



the british
psychological society
promoting excellence in psychology

Psychological Society of South Africa

Celebrating 25 years

August 2019

HISTORY



Introduction

The British Psychological Society (BPS) is proud to join The Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) in celebrating its 25th Anniversary.

BPS has always had members either based or born in South Africa, partly because of strong relationships and cross fertilisation in education and training. There are therefore natural close links between our two societies. These go back a long way. From our archives we know that our members were committed to supporting the fight against apartheid from the 1970s.

At the 1974 BPS Annual General Meeting a Members' resolution was agreed that when advertisements were submitted to the Society's appointments memoranda from South African institutions the Society should seek assurance that the posts were open to non-white applicants.

In 1984 the BPS changed its bank from Barclay's due to its links with a South African regime that operated apartheid. The BPS also worked closely at the time with the South African Institute of Clinical Psychology and supported their 1986 position statement on Discriminatory Laws in South Africa.

Articles and letters to the BPS's in-house magazine *The Psychologist* urged the Society to take a clear stand against apartheid. Although under the Charities regulations and the BPS constitution at the time they were not allowed to act as a political pressure group, the 1987 constitutional changes allowed for a subsequent membership vote against apartheid on the grounds that it was against

the requirement of the Society's code of conduct that 'Psychologists shall not allow their professional responsibilities or standards of practice to be diminished by considerations of religion, sex, race, age, nationality, part politics, social standing, class or other extraneous factors.'

The BPS was delighted that after apartheid ended PsySSA was formed in 1994, both from our own perspective and as a committed member of the International Union of Psychological Science (IUSPsyS).

In 1999 we were honoured that Saths Cooper, a prominent anti-apartheid campaigner and President of PsySSA between 1996 and 1998, visited the BPS Leicester Offices. Saths Cooper also attended the 2008 BPS Annual Conference, and the BPS was very pleased to make him a BPS Honorary Fellow in 2013. BPS close associations with Saths Cooper have of course continued during his Presidency of IUPsyS between 2012 and 2018, and this relationship continues during his past presidency.

In 2001 PsySSA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the BPS. This was signed by Ann Watts then President of PsySSA, and Vicki Bruce, then President of the BPS. We are pleased that our association with Ann Watts continues to this day in her role as Secretary General of IUPsyS since 2012, and from 2008 in other IUPsyS executive roles.

The BPS celebrates your achievements and looks forward to working with PsySSA over the next 25 years as you promote and develop psychology in South Africa and positively influence psychology around the world.

FIGURE 1: THE BPS PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON APARTHEID, 1989

THE BRITISH PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

A RESOLUTION ON APARTHEID: AN EXPLANATORY STATEMENT BY THE COUNCIL

As a professional association and scientific society incorporated by Royal Charter, the business of the Society and that of and its subsystems has to be conducted within the 'objects' of the Society as listed in its Charter. Any resolution presented to the Membership has therefore to relate to one of the objects of the Society to avoid being ruled out of order and *ultra vires* (outside the power of) its Charter. If the Society were to attempt, for instance, to become a political pressure group for a particular cause not related to its Charter, a legal injunction could be taken out to restrain the Society from voting on a resolution unrelated to its predefined 'objects'.

As letters in *The Psychologist* have revealed, a number of Members have been pressing for the Society to take a stand on the issue of apartheid as practised in the Republic of South Africa. In the past, in keeping with Statute 17 various resolutions have been proposed to the Honorary General Secretary but the proposers of the resolutions have been unable satisfactorily to demonstrate that they were relevant in a legally water-tight way to the key object of the Society 'to promote the advancement and diffusion of a knowledge of psychology pure and applied ...' (Article 3 (ii) of the Charter). Therefore the resolutions had to be disallowed as not being 'within the objects of the Society' as required by Statute 17. In 1984 it was possible to vote on where the Society should hold its bank account as Article 3 (xiv) of the Charter includes 'investing the moneys of the Society' as one of its objects.

Since 18 December 1987 the Society has had as one of its objects (Article 3 (iv) of the Charter) 'to maintain a Code of Conduct for the guidance of Members and Contributors ...'. The racism of apartheid permits and endorses discriminatory actions by psychologists which are incompatible with the Society's Code of Conduct. It is therefore no longer *ultra vires* the Charter for the Membership to be invited formally to condemn apartheid and by means of a resolution to clarify the policy its members should adopt in relation to non-members who are unwilling to affirm and adhere to the principles of non-discrimination contained in Clause 5.6 of its Code of Conduct. The Council has therefore agreed that the resolution on the attached voting paper shall be put to the Membership in a postal ballot.

