Activist Scholar-Practitioners in the United States and South Africa

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Abstract

This article discusses the lives and impact of leading activists whose work is highlighted in the histories of clinical sociology in the United States and South Africa. The four scholar-practitioners from the United States discussed here are Jane Addams, W.E.B. Du Bois, Charles Gomillion and James Laue. The South African clinical sociologists whose lives are profiled are Harold Wolpe and H.W. van der Merwe. Based on the career experiences of these six individuals, concluding comments are made about five topics in relation to activism: employment, sufficient time for effective activism, handling criticism, reasons for becoming strong activists, and factors that may discourage activism.

Key words: Jane Addams, W.E.B. Du Bois, Charles Gomillion, James Laue, Harold Wolpe, H.W. van der Merwe, clinical sociology

1. Introduction

This article discusses the lives and impact of some of the activists whose work is highlighted in the histories of clinical sociology in the United States and South Africa (Fritz, 2021b, pp. 35-55) as follows:

> Clinical sociology is a creative, humanistic, rights-based and interdisciplinary specialization that seeks to improve life situations for individuals and groups in a wide variety of settings. Clinical analysis is the critical assessment of beliefs, policies, or practices, with an interest in improving the situation. Intervention is based on continuing analysis; it is the creation of new systems as well as the change of existing systems and can include a focus on prevention or promotion (e.g., preventing sexual harassment or promoting healthy communities) ...

Clinical sociologists lead or assist with change efforts. They often work with client systems… to assess situations and avoid, reduce, or solve problems through a combination of analysis and intervention.

The clinical sociology specialization is as old as the field of sociology and its roots are found in many parts of the world. Clinical sociology is often traced back to the work of the Arab scholar and statesperson Abd-al Rahman ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) and the first known use of the term "clinical sociology" was in Spain in 1899 by a surgeon named Rubio y Gali.

Clinical sociological work is done at all levels of intervention (e.g., individual, small group, organization, neighborhood, community, national, global). It may be initiated by clinical sociologists (without having specific clients) or requested by clients (e.g., individuals, civil society organizations, governments, businesses). The assessment and intervention work is usually conducted in a very collaborative/ participatory way. A common thread in the work of clinical sociologists is that they want to improve the life circumstances of all.

While clinical sociology has developed in a number of countries (e.g., France, Canada, Japan, South Africa, Uruguay, Spain, Columbia, Brazil, United States), this article focuses on the work of selected sociological activists in two countries – the United States (U.S.) and South Africa. The histories of clinical sociology in these two countries can include a discussion of many different kinds of practitioners (e.g., counselors, organizational development specialists, consultants, policy analysts, elected officials, forensic sociologists, translational sociologists in health), but has emphasized the problem-solving work of leading activists.

2. Activism

Activism is often defined as an attempt to promote, stop, direct, or intervene in reform efforts (for instance, social, political, environmental, or economic initiatives) with the idea of improving a situation. As one might expect, there are gradations in these efforts that might go from something rather minimal (telling a friend you object to something) to something more substantial such as giving

testimony in support of a change effort[1] or to full-time activity such as building and leading a social movement.

There can, of course, be differences about what someone thinks improves a situation. Will the activity improve a situation for all, or does it give an advantage to a certain group of people? For instance, if a person keeps a group of citizens who are entitled to vote from being able to do that, this activism might not be the kind that someone else might want to think of as improving a situation for all.

Clinical sociology does involve activism in all its gradations. However, it is basic that clinical sociologists work toward improving the situation for everyone… not giving an advantage to certain people over others. There were, for instance, sociologists in South Africa who contributed to building the apartheid system. They were activists, but they certainly were not working on something that improved South Africa for everyone, and they are not considered to be clinical sociologists.

There is a great deal written about the history of clinical sociology in the United States (e.g., Fritz 2021b) as well as in other countries (e.g., Fritz 2021). Some of the central figures in those countries have been activists either in and/or outside of the discipline's academic setting. Some clear examples of activism – particularly outside of academia – come from the United States and South Africa.

In the following pages, the stories of selected activists are provided. They were leaders who were working to improve the local, national and/or international world for all of us.[2] The information and analysis provided here is based on information collected over the last 50 years from archives across the United States and the archive at the Liliesleaf Museum in South Africa. It also is based on literature reviews and interviews with a few of those who are discussed here

1 For instance, Larry Nichols (2019) describes sociologist Louisa Pinkham Holt's important "expert testimony in the landmark racial desegregation case of Brown v. Topeka Board of Education." In this case, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that U.S. state laws establishing racial segregation in public schools were unconstitutional even if the segregated schools were equal in terms of quality.

2 The term "clinical sociology" was only used in a limited way in the United States beginning in the late 1920s. The term "clinical sociology," therefore, was not used by some of the early leaders in the U.S. to describe their work.

(Charles Gomillion and James Laue), relatives (those related to Charles Gomillion, James Laue, and Harold Wolpe) and professional associates (those who worked with Charles Gomillion, James Laue, and H.W. van der Merwe).

