“Oberlin-Inanda: The Life and Times of John L. Dube”

On that day of April 27, 1994, as he was about to consume the first fruits of the triumph of democracy in South Africa, Nelson Mandela traveled from Johannesburg to Inanda, a black township on the outskirts of Durban, one of the poorest in the country, to cast his vote in the first multiracial elections at the historic Ohlange High School. That day Mandela stood with the masses not only to celebrate the future and but also and more importantly to invite the nascent nation to join him in saluting the memory of the first of its prophets, John Langalibalele Dube, the man who, more than a century earlier, had traveled overseas to bring back to his people the key to their freedom from colonial oppression.

This is the story of an African visionary and of the incredible gifts he made to his country and to Africa more than a hundred years ago.

TITLE: Oberlin-Inanda: The Life and Times of John L. Dube

Voice of Cherif speaking to the students: “*we are all here, on the footsteps of one man, John Langalibalele DUBE, the founder of this school. I am very emotional, because when I think of where this man started, when I think of when he started, to see what he has done, it just boggles your mind; to see that this man started his journey, his vision at age 16, when he went to the US, with a vision to do something for his people, he went to a foreign land and never lost sight of the people he left back home, he never lost sight of the conditions he left back home.*

Y. Saaka: “In fact, John Dube set the example, he set the tone: he was the person, as his nickname suggests in Zulu, who awakened the minds of his people.”

Sangweni: “When he came in here, and addressed the nation, he said:”I have taken the key of ignorance and thrown it into the sea because I have established an institution for the Africans, for everybody in Africa.”

Kaba Mkhize: And then came out with a school, which was a national school, Uhlange; Uhlange means a nation; it means people must stick together like the reeds by the riverside.”

Cherif: "*All of us today are the beneficiaries of what he has done. You are part of a history that is going to be remembered over and over, as long as South Africa will live."*

A SCHOOL CALLED OHLANGE

When John Dube returns from the United States in 1899, he is determined to start a school which he calls the Zulu Christian Industrial School or Ohlange, with one intention, to educate his people for self-help and independence.

Zondi: *He said no; instead of having our people back home always working for white people, let me go and start a school. So he went over, looked for the place where Ohlange is just now and then he began the school with fairly few staff members.*

Ohlange officially opens its doors in 1900. The first students are the children of the Zulu Christian community known as the Amakholwa. Dube and his students build the school by hand and in the process they acquire the manual skills of carpentry and masonry, which prepared them for self-reliance. But in those days in South Africa, the idea of a black man building a school, was considered a childish dream and indeed a folly by many.

Mkhize: *in fact, you must imagine now that we are talking about a period 100 years back, a person who had a vision that I can build an institution like this one, it was far-fetched really. People were saying, he is wasting his energy; they said "**Mafukuzela",** to waste your energy, to work like you are just making movements which will have no results. You say "You are fukuza." His name comes from that movement which is going nowhere. You are wasting your energy. They said he is Mafukuzela, because he thinks he is a white man; it is only whites who can build a school."*

The concept of a school for self-reliance and self-empowerment quickly proves very popular. Young people from surrounding areas and from many other parts of South Africa start to flock to the hills of Ohlange. Classes are initially held outside, with Dube and his first wife Nokutela as the instructors. But to meet the growing enrollment, Dube has to recruit additional teachers, including Blacks from the United States and the West Indies.

Zondi: *He also taught. He was overloaded but then his mission was one: let my African people not work for the white people; let them be independent! They must start their own firms where they are going to sell shoes, where they are going to make furniture; ...but then the school became very popular. .. He was a very keen man to see that his people move forward... His teachers loved him. But he was a strict man; he wanted what he wanted for the black nation and he would tell a teacher straight away: "You are not for me if you do this, you are not for the nation if you do this.*

As if the burden of running such a school was not heavy enough, in 1903, Dube launches *Ilanga Lase Natal*, the "Sun of Natal", the first secular Zulu newspaper. It provides training to several young people in news reporting, in the trade of printing and starts a whole new culture among black people of discussing their conditions under colonialism in a more open fashion. Letters to the editor pour onto Dube's desk in English, Zulu and Sotho.

Zondi: "His paper published very regularly the happenings of that time; the government did not like that. It didn't like that; so he experienced some harassment, until at one time he came up and said "why I must have laws to not publish what was said by people who were there."

