



Blood from Your Children: The Colonial Origins of Generational Conflict in South Africa (Reconsiderations in Southern African History)

Benedict Carton

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The young black activists whose rejection of their parents' complacency led to the 1976 Soweto uprising and the eventual demise of apartheid are part of a long tradition of generational conflict in South Africa. In *Blood from Your Children*, Benedict Carton traces this intense challenge to an extraordinary and pivotal episode a century ago that bitterly divided families along generational lines.

Facing a series of ecological disasters that crippled agriculture in the 1890s, African youths in colonial Natal and Zululand perceived their fathers' struggle to meet increased colonial demands as an act of betrayal. Young people engaged more frequently in premarital sex, while young men sparked widespread gang fights, and young women rejected traditional filial and marital obligations. In 1906, after the imposition of an onerous head tax on young men, this domestic turmoil exploded into an armed uprising known as Bambatha's Rebellion. The young men sought revenge by attacking both the African patriarchs whose apparent accommodation they considered traitorous and the colonial troops dispatched to quell the violence. After the Natal forces crushed the insurrection, some captured rebels faced trial for treason under martial law. Often, their fathers testified against them.

While the military intervention eventually caused many more African youths to seek work in the mines, thus defusing generational turmoil, others moved to industrial centers in the wake of the uprising. These young people formed the vanguard of insurgent political groups that continue to play an important role in South African urban life.

Through his lively and thorough presentation of the forces at work in Bambatha's Rebellion, Benedict Carton brings a fresh understanding to the tragic role of defiant youth and generational rivalry in African resistance.

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