3. Activist Clinical Sociologists in the United States

Sociology in the U.S. emerged as a discipline during the Progressive Era, a period that dates from about the mid-1890s through 1916. It was a time when the nation was struggling with issues of democracy, capitalism, and social justice; it was a period of reform as well as one in which corporate capitalism emerged (Sklar, 1988). There was rural and urban poverty, a growing need for economic security, women were still without the vote, and there were lynchings. At the turn of the twentieth century, frustration led to public protests and the development of public interest groups and reform organizations (Clemens, 1997; Sanders, 1999). In this climate, it is not surprising that many of the early sociologists were scholar-practitioners interested in reducing or solving the pressing social problems that confronted their communities.

As sociology was developing as a field in the 1900s, the U.S. became involved in two world wars and experienced a deep economic depression, a period of anti-Communist fear, a period of strong anti-war sentiment about the war in Vietnam and very strong civil rights activity. As the field of sociology developed during the 1900s, there still were those drawn to sociology because of humanist and practice (clinical and/or applied) traditions or possibilities, but increasingly the field was characterized as scientific and the humanist and practice traditions were given little emphasis.

In the following pages, five stories are provided about a few of the scholar-practitioners in the United States who are highlighted in the history of clinical sociology. They were activists who worked to improve life for all of us.

Jane Addams[3] (1860-1935), the first woman from the U.S. to win a Nobel Peace Prize (1931), is remembered as a clinical sociologist, social

3 This section is based on "Jane Addams and Hull-House" (Fritz 2022).

worker, feminist, community organizer, philosopher, peace activist, public intellectual, and urban reformer (Fritz, 1991, 2005, 2022). She was one of the most influential women in U.S. history (Lewis, 2012, p. 1).

In 1889, three years before the Department of Sociology was founded at the University of Chicago, Addams and Ellen Gates Starr established a settlement house in the decaying Hull Mansion in Chicago, Illinois. Hull-House, as it came to be called, was, according to Addams (2008, p. 83) in 1910, "an experimental effort to aid in the solution of the social and industrial problems which are engendered by the modern conditions of life in a great city." Hull-House was a center for activities for the ethnically diverse, impoverished immigrants in the Nineteenth Ward of Chicago, Illinois. Hull-House fostered democracy through, for instance, interaction between its residents and others from the community; learning between those from different ethnic backgrounds about each other as well as learning how to succeed in the U.S.

Hull-House gave its residents, most of whom were privileged, educated young women, contact with the real life of the majority of the Chicago population.[4] Hull-House operated a day nursery, hosted meetings of four women's unions, established a labor museum, ran a coffee house and held economic conferences bringing together business owners and workers. The Working People's Social Science Club held weekly meetings, and a college extension program offered evening courses for neighborhood residents. Some University of Chicago courses were held there, and the Chicago Public Library had a branch reading room on the premises.

Jane Addams was not just a leader in the U.S. settlement movement; she also was a leader in the movements to promote peace, child welfare, women's suffrage, improved housing, education, juvenile justice, labor relations, civil liberties, and political reform. She was, for instance, a co-founder of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU); the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Child Labor Committee; president of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections; and vice-president

4 Hamington (2018) identified the group as a "pragmatist feminist think tank."

of the National American Woman Suffrage Association. Nearly every major reform proposal in Chicago, Illinois (1895-1930) had Jane Addams' name attached in some way. Her involvement in major issues – such as factory inspection, child labor laws, improvements in welfare procedures, recognition of labor unions, compulsory school attendance and labor disputes – earned her national prominence.

During the founding years of sociology in the United States (1892-1920), Jane Addams was the "foremost female sociologist" in the country, and she has been referred to as "a virtual adjunct professor in sociology at Chicago" (Deegan 1981, pp. 18-19). She was the author of many books including *Democracy and Social Ethics* (1902), *Newer Ideals of Peace* (1907), *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (1909), *Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1910), *Peace and Bread in Time of War* (1922) and *The Second Twenty Years at Hull-House* (1930). In 1895, *Hull-House Maps and Papers*, by the Residents of Hull-House (2007), was published. This book dealt with topics such as tenement conditions, sweatshops, and child labor; it was the first systematic attempt to describe immigrant communities in a U.S. city. It has been referred to as "the single most important work by American women social scientists before 1900" (Sklar, 1998, p. 127).

Addams' later years were devoted to global peace activities. Her pacifism emerged in part through her work at Hull-House, where she saw that people from many kinds of backgrounds could live and work together. In 1914, at the outbreak of World War I, Addams opposed the war and, in 1915, helped organize and became head of the Women's Peace Party (U.S.) and then the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. In 1915, she also was chosen to head the National Peace Federation and presided over the International Congress of Women at the Hague. Addams was one of five women elected at the Congress to meet with the heads of all European governments to see if they would be interested in ending the war through mediation (Opdycke, 2012, p. 180). Addams' "fundamental plan for peace... was not to focus on treaties and armies but to fight poverty and inequality and discrimination" (Opdycke 2012, p. 210) so that war would not be viewed as necessary or acceptable.

While Addams was seen in other countries as an important leader working for peace, after the U.S. joined the war in 1917, many in the U.S. repeatedly criticized her and some thought she was a traitor. It was only in the 1930s that she was once again generally seen in the U.S. as an important public citizen, and she began to receive many awards, including the Nobel Peace Prize.

W.E.B. Du Bois[5] (1868-1963) made major contributions to the development of the U.S. through his popular and scientific publications and organizational efforts. We would now say he did this as both a clinical and applied sociologist. He was a founder and general secretary of the Niagara Movement, an early advocate of women's rights, a founder of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and, from 1910 to 1934, the internationally known editor of the NAACP's *The Crisis*.