Ohlange strives for self-sufficiency, with no government assistance. Students grow their own food; they produce cash crops such as sugar cane, to be sold on the market. Cash is also generated by the sale of building materials, of shoes and clothes crafted right there in the workshops of Ohlange.

Zondi: *Each time when money was a bit scarce, he went over to Swaziland mainly, where he killed game and people bought the meat; but he also went to Rhodesia looking for ivory.*

Dube's fund-raising often takes him to the United States for extended periods. During these trips, he crisscrosses the country with his wife lecturing about his vision for his people and singing songs from their homeland.
An American woman, Mrs. Emaroy June Smith of Chicago hears Dube's lecture and generously provides funds for the construction of a building in the name of her father.

It is the first two-story building to provide classrooms, a library and comfortable dormitories for the students. It compares favorably with any structure the white government of Natal has built for white students in the colony.

The British govenor of Natal, Sir Matthew Nathan, attends the dedication ceremony of the June Building. Dube orders the band to play "Yankee Doodle" as the Governor's party arrives. Dube's irreverence demonstrates the independence of his mission from the colonial power and celebrates the United States as the main source of his financial backing for Ohlange.

Ohlange's success as an industrial school leads to an ever-increasing enrollment.

G.V. Sangweni: It housed students from Johannesburg, from Bloemfontein, from Cape Town, from Zululand, from everywhere in the country."

For the first time, Sotho, Zulu and Xhosa kids sit and work next to each other in workshops, developing an unprecedented sense of unity and of common purpose.

Dube expands the scope of the school to include subjects beyond the manual trades. New courses include business, literature and the arts.

Students of the early days include Albert Luthuli, who will go on to receive the Nobel Peace prize in the 1960s as the President of the African National Congress, but also R.T. Caluza,who, at the helm of the Ohlange Choir, sets the stands the standards of modern Zulu Choral music.

Dube's success, his independence and his outspokenness are seen as a threat by many whites.

Hughes: Look, *he had a very ambivalent relationship with the white authorities in Natal. He was spied on. They did not much like him; there were definitely spies in the audience for the inauguration of Ohlange school; there were always spies in the congregation of his church when he preached. They always had eyes and ears around wondering what he was doing; they feared him.....*

Hunt Davis: *In the first decade of the 20th century, you had the Bambata Rebellion, that was ruthlessly suppressed and the leaders were essentially murdered; So a situation of violence in which it was risky. You had to be a brave person to be willing to stand up and say I am going to lead my people. And there was also a hostility among whites, who were in political power in Natal, to educating blacks.*

Dube believes in the legitimacy of any government authority, whether traditional or modern, in so far as it is responsible to the people and fair with them. He sees education as the only protection against the growing tyranny of the colonial state of the day. And he is determined to bring quality education to his people, at any cost.

N. Zondi: *He believed that there is education for human beings and no such thing as education for the natives, or as the Boers later called, the Bantus.. So for instance, when they came to say, there is something wrong here. You put up your school and you are teaching exactly what is taught in white schools; you are teaching science, you are teaching commerce; it was the first school. We believe natives don't need all that. Natives need to learn about the soil and about agriculture; so change the school to a school of agriculture to let them learn how to produce food for themselves. And Dr. Dube said to those people, the inspectors that were there: "Alright, he was dramatic, he said. Come out, I will show you. You see that beacon there, you see that beacon there, that's the end of my land, Ohlange, my land. Beyond the boundaries of that land, there is a vast*

amount of land; you are free to put up all those things you are talking about. And that was the end. They went back disappointed. And that's the type of man.

Not only had Dube built an entire school for the education of his people, the best proof up to that date of Black people's ability to control their lives independently, but also he had invested himself personally to educate many promising young South Africans in the US.

In 1910, following the Anglo-Boer War, the Union of South Africa is created for the purpose of strengthening white self-rule in the colony of South Africa. It was clear to John Dube and to all native leaders of the day that this union was happening at the expense of Natives and their rights.

In 1912, Black leaders from the Cape, the Transvaal and Natal and the Free State, gather in Bloemfontein and elect Dube as the President of a new organization, the South African Native National Congress.

