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Editors/Redakteurs

Andrew Bank, University of the Western Cape

Leslie Bank, University of Fort Hare

Review editor/Besprekingsredakteur

Lance van Sittert, University of Cape Town

Layout, Design & Typesetting/Uitleg, Ontwerp en Lettersetwerk

Jenny Sandler

Editorial Advisory Committee/Redaksionele Advieskomitee

Robert Ross, University of Leiden

Nigel Worden, University of Cape Town

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KRONOS word jaarliks deur die Departement van Geskiedenis en Instituut vir Historiese Navorsing aan die Universiteit van Wes-Kaapland gepubliseer. Dit dien as 'n forum vir die besprek-ing van oorspronklike navorsing oor die geskiedenis van veral Kaapland, vanaf die voor-koloniale era tot die hede.

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Editorial note

In 1990, on the eve of the transition to democracy in South Africa, a group of Eastern Cape based academics gathered in East London to reflect on the current state of social science and historical research in the province. Foremost in the minds of many of the participants was the imminent collapse and unbundling of the homeland system, which had been the dominant feature of the region's history over the past forty years. East London was the venue for the workshop, because it was equidistant from Fort Hare, Rhodes and Unitra. Although this first conference was a relatively modest affair, some of the papers were published in a special issue of the *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, which appeared in 1992 under the title 'Undoing Independence'.

In the twelve years since then much has changed in the Eastern Cape. The homelands no longer exist as formal political entities, although their legacy is still strongly felt, and the Eastern Cape province has been reshaped as a political entity with new boundaries and municipalities, and a new political centre located in Bisho/East London. The status of the province as one of the country's poorest has not changed, nor has academic interest in the Eastern Cape's complex and conflicted history and in its contemporary social, economic and political challenges. In fact, throughout the 1990s, a steady stream of Ph.D. students and more established scholars have continued to work on the Eastern Cape, many of whom have produced significant books and theses on the basis of their research. In December 2000, following discussions with William Beinart at Oxford University, it was decided that it would be productive to hold another conference on the Eastern Cape, which reflected both on the achievements over the past decade and began to explore research agendas for the future.

The Institute of Social and Economic Research on the East London campus of what has now become the University of Fort Hare took this idea forward as a joint venture between Universities of Fort Hare, Oxford and Rhodes, and organised 'The Eastern Cape: Historical Legacies, New Challenges' conference in August 2003. The conference was well advertised and attracted wide-ranging participation with more than 70 papers from both local and international academics. It was also host to three major photographic exhibitions on the Eastern Cape. The sessions varied from the historical to the contemporary, and covered a wide range of topics on history, biography, heritage and literature, as well as issues related to post-apartheid developments in the fields of social development, land reform, environmental issues and urban transition. This special issue of *Kronos* draws on a selection of historical papers presented at the conference, and includes the opening keynote address by Professor Colin Bundy. Additional papers were commissioned from leading scholars on the Eastern Cape who were unable to attend the conference. Thanks to the contributors for their willingness to participate in this volume. Other papers from the conference are available on the website of the Fort Hare Institute of Social and Economic Research at www.fhri.ac.za.

ufhel.ac.za.

In presenting these papers for publication, we would like to acknowledge the generous financial support received for the conference from a range of academic and development organisations, both in the Eastern Cape and beyond. The main sponsors of the conference were: the National Research Foundation (NRF), the Fort Hare Foundation, the Oppenheimer Trust, St Anthony's College, Oxford University, the Journal of Southern African Studies, and the University of Fort Hare. Special mention should be made here of the role of the Vice-Chancellor of Fort Hare University, Professor Derrick Swartz, for his enthusiasm and support of the event. Other donations were received from public and private sector organisations in the Eastern Cape, including the Border Kei Chamber of Business, the Border Rural Committee, Daimler-Chrysler, the Daily Dispatch, the Eastern Cape Development Corporation, the Eastern Cape NGO Coalition, the Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council (ECSECC), the Eastern Cape Tourism Board, the Industrial Development Zone (IDZ), the German Technical Corporation (GTZ), Simeka Management Consulting and Sure Aloe Travel.

Leslie Bank
September 2004