Du Bois's (1944) autobiographical essay, "My Evolving Program for Negro Freedom," was written when he was in his mid-70s. It provides some information about his direct connections to sociology (e.g., his academic work at Harvard, studies with Schmoller and Weber, offer to teach sociology at Wilberforce, development of the Atlanta Conferences and research in Philadelphia). Du Bois (1944) recalled that, when he was in his 40s, he "followed the path of sociology as an inseparable part of social reform, and social uplift as a method of scientific investigation." He said he was changing his attitude about the social sciences. He thought there "could be no ... rift between theory and practice, between pure and applied science."

Du Bois (1944) discussed the times when urgent action was imperative:

> I faced situations that called—shrieked—for action, even before any detailed, scientific study could possibly be prepared.... I saw before me a problem that could not and would not await the last word of science, but demanded immediate action to prevent social death. I was continually the surgeon probing blindly, yet with what knowledge and skill I could muster,

5 This section is based on the profile of W.E.B. Du Bois in "The History of Clinical Sociology in the United States" (Fritz 2021b, 40-42).

> for unknown ill, bound to be fatal if I hesitated, but possibly effective, if I persisted.

Du Bois engaged in numerous important activities that are not very well known. In 1900, for example, he unsuccessfully challenged the Southern Railway systems for denying him, on racial grounds, a sleeping berth and petitioned the Georgia state legislature regarding cuts in funds for public schools for black children. In 1917, he was in the front ranks of an NAACP-organized march in New York City to protest lynching. That same year, he collected testimony from survivors of an East St. Louis massacre of people who were black. In 1918, Du Bois helped organize the Negro Cooperative Guild to study and coordinate black-run cooperatives, and in 1919 he organized and was elected executive secretary of the first Pan-African Congress. In the 1920s, Du Bois was a founder of the Harlem Renaissance and, in 1950, Du Bois was the Progressive Party candidate for the U.S. Senate from the state of New York.

Du Bois repeatedly tried to bring about a more just society. In the course of doing this, he put new initiatives in place and did not hesitate to criticize individuals or programs when he felt the criticism was warranted. At times, he was at odds with Booker T. Washington, the NAACP, Marcus Garvey, the Community Party of the United States of America, and the trustees of Atlanta University. In 1918, the Department of Justice warned him that he risked prosecution for his criticism of racism in the U.S. armed services.

In 1951, when Du Bois was 83, he was indicted by the U.S. Government, accused of being an unregistered, foreign agent, and in 1952 the federal government arbitrarily refused to issue him a passport. The last two matters were resolved, eventually, but not without restriction, pain, and, finally, a change of citizenship. At the age of 93, in 1961, Du Bois left the United States to work in Ghana, a country where he received "worshipful, esteemed status" (Horne 1986), and was given citizenship and a passport. He went there to undertake a major project, the *Encyclopedia Africana*, but he also left the United States because he was completely frustrated. In 1963, Du Bois died in Ghana, a country where he was honored both in life and in death.

There was a period in the U.S. when some sociologists wrote that Du Bois left the field of sociology just because he left an academic position to take up the work with the NAACP (Fritz 1990). Now it is not unusual for sociologists to talk with pride about Du Boisian sociology.

Charles Goode Gomillion[6] (1900–1995) was born in Johnston, a small town in rural South Carolina (Fritz 1988). His father, a custodian, was illiterate, and his mother could barely read and write. At the age of 16, with only 26 months of formal education, Gomillion left home to live and attend high school some 40 miles away at Paine College, in Augusta, Georgia. Paine, an historically black college, provided secondary education at that time, in addition to college classes.

After graduating from Paine, Gomillion took a teaching position with the high school program at Tuskegee Institute (now Tuskegee University) in Tuskegee, Alabama. Tuskegee also was a high school and college for African American students and had an all-African American faculty and administration. During his affiliation with Tuskegee, Gomillion also took graduate courses at Fisk University and then received a Ph.D. in sociology from Ohio State University when he was 59 years old.

Gomillion was a sociology professor at Tuskegee and served, at various times, as Dean of the Division of Social Sciences, Dean of Students, Chair of the Division of Social Sciences and Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. While Gomillion is remembered by some for his years of work at the university, he is remembered in the city of Tuskegee and nationally for his involvement in the civil rights struggle.

Gomillion was the forceful, patient president of the Tuskegee Civic Association (TCA) from 1941 to 1945, 1951 to 1968 and again in 1970. As TCA president, Gomillion and the community organization began to challenge the voting barriers facing African American residents by the city of Tuskegee and the larger county (Macon). The struggle was long and difficult; numerous legal actions had to be initiated.

A boycott of Tuskegee's white-owned businesses began in the early 1950s. The Tuskegee boycott (known locally as the trade-with-

6 This section is based on "The History of Clinical Sociology: Charles Gomillion, Educator-Community Activist" (Fritz 1988).

your-friends campaign) was officially endorsed by TCA in 1957 and lasted two more years. It was so effective that half of the white-owned businesses were gone by the spring of 1958 and sales were down 45–60% for those businesses that survived. As a result, white resistance finally started to diminish, voter registration of African Americans began to take place and the courts started to be responsive.