If passed how will the resolution be interpreted?

All applicants for membership of the Society have to sign a declaration agreeing to abide by its Code of Conduct. If non-members of the Society wish to forge links with the Society by attending its conferences or publishing in its journals, it is quite reasonable to expect them to adhere to its Code of Conduct and for the Society to avoid links with individuals or organisations for which there is evidence that the person or organisation concerned does not adhere to the Code of Conduct. It is however important to assume that all individuals and organisations that claim to affirm the Society's Code of Conduct are doing so, unless it is proved otherwise. Natural justice demands that innocence is assumed until guilt is proven.

No new principle is being introduced; the editors of Society journals would not accept a paper were it known that the research method employed had been inconsistent with the ethical principles for research which the Society promotes.

The government in the Republic of South Africa and its various agencies (e.g. civil service, police force) by practising apartheid cannot claim to adhere to the principles in the Society's Code of Conduct. If the resolution is passed, the Society will therefore have no links with psychologists serving as official representatives of those organisations. However individual employees of official bodies in South Africa (e.g. psychologists working as government funded employees of its health service) who apply for membership or wish to have other links with the Society will not be discriminated against, provided they can affirm its Code of Conduct and they do not approach the Society as official representatives of their employers. Employees may be in dispute with the policies adopted by their employers and the Society has a responsibility to support individual South African citizens who are in opposition to apartheid from within their own country and its institutions. It would be incompatible with its own Code of Conduct for the Society to adopt any kind of blanket ban on links with individual South African psychologists simply because they are employed by a government funded agency or are members of a particular racial group; they have to be judged on their individual beliefs and actions.

FIGURE 1: CONT.

When any doubt exists about the position of an individual psychologist who has applied to attend a meeting of the Society or otherwise started to interact with the Society, the person concerned will be sent the Code of Conduct and asked to confirm that he or she does affirm and does adhere to the principles in the Code of Conduct, in particular Clause 5.6. Some general statements are also likely to be included in publications of the Society. For instance, on the form sent to those planning to submit papers for conferences of the Society, it will be made clear that all speakers must be in agreement with the Society's Code of Conduct and must have carried out their research and practices in keeping with its provisions. Non members will be required to sign an affirmation to this effect as part of the routine process of submitting their papers for approval. If it subsequently comes to light that the principles within the Code of Conduct have not been observed the paper would be rejected, or expunged from the programme if already accepted. All Members, including those in South Africa, are already answerable to the Society for their actions and subject to the disciplinary provisions specified in the Charter and Statutes.

J GRAHAM BEAUMONT
HONORARY GENERAL SECRETARY

18 February 1989

FIGURE 2: INVITATION TO VOTE ON THE RESOLUTION, 1989

THE BRITISH PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

A RESOLUTION ON APARTHEID

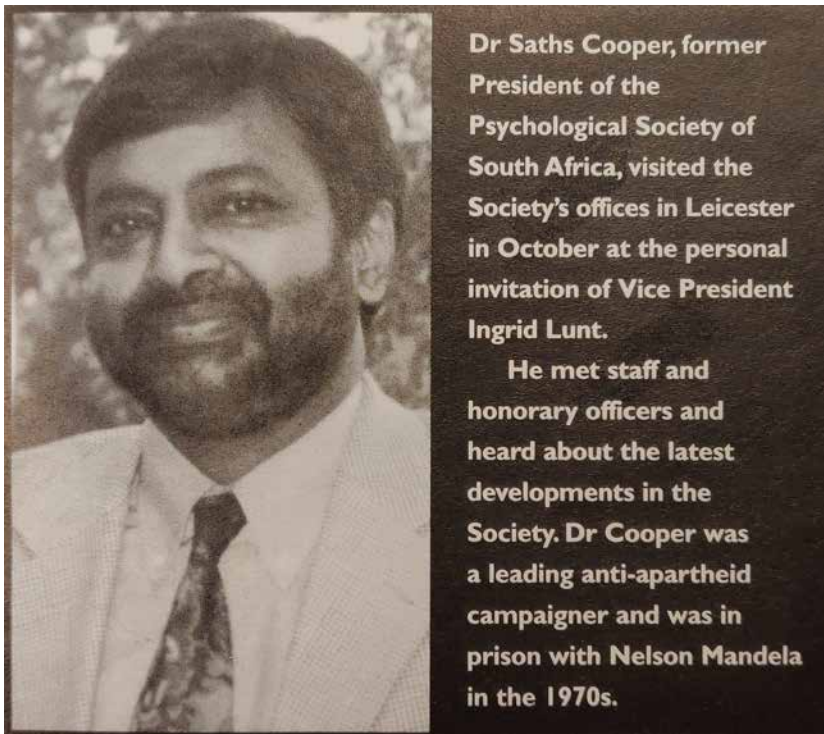
YOU ARE INVITED TO VOTE ON THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION:

