

hidden histories series

And we forgave them

Stories from the Struggle Against Apartheid in Venda, South Africa

Following the bombing of the Sibasa police station in October 1981, having failed to capture the perpetrators, the Vendaleland security police persecuted four Lutheran church pastors. This book tells the story of two of these men. The first-person experience of torture of **Ndanganeni Peter Phaswana**, ably refracted through his theological training and through his capacity for reflection on the issues of forgiveness and reparation that his suffering entailed, offers one lens. The experience of **Lillian Tendani Muofhe**, as she sought to absorb the murder of her revered husband **Isaac Tshifhiwa Muofhe**, while grappling with mothering Mulanga Muofhe, her infant daughter, offers a deeply personal reflection, one which, while grounded in a Christian sensibility of forgiveness, leaves Lillian lost for words at the ability of the apartheid South African judicial system, such as it was, to allow the killers of her husband to walk free.

Both accounts offer opportunities for readers, to resist the smoothing of their narratives into reductionist victim or hero narratives. Instead, they hold up a mirror to South African society, present and past, and their narratives offer powerful lenses for engaging with the ways in which trauma lodges, sometimes intractably, in the individual unconscious as well as in the collective unconscious of a society.

Their two stories are complemented by a Preface by distinguished journalist **Mathatha Tsedu**; an Introduction which offers a discussion of the consequences of historical trauma and the importance of reclaiming memory by psychoanalyst **Michael O'Loughlin**; and an Afterword in which theologian **Andrea Fröchtling** offers reflections on South Africa's long walk to freedom.

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Edited by Michael O'Loughlin



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