Gomillion won his most impressive legal victory (Gomillion v. Lightfoot) in the U.S. Supreme Court in 1960 (Taper 2003). Gomillion's successful suit stopped the local gerrymandering which had kept all but about 10 African Americans from voting in the city of Tuskegee's elections. According to the attorney for the Tuskegee Civic Association (Guzman 1984, p. xi):

> the Gomillion case is one of the landmark cases of the century. It opened the door for the redistricting and reapportioning of various legislative bodies from city hall to the U.S. capitol and also laid the foundation for the concept of 'one-(person)-one-vote.'

Gomillion was well aware that his actions on behalf of the community could be problematic for his employer, Tuskegee. He told the president of Tuskegee that he would resign if any of his activities presented any difficulty for the institution. Gomillion was never asked to resign.

Gomillion described his life's work as that of an educator and community activist. He wanted his students and colleagues to understand the importance of using their gift – their education – to improve the conditions of society. Dr. Gomillion's work received many awards, but his first award from a sociology association came from other clinical sociologists in 1988 (Fritz 1988). The award was presented by someone who asked to do this because he was very familiar with Gomillion's important civil rights work; the presenter was James Laue.

James (Jim) Laue[7] (1937–1993) completed his undergraduate degree in sociology at the University of Wisconsin and then completed his master's and doctoral degrees in sociology at Harvard University.

7 This discussion is based on the profile of Jim Laue that appeared in "The History of Clinical Sociology in the United States" (Fritz 2021b, pp. 44-45).

While at Harvard, Laue studied race relations as well as the sociology of religion, and he became increasingly involved in civil rights work. He participated in "lunch counter sit-ins and church 'kneel-ins' and interact(ed) with SCLC and SNCC members" (Nandi, n.d.).[8] Laue's Ph.D. dissertation was entitled "Direct Action and Desegregation: Toward a Theory of the Rationalization of Protest."

In 1965, Laue was the Assistant Director for Community Analysis for the U.S. government's Community Relations Service (CRS). The CRS was the "first congressional effort to establish a federal agency to assist communities to restore or maintain racial peace" (Community Relations Service 1994, pp.1–2). The CRS was established in 1964 under the U.S. Department of Commerce (because of the number of disputes involving public accommodations); the CRS was transferred to the U.S. Department of Justice in 1966. According to Laue's colleagues, Laue had a major role in the design of CRS's conciliation and mediation frameworks (Potapchuk 2020; Levine 2005, p. 44).

In 1968, Laue was in Memphis, Tennessee "on assignment with the Community Relations Service of the U.S. Department of Justice" because of "racial tension swirling around the sanitation workers' strike, mass marches and scattered violence" (Laue 1993). Laue (1993) heard what sounded like "a cherry bomb" and left his room, room 308, at the Lorraine Motel and found civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. lying on the motel's balcony just outside of King's room, room 306 (Nandi, n.d.). Ralph Abernathy, in his autobiography, was describing Jim Laue when he wrote that there was a white man on the balcony after King was shot who was "frightened enough to be crawling on his hands and knees but brave enough to bring a blanket to spread over Martin" (Hampson 2018, p. 3).

After leaving CRS in 1969, Laue was affiliated with the Laboratory of Community Psychiatry at Harvard's Medical School for two years. Then, from 1971 to 1987, Laue was a Vice Chancellor at Washington University in St. Louis and then Director of the Center for Metropolitan Studies at the University of Missouri - St Louis. Beginning in 1986, Laue was affiliated with George Mason University where he was the

8 The initials refer to two civil rights organizations, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

first Lynch Professor of Conflict Analysis and Resolution and also had a senior affiliation with the Conflict Clinic, Inc, a non-profit dispute-resolution organization.

Laue's activities included the following: vice chair of a bipartisan commission that led to the establishment of the U.S. Institute for Peace; mediator of many civil rights disputes (e.g., Selma, Alabama in the 1960s and Northern Ireland in the 1990s); assisted with the development of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter's conflict resolution program; and first chair of the National Peace Institute Foundation. Laue, with the support of the Kettering Foundation in Ohio, also was the lead mediator/facilitator working on developing "a shared commitment to deal with the chief problems and/or opportunities" (Kunde 1997) in Gary, Indiana. Gary's eight-month process (a Negotiated Investment Strategy) involved stakeholders from all levels of government and the community.

Laue "helped to establish the field of conflict resolution as a distinct academic discipline" in which he "combin(ed) social theory and practical problem-solving into a new practice of clinical sociology" (George Mason University Special Collections, n.d.). Ron Kraybill (2002, p. 33) also noted Laue's pivotal role in the development of mediation in the United States and said he was one of the two godfathers of mediation in the country. Bill Potapchuk (2020), executive director of the Community Building Institute, thinks what was particularly special about Laue's work was that "he married dispute resolution with a social justice framework."

4. Clinical Sociology Activists in South Africa

South Africa has experienced very difficult times for very long periods. Some of its complex history – much of it focusing on the European "invaders" (Thompson. 2014) – is provided here.

The Cape area was colonized by the Dutch (beginning in 1652) and then the area went back and forth between the British and the Dutch. The British were again in control of the Cape Colony in 1806. From 1816-1828, there was "warfare among Africans throughout much of southeastern Africa (Thompson 2014, p. xx). And then the British defeated the Xhosa twice (1834-1835, 1846-1847) and, in 1879, they

defeated the Zulu. There were two wars – Boers v. British – in the 1800s. The second war (1899-1902)[9] "brought about massive devastation, social dislocation, and impoverishment of both the Afrikaner (Boer)[10] and black African population (Uys 2021, p. 109). In 1910, the Union of South Africa was formed from four colonies under the control of the British Empire and, in 1913, the Natives Land Act required segregation of land based on race.