James Millette: "*You walk a thousand miles but you have to take a step at a time; and I think that Dube and people like Dube were the ones who took that initial step and who really formalized the early presentation of the problems which focused the minds of African people. I think that the main contribution of Dube and his group really had to do with constituting a national consciousness which prevailed over what we may call for want of a better word the tribal consciousness; they were always talking about that. In fact, when they formed the South African Native National Congress, they said that it was formed in order to combat tribalism, to combat rivalry between the groups, that we had been separated and apart and antagonistic to each other for too long we needed to build a consciousness because they pointed to what was happening among whites; they said the whites are coming together, the whites have united South Africa but it is a South Africa in which we do not have a part, and we will not have a part until we ourselves are united.*

Their fears are justified for in 1913, the Union Parliament hastily passes the Natives Land Act to limit Black ownership of land in South Africa. It is a landmark in the colonial exploitation of the country and the cornerstone of a tenacious segregation system that will prevail for the next eighty years.

Hunt Davis: *"South Africa, there was a situation in which whites were steadily expanding and trying to seize land from the Africans and also trying to seize African labor as well. And all this came to a head shortly after Dube became President of the African National Congress, in that the South African government passed something called the Native Lands Act in 1913, which limited African land holding to approximately seven and half percent of the total land surface of South Africa; this was all the land left in African hands after the process of conquest. Now Africans had been buying land back; they had pooled their resources and a community would move in, buy a farm and split it up, a white-owned farm; they were also engaging in working on shares, in which they*

would grow crops on white-owned land, and the landowner would get part of the crops and the Africans would get the other; they were reclaiming the land this way. So they saw the Natives Land Act of 1913 as an issue that was thwarting their efforts to acquire more land and in fact was going to prevent them from continuing an agricultural existence. Dube became deeply involved in this issue because he was after all very conscious of the needs of rural people."

Dube leads the first native Delegation to England to protest the Land Act and to assert to the British opinion their rights to an equal treatment under the British Flag. Although their lobbying efforts are cleverly deflected by the Crown, Dube seizes this momentum to build a stronger political unity and a nationwide support for the South African Native National Congress.

AN EDUCATION FOR LEADERSHIP

Dube's leadership skills and his vision for his people began at an early age. Born in 1871, the son of James Dube, the first black pastor of Inanda Congregational Church, John Dube is first educated at Adams Mission in Amanzimtoti, Natal. His formal education, like that of all blacks in Natal, is controlled by the white colonial government, which only funds Native education up to the seventh grade. Dube's mother, who takes charge of his education after her husband's death, is determined to see her son obtain the same education as that offered to the white children of Natal. She asks the Reverend William Wilcox, a missionary of the American Zulu Mission to shepherd her son to America for better educational opportunities.

Wilcox and his wife serve at the American Zulu Mission and have a reputation for their unconventional views. Wilcox is one of the few missionaries who are totally committed to the empowerment of Blacks.

Marly Merrill: "It was important to create a missionary environment where native people could learn skills so that they could become self-sufficient and where Clergy could be trained and where natives Clergy could be in control of the Church, the preaching, the evangelism."

In young Dube, Wilcox sees an opportunity to put his beliefs into practice and for John Dube to become the embodiment of his radical ideas.

In 1887, Dube, at the age of 16, departs for the United Sates with Wilcox and his wife. It is through Wilcox that Dube is introduced to the political and social movements of 19th century America, and which called for greater citizenship rights for Blacks after their Emancipation from slavery

Marly Merrill: *Wilcox took Dube to the Hampton Institute and apparently Wilcox thought that he would like to go there but John Dube did not really want to attend the Hampton Institute. He wanted to attend the college where Mr. Wilcox had attended."*

Oberlin is a unique school and a unique community for 19th century America. It is the first college in the US to admit women and blacks and it had, from its start, a tradition of training leaders for social activism and service to others. Wilcox, his wife and many of their contemporaries became missionaries in Africa and in Asia.

C. Lasser: *By 1860, the town was over 20% African-American, making it probably one of the most integrated towns in the country, with a long history of African-Americans and whites working together. First Church was a place where worship that included both black and white was very common.... It was a place that believed in educating African-Americans and it was a place which believed in acting on racial equality.*

The socio-economic status achieved by blacks in this environment, which is in sharp contrast to the oppressive and segregationist world of South Africa, liberates Dube's mind and enables him to actively search for appropriate models of socio-economic and political development for his people back home.

