated. Similarly, the committee of Khulumani has taken a strong stance with local NGOs wanting to conduct research with its members and sought to exercise much more control over access to group members.

I have included this discussion of an objectified and commodified storytelling practice because it complicates the 'natural history'<sup>7</sup> of storytelling that celebrates storytelling as 'cultural' (evoking romantic images of the 'traditional' black, rural experience), as 'release' (through mechanistic notions of pressure, trauma and the mind) or as 'truth-

telling' (through either legal or Christian modes of confession and testimony). These are the grounds on which public figures like Archbishop Tutu have regularly defended the reconciliatory potential of storytelling. I do not want to deny that storytelling may in its various manifestations incorporate many or all of these elements. My aim is to illustrate how, if looked at from a different angle, storytelling in a post-apartheid context can also be about the creation and exchange of new kinds of valued objects (stories of victims and of perpetrators, apologies, news reports, images of the TRC, books, articles, careers, a 'nation') and new kinds of people (healed victims, repentant perpetrators, concerned beneficiaries of privilege, peacemakers, villains, meddling outsiders, suspicious insiders, etc.). I want to argue that all of this is relevant when considering storytelling's relationship to reconciliation. The standardisation of stories I have described and anxiety over ownership and representation and the disappointment of stories that fail to produce the value they are expected to all impact, I think, on the effectiveness of storytelling in enabling reconciliation.

### *The dangerous roots/routes of stories*

The anxiety that accompanies the movement of stories from local or private spaces into networks of public exchange is not limited to questions of the ownership, benefit and reduction of stories. In the storytelling section of monthly meetings and in other storied spaces, group members also point to the danger contained within stories that are put into circulation. Some members are reluctant in storytelling sessions to speak since the say it will only stir up anger and hatred in themselves or in those who are listening:

I don't want to speak of these things because it makes me so angry, because, also I think other people will not feel so good when they hear these things because they know what I am talking about but I don't need to say these things here. (Khulumani Member, November 2000 Monthly Meeting)

Others explain that expressing their continuing suffering shows a disrespect of the current government. Some of the members, especially those in the rural areas, have expressed discomfort with the politics of Khulumani and the process of storytelling saying that it is too critical of the ANC. For still others, the danger of storytelling becomes very real and tangible when they remember that their torturers often still live in the same community as they do:

I saw him in this house I was painting ... he lives just down that street, in my township. He was just standing there in front of me and he knew I knew who he was. I did not say anything ... I just looked at him and turned around and walked out. I will not say his name, but he was my torturer. (L.C., 14 March 2001)<sup>8</sup>

Finally, there is a sense within the group that some members might be too eager to tell their stories multiple times and many members have expressed to me the need to make sure 'others have their turn before I go'. Even though telling one's story often acts as a kind of informal initiation into the group, taking too much time and speaking too much about oneself seem to be active concerns.

### *Storytelling across boundaries*

For Khulumani, storytelling is characterised by its self-healing properties, its contribution to group formation and motivation and a frustration with the perceived separation between 'storytelling' and the work of 'real change'. In general, storytelling has not been emphasised as a way of crossing boundaries between different, unreconciled groups. Recently, however, storytelling as a means of reconciliation and education across racial and generational boundaries has gained some attention in the group. The drama workshop mentioned above has become one of the few vehicles within the group for storytelling designed to foster social reconciliation outside the group. Though initially conceived of as a healing opportunity for the actors, the primary purpose for the participants in this drama group has shifted towards using storytelling as a means of advocacy and reconciliation outside of the confines of the group. Though future plans are unclear right now, there was much discussion around the time of the initial performance that white schools should be targeted for this production because the youth and the white community were the two groups who 'needed to know this history' (L.N., 11 December 2000). The proposed museum project commemorating those who suffered through the Nyanga Bush War fires is another example of possible excursions of storytelling beyond the confines of the group.

### **Critical Relationship to Common Reconciliation Concepts**

In the following sections, I outline some of the more common concepts associated with reconciliation and describe the group's critical relationships to these concepts.<sup>2</sup> These ideas are not dismissed by group members; rather, they regard them with suspicion and unease, usually assuming them to be 'too much, too early'.

#### ***Forgiveness***

Forgiveness has not been a prominent part of the discourse of the Torture Project or the Khulumani support group. Though most group members will explain that forgiveness is a necessary part for any lasting reconciliation and psychological well-being, there is a widespread feeling that the question of forgiveness is quite premature and this attitude has hardened throughout the life of the group. The group's emerging political identity is largely grounded in the assertion that conditions have not significantly changed for the victims of apartheid. Forgiveness, therefore, has come to be seen as at best irrelevant at this stage and, at worst, an attempt to foreclose on real reconciliation and repair that further victimises the victims. They also point to the lack of repentance on the part of perpetrators as a reason the moment is not right for forgiveness:

How can they ask me to forgive when I am still hungry and they have not said sorry? How can they do this thing? You can not forgive if the other person does not come to you and say they are sorry, that they are wrong. (Khulumani Member, November 2000 Monthly Meeting)

The few times when forgiveness is mentioned, it is often accompanied by a strongly emphasised 'We might forgive, but we will never forget'. The implication here appears to be that forgiveness may be granted by the grace of the victims, but forgiveness is no indication that the violation will be forgotten or that accounts have been settled.