In 1948, the Afrikaner National Party, which promoted Afrikaner nationalism, came to power. This government adopted the policy of apartheid (this means separateness in Afrikaans) and, in the next years, the African National Congress (the ANC)[11] and other groups protested apartheid, a system of institutionalized racial segregation. In 1960, the Sharpeville Massacre occurred following a large demonstration against "pass laws,"[12] an internal passport system that restricted the movement of people who were black, Indian and colored.

The Republic of South Africa, formed in 1961, was just a continuation of the 1948 rule of the National Party. This white Afrikaner government – now independent of Britain – was another phase of harsh control. In 1955, the Congress of the People adopted a Freedom Charter and, in 1956, more than 250 members of the Congress Alliance were charged with treason. In 1961 an armed branch of the ANC was formed to fight against apartheid, and, in 1962, Nelson Mandela and others were arrested and jailed. Mandela was then imprisoned for 27 years and became an international symbol for the fight against apartheid. Mandela was released in 1990, won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1993, and was elected President in 1994, the year apartheid was fully repealed.

South African sociology is part of this history. It began with the founding of the Association for the Advancement of Science in South Africa in 1903 (Uys 2021, p. 110). At the first annual congress a paper on the sociology of August Comte introduced several ideas that were

9 Thompson (2010, p. xxi) refers to this as the "War between the Whites."

10 Afrikaners means Africans in Dutch. Afrikaners are South Africans who descended from predominantly Dutch settlers. The Dutch emigrants first arrived at the Cape of Good Hope. Afrikaners are also known as Boers. Boer is the Dutch word for farmer.

11 The ANC was formed in 1912.

12 The first internal pass law was put in place in 1797 to keep people who were black from entering the Cape colony.

discussed at subsequent conferences, and this led to the establishment of the discipline of sociology at universities. The first university courses in sociology were in social anthropology departments at the University of South Africa in 1919 and the University of Cape Town in 1926.

South African sociology began by trying to find solutions to pressing social problems. Sociology was thought to be important for the training of social workers and so a number of departments of sociology and social work were established in the 1930s. The ties between sociology and social work diminished in the 1950s and 1960s and, by the end of the 1960s, sociology was offered in separate departments.

Sociology was connected by some of the sociologists to the prevailing government policies and certain attitudes in the country. For instance, "a number of South African sociologists, particularly those connected to Afrikaans-medium universities, became actively involved in research focused on the successful implementation of apartheid policies" (Uys 2021, pp. 112-113). Geoffrey Cronje, the first professor of sociology at the University of Pretoria, "produced four publications (between 1945 and 1948) in which he provided a justification for the South African government's apartheid policies" (Uys 2021, p. 113). And the first sociology organization, the South African Sociological Association (SASA), began in the late 1960s with a clause that restricted the membership to only those who were white. The clause was removed only in 1977.

There were activist sociologists who did not go along with the repressive and discriminatory actions of the government and other organizations. For instance, three of the drafters of the South African Sociological Association's constitution withdrew from the organization in opposition to the racial membership clause; sociologists Fatima Meer and Jack Simons were banned; sociologist Herbert Vilakazi was deported; and there were "vocal opponents of apartheid (who came) from the black campuses where some faced expulsions and deportations…" (Hindson 1989, p. 71). The history of clinical sociology in South Africa has included discussions of some of the social justice work in the discipline and the country. Two of these scholar-practitioners are profiled here.

Harold Wolpe[13] (1926-1996) was born in 1926 in Johannesburg, South Africa to a Jewish couple from Lithuania. Wolpe graduated with a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Social Studies in 1949 and a law degree in 1952 from the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in Johannesburg. At Wits, he was President of the Student Representative Council and a "leading activist" (Bernstein, 1996) in the National Union of South African Students. Former South African President Nelson Mandela, in his autobiography, mentioned, while he was a student at Wits, the influence on him of intense discussions with Wolpe and other leftist students who were involved in the liberation struggle (Mandela, 1994).

In the 1950s and 1960s, Wolpe represented anti-apartheid activists/political detainees in court; he also helped the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the African National Congress (ANC) plan actions against the government. ANC activists were arrested on July 11, 1963 after police raided the Liliesleaf Farm in Rivonia (near Johannesburg), the secret headquarters of the Liberation Movement and the High Command of the military wing of the ANC. Wolpe was arrested "days after the Rivonia Raid" (Bundy 1996).[14]

Wolpe and three others escaped from a Johannesburg jail by bribing an 18-year-old guard and this led to one of South Africa's largest manhunts, "a drama that commanded headlines around the world" (Bundy 1996). Wolpe and one of the other escapees hid in safe houses until they were finally taken, in the trunk of a car, to Swaziland (now eSwatini). Wolpe and the other escapee, dressed as priests, were flown to Bechuanaland (now Botswana). From there they flew to Tanzania and then made their way to England.