AJ Miller: *What is interesting about Dube, he is a very shrewd character; he is trying to walk a very interesting tight-rope, he is trying to raise money here. He is interacting with his white benefactors who brought him here; yet he's got his eyes on the black community, because he realizes that in the black community there is a whole development of independence and self-help and self-determination to build their own schools, and he is looking at the black churches who are building their own institutions. He is watching blacks as they are organizing their own congregation, You know, and I can imagine Dube would be thinking about all this. How can I translate this back to the situation in South Africa; how do we build the kind of institutions that will be self-determining at one level but at the same time drawing support from those white supporters and benefactors who have the resources to make this happen.*

Dube finds the best answers to his many questions in the work of this man: Booker T. Washington, a man who had risen from slavery to become one of the greatest leaders of the black race in modern times. Dube is captivated by Washington's philosophy and his success at educating Southern blacks in the manual trades, thereby giving them opportunities to lift themselves up from illiteracy and poverty to become self-employed artisans and small independent business owners. Washington, a graduate of the Hampton Institute in Virginia, had gone on to create the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, with funds he had collected from wealthy white philanthropists. He becomes the quintessential model for John Dube.

Hunt Davis: *The other thing I think, that appealed about Washington to Dube was that in Tuskegee, Dube saw an African-American, a black American organizing and running a school with other Black Americans, so that all the teachers, all the administration were black Americans. And this is what he returns to Natal, South Africa, to do with Ohlange, to set up a school run by Africans, not under white principalship or with the lead teachers being white but with Africans. So this notion of self-help, of an industrial school*

education model linked to more literary forms of education but a practical form of education and self-help, in which it was Africans doing it for themselves ...

When Dube returns to South Africa in 1899, he begins 47 years of hard and unrelenting fight to educate his people, to better their socio-economic and political conditions. He advocates the empowerment of women to produce real social change. He insists that all races must have equal rights to the land of South Africa. About the advent of majority rule, he says that where there was once a pool surely water will collect again.

N. Zondi: *Dr. Dube believed that you have your own fate in your own hand. You don't need to fear anybody, you have your own fate in your own hand. And it's you and God. So get up and do things. Whatever your situation in life, get up and do things, you yourself. Don't expect handouts and things of that kind. That was Dube's philosophy.*

Dube has made Ohlange what the poet HIE Dhlomo calls a Citadel of Light.

In 1937, the all-white University of South Africa confers on John Dube a Doctorate *Honoris Causa*, making him the first black man to receive such a recognition from a South African institution. To be sure, this recognition was not a handout; it was a well-deserved award for a prestigious record of service by any standard, anywhere in the world.

Dube has turned Ohlange into what HIE Dhlomo, the poet, calls a Citadel of Light.

Mokone: "Your first week or two in Ohlange, you sense that this is a different school. You'd sense that there was something here you might not be able to explain it and it was that sense of belonging, that sense of comradeship, that sense of "we are the leaders of tomorrow, that South Africa depends on us." We saw ourselves as better than any other school by virtue of being a black school."

Several generations of young men and women cut their political teeth under Dube's mentorship.

Mokone: "We were taught politics at Ohlange, in a way which I don't think politics was ever taught at other schools. We were sort of taught to be leaders of tomorrow. We were taught to be proud of ourselves, irrespective of whether you were a Zulu, a Xhosa or whatever it was. We were all considered one nation."

Dube's ideas reach across the continent of Africa.

Mokone: "From the very point of where Dube started at Ohlange, he was able, his ideas and his philosophy was able to spread to the rest of Africa because of some of the

students who had come to Ohlange, shall we say, who had come to the fountain, to drink from Dube's philosophy, then went back and took some of his ideas to the rest of Africa.

Dube, just like the ANC he had helped shape, never stopped promoting interracial cooperation and dialogue around issues of social justice. In doing so, he was true to the spirit of his birthplace, Inanda, which was the cradle of several other groundbreaking social movements in the country: Gandhi's work for social justice; the Shembe Church, the most popular African church in Southern Africa, the Trade Union movement of A.W. G. Champion.