#### ***Ubuntu***

In a similar fashion, ubuntu, another of the more prominent concepts in reconciliation discourse, has not been a prominent part of the language of either the Trauma Centre or the

support group. Proponents of ubuntu like Desmond Tutu or those associated with the Centre for Ubuntu typically use ubuntu to explain the generosity of spirit of black African victims in approaching and reconciling with their white oppressors. Though many of the group members have explained and defended ubuntu as an important aspect of African philosophy, it doesn't find an easy conceptual home within the work of the group itself, which is focused on healing internally, constructing relationships within the group or fighting for social and economic rights outside of the group:

You see, the African people, our people, they have 'ubuntu' which means 'humanity' ... this is why they open their hearts to the white people ... this is why there was no civil war, this ubuntu means they have feeling for the other people ... but ag, man, I am feeling sad now because the whites, they do not feel our ubuntu. It bring me pain to see this ... I don't know what we can do to make this better, to make them see... (L.N., 8 November 2000)

Like forgiveness, ubuntu seems to mainly operate on a general level as an accepted and important concept and as part of the overall framework of reconciliation. Its place in the philosophy and activities of the group or of the Trauma Centre, though, is distinctly peripheral.

### ***Deconstructing the relevance of 'race' in post-apartheid South Africa***

A critique of the concept of race has also been identified by group members to be a key dimension of reconciliation. Again, however, this critique of race seems to have joined the concepts of forgiveness and ubuntu in a legitimate, but sidelined position in the work of Khulumani. Like forgiveness and ubuntu, the danger of racial classification is an abstraction that forms part of most group member's broad belief system. A liberal humanist critique of race does not, however, enter into the daily working and thinking of the group. Again, it is not because non-racialism is not an expressed ideal. It simply seems to be a premature topic for discussion. Race continues to be perceived as a major force that structures member's experiences and life chances:

Things have not changed here very much if you are a black person ... the whites, they still have the power and they have not changed their hearts. The police, they still treat you badly, even the black police. And it is still not so good with the coloureds because the whites, they have changed their [the coloureds] hearts. A black man can not get a job, but a white or coloured man can. (Khulumani Member, October 2000 Monthly Meeting)

Few will argue that race is a real, useful or necessary category, but most will claim that race still matters to black South Africans.

### **Conclusion**

Khulumani continues to evolve in its work. In late April 2001, a two-day Reparations Indaba was hosted by Khulumani and was quite successful in securing government and NGO participation and media coverage. Most members feel that they have finally effectively communicated their anger and disappointment over the reparations issue to the government and have a cautious optimism that a government program to pay out

reparations is on the horizon.

The monthly meetings are continuing, though many of the Trauma Centre personnel have changed in the meantime. The Trauma Centre facilitators are trying some new approaches in the storytelling section of the meetings, encouraging more interaction among members and more sustained reflection on individual stories. The Nyanga Bush War museum project and the drama production "Khumbulani" have added an educational dimension to the group's work that may be developed over time, especially if the fight for reparations finds some kind of conclusion. The executive committee is also hoping to begin reviewing and funding income generating projects for group members.

Their relationship with the Trauma Centre is also still in transition. As Khulumani's activities have grown, questions about funding and tensions over sharing resources have developed. Khulumani is looking for office space outside of the Trauma Centre both as a real and symbolic form of separation and because the Trauma Centre declined to provide them an office, citing lack of space and funding for outside organisations. The executive committee has asked that Trauma Centre personnel not to come to their executive committee meetings (as they have done from the beginning) unless their presence is requested. And the new Torture Project coordinator has begun designing new program activities for the Torture Project that fall outside of the scope of Khulumani. Both parties hope these developments will enable them to work together in a clearer, more accountable and friendlier context.

Perhaps the most important question in looking towards the future of Khulumani and the Trauma Centre is what will happen "after reparations." Many group members express both fear that the payment of reparations will divide the group between those who received and those who did not and hope that once some of the material suffering and moral damage members are experiencing has been alleviated, members will be ready to look to the future and work more effectively in the present. A particularly intriguing question in this context will be how the practice of storytelling continues to evolve once Khulumani becomes more of a separate organisation, the fight for reparations reaches some kind of conclusion and the TRC-model of testimonial storytelling in the service of national reconciliation recedes further into the distance.

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> In this report, I use the racial categories used by Trauma Centre staff and Khulumani members themselves. Though there are exceptions, this typically means 'black', 'coloured' and 'white'. The terms 'Indian' and 'Asian' are rarely mentioned and those labelled as such are rarely serviced by the Trauma Centre. The use of 'black' as a political identification uniting all those excluded from the category of 'white' has not been observed with these participants.

<sup>2</sup> See Kayser (2001b) for a more detailed analysis of this programme.

<sup>3</sup> Examples in the Western Cape include Khumbula ('To Remember'), the Ex-Political Prisoners Committee, the Umkhonto weSizwe Veterans Association and the ANC Veteran's Association.

<sup>4</sup> Every month there are about 10 people who come just in time for lunch and leave soon after the food is passed out. Most participants, however, attend the whole meeting.

<sup>5</sup> Many argue that this obligation was established by the Constitutional Court decision in the 'AZAPO Case' that, in giving up the right to seek civil damages from or criminal prosecution of perpetrators who were awarded amnesty, the government took on the responsibility of providing an appropriate level and kind of compensation for these victims.

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted here that there has always been a black, Xhosa-speaking 'co-facilitator' present at every meeting. The other facilitator, however, a white man, has typically been seen as the main facilitator and representative of the Trauma Centre (cf. Dullabh 2000).

<sup>7</sup> By 'natural history' I mean those characteristics of storytelling that have come to be accepted by many involved in the debate over reconciliation as 'natural' and 'self-evident' qualities of storytelling.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ross 2000 on the reluctance of many women involved in the TRC process to speak about their own suffering, choosing instead to focus on the suffering of (male) others.

<sup>9</sup> These concepts were originally outlined by the various researchers in this survey as common themes found across most of the reconciliation projects under examination.

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Focus Group with Khulumani Members, May 2000