Wolpe was officially allowed to establish himself in England in September 1963 and lived there with his wife, sociologist AnnMarie Wolpe, and their three children – Peta, Tessa, and Nicholas (Nic). Wolpe did not enjoy working in law and so he became a Nuffield Foundation Sociological Scholar at the London School of Economics in 1964–65 before joining the University of Bradford and North London

13 This section is based on the profile of Harold Wolpe in "Harold Wolpe, the Freedom Charter and Educational Transformation" (Fritz 2020a, pp. 271-279).

14 According to Wolpe's son (Nic Wolpe, 2017, 2018), Harold Wolpe was a commander in the ANC's military wing but, at the time, this was a secret he kept from his family.

Polytechnic (now the University of North London). After that, Wolpe was a faculty member in sociology (1972–1991) and chair of the Department of Sociology (1983–1986) at the University of Essex.

When Wolpe was in England, he published one of his best-known articles – "Capitalism and Cheap Labour Power in South Africa: From Segregation to Apartheid" – in a 1972 issue of *Economy and Society*. Wolpe challenged the widely held opinion that apartheid is little more than segregation under a new name. Bernstein (1996) wrote that Wolpe "(re)inserted class analysis at the core of the national democratic revolution." Bernstein also declared the article was "the most path breaking theoretical statement in South African Marxism in the apartheid period."

Wolpe was a longstanding member of the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the African National Congress (ANC). After Wolpe arrived in England, some have indicated (e.g., Friedman 2014, p. 43) that Wolpe's contribution to the left's fight against apartheid was intellectual/theoretical – a contribution most of the ANC and SACP leaders "seemed to find of little value." While most of the leaders were focused on practical decisions, Wolpe provided theoretical work to assess and improve practice. As O'Meara (1997) has noted, "for Harold, theory was always connected to, and ultimately about, practice."

During his later years, Wolpe was concerned with the development of educational policy for a democratic South Africa. Bernstein (1996) wrote that Wolpe's work "registered the impact and aftermath of the student-led Soweto Uprising of 1976."

Wolpe was a member of the ANC's London Education Committee and its National Education Council. He was involved in the intense discussions about the ANC's Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College in Morogoro, Tanzania, where many of the student activists had resumed their schooling after fleeing South Africa because of the Soweto Uprising. At the University of Essex, Wolpe established a project on Research in Education in South Africa and was an editor of two books of papers on educational reform after apartheid. In 1977, Wolpe spent his sabbatical in the Law Faculty of the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

Harold Wolpe and AnnMarie Wolpe had to deal with a number of profound personal concerns (A. Wolpe 1994, pp. 272–276, 13) during their time in England. For instance, in 1963–1964, the children could not immediately join the parents in London. It took a month to obtain state permission for the two older children (five and six years old) to come to London; the baby, Nicholas, was very ill and could not join them for five months. And AnnMarie's brother, James (Jimmy) Kantor, a lawyer, had been arrested and tried as part of the Rivonia trial. Jimmy was acquitted, but "always felt betrayed by Harold and AnnMarie." Jimmy had a "massive heart attack" and died at the age of 47. According to Bishop (2018):

> Police released (Jimmy) Kantor but made sure they ruined his business and he went to an early grave bitter with the family and its political connections.

According to AnnMarie Wolpe (1994, pp. 272–276), her mother "never reconciled to (Jimmy's) untimely death; she fell ill and lost all her faculties." Because AnnMarie was not given "safe passage" to visit her mother in South Africa, she never saw her mother after she became sick. And all three children were affected by their early experiences. Harold and AnnMarie (A. Wolpe 2017) found the children's statements about their early lives in England to be "spine-tingling and very sad" as the children were at times angry, didn't feel safe and didn't think they had normal lives because of the political involvement.

After living in England for more than 25 years, Wolpe left the University of Essex in 1990 and, with his wife AnnMarie, returned to South Africa. Wolpe became the Director of the Education Policy Unit (EPU) at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town and chair of the forum which coordinated the work of five such EPUs at the national level.

AnnMarie Wolpe (1994, p. 277) indicated, after returning to South Africa, that she and her husband thought there was a "resistance to utilize to the full the abilities and capacities of returning exiles – except, of course, for those who fitted full-time into existing ANC structures." Sociologist Eddie Webster (Friedman 2011) indicated that Wolpe experienced "marginalization" from the Communist Party,

and was hurt that the Party did not even invite his participation in the local branch.

Harold Wolpe passed away on January 19, 1996 at the age of 70. According to Colin Bundy (1996), then a vice-rector at the University of the Western Cape, "Harold Wolpe was one of those rare academics who give intellectuals a good name." And at the inaugural conference of the Harold Wolpe Memorial Trust held at the University of the Western Cape in 1997, Dan O'Meara, of the Department of Political Science at the University of Quebec, Canada, said:

> Harold Wolpe's work and actions played a fundamental role in revolutionizing the way in which social scientists and activists in the struggle against apartheid understood both the workings of South African society and the appropriate ways to change it … Harold was without any doubt whatsoever one of the architects of 'the new South Africa'. His work quite literally reshaped the way in which vast numbers of people saw apartheid South Africa, and in doing so, made a huge contribution to doing away with it.

Hendrick Willem (H.W.) van der Merwe[15] (1929–2001) was a Quaker, and he described himself as a "scholar practitioner" (van der Merwe, 1989, pp. 35–45) who specialized in peacebuilding (including peacemaking). According to Vasu Gounden (2013, p. 159), the founder and executive director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), van der Merwe "can be considered one of the founding fathers of the conflict resolution field in South Africa."