As a person who demanded so much of himself, Dube still did not think he had done enough. But visibly, old age had come and to make prospects even gloomier, a strong tide of racial division was rising all over the country with the growing domination of the Afrikaner ideology in politics.

On February 11, 1946, John Dube died. What a great loss it was for all peoples of color and all white liberal-minded people in the country!

WITHSTANDING APARTHEID

The question on everyone's mind was: What will become of Ohlange? Up to that day, Ohlange had remained the sole visible monument to black self-determination and independence. For almost 50 years, Dube had been the heart and soul of the enterprise. By 1946, many parts of Ohlange were showing signs of aging but in the absence of much government subsidy, a big challenge was awaiting the keepers of Dube's legacy.

N. Zondi: *So we said" No, this is a shame; now, it's a shame upon us who teach here; we must do sth to show our appreciation of what Dube did. So we all banded ourselves to have 10% of our salaries deducted every month until we made a sizeable sum of money, with which to go out to the public; we made that money after a year, and went out to the big financial magnates in town, most of them were white and Indian, with drawn up plans and everything, building specifications were there. So we went with all these, shivering and wondering who is going to accept to help us. We thought we would go all around Durban. We went to the Lockhat Brothers. These people said that you want so many thousand rands for this building; thirteen classrooms, a science laboratories, a home economics department, and so much. So these Indians, the Lockhat Brothers said, "Look, this is a pitance, man." One of them stood up and said "Gentlemen, allow me to make them a check to go and put up that school."*

For all the positive symbols Ohlange stood for, interracial cooperation, black self-determination and competence, it was bound to become the target of choice for the racist educational policies of the Apartheid regime, known as Bantu Education, the very type of substandard education against which Dube had fought all his life.

D. Zondi: *Bantu education came over and took over almost everything belonging to the Africans, said we are not going to do it, we are not going to say, Oh, department of Administration, do this, we are going to administer Bantu Education until we realize the goal of Bantu education, which was to educate people for servitude. And that was written on black and white by Verwoerd himself.*

It is an understatement to say that Apartheid created a lot of social disruption for people of color in South Africa and particularly for the majority black population. Throughout the 1950s, black education is deliberately under-funded and reformed in such a way as to dull the mind of the African child.

Miraculously, Ohlange emerges from forty years of nightmare to become a fountainhead of talents for post-Apartheid South Africa: four cabinet ministers in today's government are from Ohlange; many prominent educators, business leaders, music stars and sports personalities are also products of Ohlange.

K. Mkhize: *The principal who took over the school when it was in crisis actually ran the school as a combat by using Dube as a symbolism for unity, for strength, like perseverance, tolerance, by saying: "remember the founder of the school, who was it? What meaning did he give to our being; And this would collect our minds. In other words, Dube was the inspiration within the school and you'd ask yourself as an individual: "Am I here to destroy something that is successful, that was put together by one of my ancestors?"*

That principal, SD Ngcobo, is one of those young leaders for whom John Dube was the embodiment of the spirit of black resistance of South Africa. He feels compelled to do something to save Dube's legacy. What an uphill battle this was going to be!

Mr. Mbutho: *Every place was rotting, lavatories, the yard and some buildings were beginning to fall down. It was not inviting at all."*

But SD knew where his mission was!

"Rotting as it was, it was a challenge for him to bring it up to something worth looking at.

G.V. Sangweni: *And the story goes that when he came here in 1960 he realized that the culture had not followed what Dr. J.L.Dube intended, to bring up students who are learned and who have not departed from their culture and also specializing in their various talents. And he realized that most of the students were not gifted academically but they had a lot of talent with them. So he tended to blend in his program the extramural activities and what was happening in the classroom, at the same time appreciating that it is not all the students who are grade As.*

The astute and patriotic educator he is, SD sees clearly that the lessons of such a life of distinguished service as John Dube's can turn Ohlange around and act as an effective antidote to the inferiority complex Bantu education is injecting in the minds of black children. With some elders of the Inanda community, he undertakes a systematic program to celebrate John Dube's legacy within the school.