The Code of Conduct of The British Psychological Society requires psychologists 'Not to allow their professional responsibilities or standards of practice to be diminished by considerations of religion, sex, race, age, nationality, party politics, social standing, class or other extraneous factors'. The racism of apartheid is incompatible with the Society's Code and the Society therefore condemns apartheid and resolves to avoid all links with psychologists and psychological organisations and their formal representatives that do not affirm and adhere to the principles in this clause of its Code of Conduct.

FIGURE 3: RESOLUTION ON ADVERTISING, 1974

RESOLVED (9) that the following Resolution submitted by 50 Members of the Society in accordance with Statute 12(4) be approved:
"When advertisements for institutions in South Africa are offered in the Appointments Memorandum, the Society seek an assurance that coloured (non-white) applicants may apply and be considered". AGM 1974

**FIGURE 4: SATHS COOPER'S VISIT TO BPS LEICESTER
(SOURCE: THE PSYCHOLOGIST, 1999)**



**FIGURE 5: SATHS COOPER AT THE INTERNATIONAL ROUND TABLE,
BPS ANNUAL CONFERENCE, DUBLIN, 2008**



FIGURE 6: THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, 2001



**Memorandum of Understanding
between
The British Psychological Society
and the
Psychological Society of South Africa**



The British Psychological Society (BPS) and the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA) agree as follows:

WHEREAS: the Charter of BPS and the Constitution of PsySSA share mutual objectives calling for the advancement of psychology as a science and a profession and in the public interest; and

WHEREAS: it is desirable to have a high level of integration and exchange between the psychological societies in South Africa and the United Kingdom; and


WHEREAS: mutual concerns make it a certainty that occasions for joint consultation and co-operation will continue to present themselves in the years to come; and

WHEREAS: both organizations wish to anticipate such occasions by establishing a framework for their timely discussion;

Now therefore: both organizations reaffirm their working relations in this memorandum of understanding.

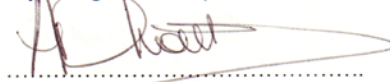
Pursuant to this understanding the executives of BPS and PsySSA shall maintain regular communication to discuss matters of common concern. BPS and PsySSA will seek to identify specific projects and activities in which they may work together, assist or support one another or otherwise co-operate for the betterment of psychology and the public interest.

SIGNED on behalf of The British
Psychological Society


.....
President

24. 5. 01
.....
Dated

SIGNED on behalf of the
Psychological Society of South Africa


.....
President

15. 6. 2001
.....
Dated

FIGURE 7: LETTER FROM THE BPS PRESIDENT, DAVID MURPHY, 2019



Message to the Psychological Society of South Africa

25 April 2019

On behalf of the British Psychological Society I would like to wish PsySSA and all its members a Very Happy 25th anniversary.

Since its beginnings in the post-apartheid democratic era, PsySSA has inspired psychologists around the world through its commitment to putting integrity, empowerment and social justice at the heart of its work, despite the challenges that have faced South Africa. BPS was delighted to sign a memorandum of understanding with PsySSA in 2001 and to award former PsySSA President Saths Cooper an Honorary Fellowship in 2013.

Your efforts to re-envision psychology so that it truly reflects, and respects, all of humanity and our diverse identities, have sent positive ripples across the whole world; from promoting culturally-informed therapy, re-tooling psychometric assessments to be fair and fit for purpose for all, encouraging research and praxis dialogue with traditional models of healing and your recent guidelines on working with sexually and gender diverse people, to name just a few.

The British Psychological Society celebrates your achievements and look forward to working with PsySSA over the next 25 years as you promote and develop psychology in South Africa and positively influence psychology around the world.

BPS is honoured to be invited to share your anniversary celebrations, and I look forward to seeing you in Jo'burg in September.

David Murphy
2019-20 President
British Psychological Society



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promoting excellence in psychology

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