Van der Merwe came from a conservative, rural background. He spoke Afrikaans and was raised as a Calvinist, a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. Along life's way, he became a Quaker and an African. Van der Merwe (2000) described the beginning of his transition:

> I have not yet explained the transforming moment when I became aware of my own deep prejudice and underwent the fundamental change … My belief in the superiority of white people and moral rightness of the apartheid

15 This section is based on the profile in "H.W. van der Merwe: Peacebuilder" (Fritz, 2020). Van der Merwe's colleague Andries Odendaal (2018b) reminds us, van der Merwe was "always" called H.W. His initials "when pronounced in Afrikaans, sound like 'Harvey' to English ears" (Roos-Muller & Muller 2014, p.1).

> policy had remained firm during my teenage years, but various experiences … led me to question my commitment to the political ideology and religion of my people …

Van der Merwe (2000, p. 31) wrote about a discussion with an older half-brother, Jacobus Hugo (Jaco), who was "an academic with progressive views, an agnostic and not a member of the Dutch Reformed Church." Jaco referred to a black woman using a respectful word in Afrikaans rather than a derogatory term. H.W. tried to correct his brother twice … and both times his brother repeated the respectful term. H.W said this was the beginning of the "new vision [that] dawned" on him. He said, until then, he "was an Afrikaner" but as he began to "identify with black people as fellow countrymen," he had become an African.

Van der Merwe's (2000) first university degrees were from Stellenbosch University, located outside of Cape Town in South Africa. His Bachelor of Arts (BA) was in in "sociology, philosophy and psychology"; he then earned an honors degree in sociology and graduated cum laude in 1956 (van der Merwe 2000, p. 24). Van der Merwe (2000, p. 25) also received a Master of Arts in sociology from Stellenbosch in 1957. Van der Merwe's (2000, p. 24, 42) thesis "concerned social stratification among colored people" in Stellenbosch. After leaving Stellenbosch, he became a teaching assistant at the University of California – Los Angeles (UCLA) in the United States. He completed his Ph.D. in sociology at UCLA in 1963; his dissertation topic was about the leadership of a community in Saskatchewan, Canada (van der Merwe 2000, pp. 32–33, 36).

In 1963, when van der Merwe (2000, p. 139) was returning to South Africa from the United States, he stopped in London. While there, he visited both the South African Embassy and the office of the ANC and that visit is described in the first part of van der Merwe's 1997 "Facilitation between the Apartheid Establishment and the African National Congress in Exile" (Botes 2013, p. 11).

Beginning in July of 1963, van der Merwe was a lecturer in sociology and then a senior lecturer and department head at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa. From 1968 until 1982, he was the Director of the Centre for Intergroup Studies at the University of Cape Town.

During that time the Centre "played a pioneering role not only in using, but justifying dialogue, facilitation and mediation as mechanisms to address conflict" (Odendaal 2013, pp. 151–152). Van der Merwe's work was based on "sociological and political theory, but also in religious thought and practice" (Odendaal 2013, p. 152). Odendaal (2013, p. 152) thought that van der Merwe's "grounding of the integrity of mediation in religious faith was … highly relevant in the context of the time."

Van der Merwe led the Centre during "the period in South African history when the struggle for the liberation of the black people of South Africa from colonialism and apartheid reached its climax" (Odendaal 2013, pp. 151–152). Van der Merwe was a peacebuilder in the 1970s and 1980s when ideas such as negotiation and conflict resolution were very unpopular in South Africa (Odendaal 2013, p. 1). As Odendaal noted (2013, p. 1), "the then South African government and the liberation movements both shared a common distrust of 'mediators' or 'peacemakers.'" The government banned liberation movements and even contacting these groups "was not only illegal, it was treason" (Odendaal 2013, p. 1).

Van der Merwe had ongoing relationships with both Nelson Mandela and Winnie Mandela. According to Jannie Botes (2013, p. 9):

> … In 1981, HW and his wife, Marietjie, met with Winnie Mandela who was living under house arrest in Brandfort, in the Orange Free State. This initiative later led to HW's visit to Nelson Mandela in jail, their later friendship, and HW's role in acting as a 'guardian' to two of the Mandela daughters and a granddaughter at the request of Mandela.

In 1984, van der Merwe (2000, pp. 140–145) arranged for the first meetings between government supporters and the African National Congress in exile in Lukasa, Zambia, breaking a long deadlock and influencing public opinion (e.g., Kriesberg 2001, n.p.). And, by the mid-1980s, van der Merwe (e.g., 1983, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1991[16]) was publishing a great deal about conflict intervention in South Africa.[17]

16 The 1991 publication, co-authored by Andries Odendaal, was published in the ninth volume of the *Clinical Sociology Review*.

17 For instance, van der Merwe discussed "the uses of facilitation (mainly of communications), mediation and negotiation" (Curle 1989, p. xiii) in his *Pursuing*

At times van der Merwe was an activist,[18] and other times he was the impartial, professional peacebuilder. He purposely brought together faculty members from "conservative Afrikaans and liberal English universities" for research meetings, organized "national and international workshops that brought together political adversaries who had never met before" and helped move the national sociology organization to become one that did not restrict membership only to white sociologists (van der Merwe 2000, pp. 42–43). In 1988, the South African Association for Conflict Intervention (SAACI) was established and van der Merwe (2000, pp. 104–105) became its president.