G.V.Sangweni: *And he began with Reverend B.K. Dhludla to begin to celebrate Dr. J.L. Dube; and all this work, extracurricular, sports, poetry, music, drama, was epitomized in a celebration which was called Mafukuzela Week because Dr. JL Dube was known as Mafukuzela.*

B. Thusi: *I was at Ohlange, 1969-70, that's way back, but things that Mafukuzela had done were instilled to us, still we were taught about it so that we admire and preserve that kind of culture that an African wanted to do something for the Africans, so that we can do something for ourselves, not just the handouts, I think the Africans are sick of that; they must do something and get help once they are trying to do something.*

G.V. Sangweni: *SD Ngcobo was a person who had a foresight about what Dr. JL Dube intended about the school and he made sure that the history of Dr JL Dube was known by the students. You wouldn't miss the school anthem, you wouldn't be out of uniform on a Thursday, you would never do that, because he said this is the uniform of the Zebras, the teams here were called the Wild Zebras. ..*

This effort transforms Ohlange radically and a culture of pride in the school and its historic mission reemerges.

A. **Makhanya**: *When my father said I must go to Ohlange, I couldn't believe it because it was not one of the best schools in terms of infrastructure and what have you. But he insisted that I went to Ohlange. When I got there, of course, the school was dilapidated and bad. But boy, there was a soul in the school. Immediately I got there, we clicked with all the teachers, with the students, with everybody. It was home away from home, because that's how you were meant to feel when you go to Ohlange. I remember the very first thing that really struck my mind was the initiation concert. Our principal SD was there, together with other teachers that were assisting him. But immediately thereafter, he went to all the people that had performed. He was scouting for talents.*

SD remains committed to Dube's belief that every black child, regardless of his or her ability, has a special talent and needs to be given a chance.

A. Makhanya: *One other story I remember is about a boy who was turned away from a school; one of those prestigious schools he had been attending; he came late because he was waiting for his parents to be paid; by the time he went to the school he attended, he was turned away. And then he remembered that there was school called Ohlange, asked for directions, got to the school, suitcase and all, without any application form or anything, or any prior arrangement. When he got there, he went to the principal, SD*

Ngcobo, and said: "I can't go back to JoBurg, because I will not find a school. I want to come to this school." And he was admitted, I tell you, people were admitted left, right and center and at some stage, we used to be overcrowded because SD used to say that there is no child that is going to drop out of school because there is no position for him in school.

Brian Thusi: "*Particularly, Ngcobo took kids like myself who were rejected from other schools for whatever reasons but took them to Ohlange, where we would acquire some kind of education, not only academic education but in also life skills.*

By reconnecting with Dube's concerns for building on the individual strengths of every student, SD makes Ohlange a nurturing environment again.

K. Mkhize: *he had the philosophy that there is no dark cloud without a silver lining; he would ignore your bad points and look for your strength and then build on your strength to produce a certain discovery; you self-discover. I was not aware that I am a playwright. Today, people know me as a playwright but I was discovered by Mr. Ngcobo. I wasn't aware of this energy to create, to do a script; so he did this in each one of us.*

Brian Thusi: "I want to make an example of one guy who was kicked out from another school. And he said to him: "You know, you are artist, you are going to be an actor." And this guy said: "That's crazy. I can't be an actor." Guess what, he is one of the top musicians. I am talking about Victor Ntoni. He is a top musician in the country, a great arranger. And all that came from Ohlange. Kaya Mahlangu, he is a top tenor man in South Africa. He came from Ohlange. G.T.X.Xaba, those are all top musicians in the country. And Ohlange was not just a music school; it was a normal school that used talent to enhance what the kids had in their own right.

SD instills in the students values which had been dear to the founder: self-respect, civility and a strong belief in a new African personality. He runs counter to the Apartheid social engineers who want to force the African back into the straightjacket of a false tribal authenticity.

In that sense, SD continues to uphold the mission undertaken by Dube to make Ohlange a nursery for modernity and a catalyst for a new national consciousness.

G.V. Sangweni: "*So he instilled in the students who go through his school that the nation comes first; education is important. SD used to say:"Dr Dube said that there are three things that the black people need in this country. The first one is education; the second one is more education; the third one is more and more education". So he emphasized education and made sure that it was supported by talent.*

A. Makhanya: *Indeed, there was a slogan which used to say: "Ohlange iskole sendoda", meaning it was a man's school, a real man's school. We used to identify with that. It was afterwards, when I left the school that I realized why my father took me there, so I could experience that, so I could relate to something that was done by someone of my own kind, a black person who had started a school. And I really think that it was a good school in that regard, because then we got to know that we could do things regardless of where we came from.*

In the sea of dispossession and self-doubt brought about by centuries of racist rule, Ohlange remains in the entire country an island where Black children can still dream of controlling their lives.

G.V. Sangweni: *And that culture of ownership; you know,there is a man who works with Jomo Sono, out there in the soccer field; he used to say if you never went to Ohlange as a student, you never went to school.... And why? It's because of the sense of ownership that we were taught here; and it was freely given; there was no pressure; SD never used corporal punishment. But he sensitized us to a fact that we belong here. We are the Wild Zebras. .. Out of all that, SD would say that the coat of arms of the institution says: FIDE FLOREBIMUS, Out of faith we shall flourish. Flourish, we did just that.*

At long last, vindication has come for John Dube, the man who was accused of madness for daring so early on to dream of freedom, of dignity and of enlightenment for his people.

After many years of neglect, Dube's memory is now being preserved by an ambitious effort made by the Durban Tourism Authority and which resulted in the opening of Inanda Heritage Route. It has enabled the refurbishment of those shrines dedicated to the early struggle for democracy in South Africa: Gandhi's home and Dube's first home and grave.

This year 2003, Ilanga, the second arm of Dube's educational mission celebrates its centenary, equipped with state-of-the-art tools and a new resolve to continue Dube's mission.

Arthur Königkrämer: " *I know of no newspapers that have not only survived but grown and that are published in an ethnic or original language. With regards to the role it plays in modern Zulu society, first of all apart from being a communication medium, I think one of the most important roles it plays, it acts as a standard-bearer for the Zulu language. If you look at virtually all Zulu readers, you will see that the texts are taken from Ilanga. Of course, not only do we preserve the language, it also tries to mirror the language as it evolves. Finally, I think, it also has a fairly important social role to play, which is what Dr. Dube tried to do. In a very real sense, I think it keeps alive Zulu*

traditions, it keeps alive these sorts of values that he held dear and I would like to believe we still try to mirror those today.

But what about the future of Ohlange? Ohlange's face has changed tremendously during the struggle. The June Building, the symbol of a white woman's generous contribution to the advancement of black people, was destroyed in the early eighties. If this venerable building had been standing on the campus of any white school in South Africa, it would have been renovated and preserved for posterity. But here a national treasure was destroyed. One may surmise that, with a name like June, the building became an unwitting memorial to the bloody student revolts of June 1976 in Soweto.

Today, an entire section which used to be the boys dormitory facility is closed.

The girls boarding section is reduced to no more than two rooms. Thus, the boarding component, which was so crucial in preserving the kind of culture Dube had intended for the school is all but gone.

The classrooms are overcrowded and in short supply. Whatever improvement has taken place recently is to the credit of IBM South Africa as a response to President Mandela's appeal for help on behalf of Ohlange.

Today, a small group of dedicated faculty continues to inspire against terrible odds.

The question should be asked: at a time when the doors of education have been declared wide open to all by former President Mandela, should the school which was first to successful challenge colonial control of black education in Africa be allowed to wilt away into neglect and dereliction?

G.V.Sangweni: *There is hope because as we meet as various groups in town and everywhere in Johannesburg, we do discuss the plight of the school, that we need to come back and resurrect the school. For me, the starting point would be the former students of this place. And I believe we are going to sensitize everybody. We will have a convention of those students and talk about this and begin to be proactive and then sensitize the government, because that's the most important part.*

In 1900, many skeptics had given John Dube only a few years to run out of steam and go out of business. Dube struggled but he successfully prepared Ohlange for the challenges of the 20th century.

"Yeah, if we really want to assess Dube, I think that, you know, in many ways, Dube was a pioneer. So think about it! We are talking about Dube in the 19th century, late in the 19th century, even before the 20th century, doing the same things that another 50 years, it took another 50 years for us to begin to realize in most parts of Africa. I think that we all owe a debt of gratitude to John Dube.

Today, the challenge is upon the new nation of South Africa to make sure that a unique school like Ohlange survives, prospers and tells the world its heroic story of human upliftment.

TEXT: "Mr. President, I have come to report to you that South Africa is today free."
Nelson Mandela
(facing John Dube's grave on April 27, 1994)

END