Roos-Muller and Muller (2014) have noted, as a peacemaker, that HW "... sometimes walked a lonely and criticized pathway when he spoke to those who loathed each other ... HW was the pathfinder, the first of his generation to walk the talk of that form of peacemaking." Odendaal (2013, pp. 1–2) thought "possibly (Van der Merwe's) greatest contribution to the field of mediation in South Africa was the manner in which (he) established, in the face of this large distaste for mediation, its validity and integrity". Van der Merwe's courage during South Africa's transition from apartheid has been noted by many of those who had personal knowledge of his work.

5. Comments

There are a number of topics connected to activism that one might consider discussing based on the brief profiles of the careers of these six activist clinical sociologists in the United States and South Africa. The ones chosen for discussion here are employment, sufficient time for one's activism, handling criticism, reasons why some people are activists, and why some people are discouraged from being activists.

Employment. Those who are employed by organizations are often concerned that their brand of activism might be limited or not

Justice and Peace in South Africa (1989).

18 According to Ampie Muller (2013), van der Merwe's colleague and friend, "It is important to note that H.W. never saw himself as an activist and that many of the more progressive groups criticized him for that... A fundamental understanding of the meaning and importance of the concept of the 'middle ground' only became apparent after some of them attended our training courses".

appreciated by their employers. Even if the activist effort is about respecting human rights or moving social justice issues forward for all, that effort may – for historical, political, time or financial reasons – not be appreciated. For instance, W.E.B. Du Bois decided not to pursue employment with one university because he thought this could put limitations on his work. Charles Gomillion often was concerned that his efforts to obtain full voting rights for African Americans might affect the prospects of Tuskegee and so he told the head of Tuskegee that he would offer to resign if that ever was the case. No head of the institution ever asked for his resignation.

Sufficient Time for Activism. Effective activism requires time. Those who worked for certain employers, such as universities, might feel that they did not have enough time or impact if they stayed with that organization. Du Bois, for instance, thought the situation facing African Americans screamed for immediate attention; he left a university to work full-time as an activist and scholar. Because of this, some sociologists said he had left sociology.

Criticism. Activists need to be able to handle criticism. Jane Addams, for example, had people who strongly disliked her because she thought the US should not be involved in World War I. Instead of seeing her as a pacifist, some accused her of being a communist or traitor. In 1920, while still facing criticism, she helped found the American Civil Liberties Union. Gomillion always worried that he might get angry at people if he was in challenging situations. He tried to avoid those kinds of encounters. And W.E.B. Du Bois's *Black Reconstruction* was published in 1935. As Martha Jones (2022) has noted, the book was "published against a backdrop of violence and segregation (and was) met with a vitriolic reception. White writers leveled sharp-tongued critiques." Du Bois did not hesitate to criticize individuals or programs.

Becoming an Activist. It is interesting to think about reasons why some people become strong activists, while others do not. It may be that living during difficult times; experiencing or seeing unfair treatment, and/or seeing resistance to difficulties/unfair treatment all are contributing factors. Other factors might include having a network of like-minded activists, willingness to accept negative consequences, thinking that one can avoid negative consequences, admiration from

others for one's actions and/or growing up with or being attracted by those with social justice principles (such as Quaker beliefs about individual conscience, equality, and community service). For instance, Jane Addams' father was a Quaker and H.W. van der Merwe became a Quaker.

Factors that Discourage Activism. These factors can include a lack of knowledge about or insufficient interest in social justice issues: a lack of adequate finances to allow time for activism; fear of not being appreciated (not being promoted or losing one's job)[19] or the concerns of family members. (When one discusses the concerns of family members, it is useful to remember the attitudes of Harold Wolpe's children and brother-in-law as well as the fact that Wolpe's wife could not return to South Africa to see her dying mother. Charles Gomillion's first wife wanted a divorce because she said he wasn't enough fun.). Another factor that might need to be considered by a professor at a university is one's discipline. The discipline of sociology, for instance, has not emphasized (or in some cases not even included) the history and current status of sociological practice or highlighted the activism of some of its prominent historical figures. Also, the emphasis on sociology as a "neutral/objective" science may be so strong that one may think there is little or no room for the consideration of taking part or leading strong change initiatives.

6. Conclusion

The emphasis on sociology as a "neutral/objective" science is often stated in sociology texts and articles. For instance, a recent article by Bradley Campbell (2021, p.355) notes:

> If sociology is the science of social life, its aim is to *describe and explain* the social world. This is very different from social justice activism and other efforts to *evaluate and reform* the social world. Sociology and social justice are different enterprises…"

19 In contemporary times in the U.S., employee evaluations may be a factor in understanding why strong activism by an individual might not take place. It may be that the evaluation of sociology professors for retention or tenure as well as for post-tenure reviews, do not give credit for sociological practice much less working as an activist on important change initiatives.

Social justice activism is an important part of the long history of sociology. Not only have the activist scholar-practitioners discussed here helped shape the clinical sociology specialization, they also helped their countries understand the central importance of obtaining inclusion, equality, justice and, when there have been disputes or conflicts, the necessity of obtaining a peace that is just. Sociology has at least three historical threads – science, humanities, and practice; sociologists may be involved in one or more of these areas. Evaluation and reform of the social world are part of the history of sociology.

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