

Winnie Mandela - a symbol of hope

MOTHER OF A NATION

WHEN the government banished Nomzamo Winnie Mandela to the little town of Brandfort in the Free State in 1977 they hoped they would silence her and the world would forget about her.

But the people of South Africa and the world did not forget Winnie Mandela. Like her husband Nelson she is still one of the most popular leaders in South Africa.

In Brandfort she is approached by all for help and advice on anything from baby care to domestic problems. To the rest of the oppressed people in South Africa she is a symbol of hope and inspiration.

Winnie Mandela's life has been one of resistance, suffering and courage.

She has been married for 26 years, but has only been able to live with her husband for two of those years. And since 1963 she has been restricted for all but 11 months.

She has been detained, re-

IN THE last issue of Grassroots we looked at Nelson Mandela. We now look at his wife, Winnie Mandela, who many consider as the First Lady of South Africa and the mother of the freedom struggle in South Africa.

stricted, house-arrested and imprisoned. In 1977 she was banished to Brandfort, where she lives at house No. 802 in the location.

She was first banned in 1963. The banning order was reimposed in 1965 and again in 1966. The following year she was sentenced to 14 months imprisonment. All but 14 days were suspended. She was twice charged with contravening her banning order. This related to visits to Robben Island.

In May 1969, Winnie Mandela and many others were detained. She spent 491 days in solitary confinement. She was charged with 21 others of furthering the

aims of the banned African National Congress.

The charges were dropped but the accused were all immediately re-detained. They were taken to court to face charges of terrorism but were all acquitted.

Two weeks after her release, Winnie Mandela was banned for five years.

She was allowed to visit her husband for the first time in two years in November 1970. For only 30 minutes they could see each other. They were separated by a glass partition and had to speak to each other over phones.

Winnie Mandela was arrested and charged many times with breaking her restrictions. She served six months in Kroonstad Prison in 1973. Most times she was given suspended sentences.

Her banning order expired in September 1975. For a brief period the banning order was not renewed. She was able to travel around the country, to meet friends and to address



Winnie Mandela

meetings.

But her "freedom" lasted only 11 months. At the height of the Soweto uprising in August 1976, she and other members of the Black Parents' Association were taken into "preventive" detention.

Just before they were detained, her house and the houses of other leaders were attacked.

When she was released around Christmas 1976, she was banned yet again. Shortly before the first anniversary of the June 16 uprising, she was banished to Brandfort.

In Brandfort, she is faced with many restrictions.

- She cannot be quoted.
- She cannot receive more than one visitor at a time.
- She must remain at home at night, weekends and public holidays.
- Police keep a careful and constant watch over her actions.

Two days before her ban was supposed to expire in December 1981, she was banned again for another five years.

A book on Winnie Mandela has just been published. It will not be released in South Africa.

My mother - by Zinzi

IN JUNE 1980, Zinzi Mandela wrote a story about her mother for the Cape Herald. This is what she wrote.

IT could have been 1935 (the year has never been accurately recorded) when, in the early hours of September 26, my mother was born.

In a remote countryside area called Bizana a woman in labour knelt on a red sail in a candlelit rondawel while old ladies anxiously assisted her. Soon a baby girl was born and immediately named Nomzamo, meaning trial - a very appropriate prediction of her future.

My mother came from a family of nine children whose upbringing by my grandmother had been totally conservative and religious.

My grandfather, on the other hand, was a traditionalist who believed in African medicines.

Mama was extremely close to both but it was grandfather who really protected her from the wrath of family rights.

Her role at home as a girl was minimal because she preferred climbing trees and visiting cattle posts or fighting with boys than anything else.

My grandmother died when Mama was only eight but she remembers being kept in the room next to hers during those final hours.

What I remember to be most prominent in her mind is the death of her eldest sister, Vuyelwa. I remember hearing how grandma collapsed at Vuyelwa's bedside - then grandpa collected her and covered her sister with a white sheet.

LOSE FAITH

Grandma continued crying and praying to God to save her daughter from dying when she had obviously passed away. My mother thus began to lose faith after witnessing this irony of fate which was traumatic - especially since they used to pray three times a day.

Mama's best subjects at school were history, geography and arithmetic. Fortunately grandpa taught her history at home because he always brought that atmosphere back from the classroom with him.

While she was a matric head prefect at Shawbury she came into contact with fiery Fort Hare students who were her teachers and who belonged to various political organisations.

By now she was already aware of the discrepancies in the lives of black people in Southern Africa.

It was only natural that she decided to serve her community as a social worker.

When she was a pupil at the Hofmeyr School of Social Work, she was approached by



Zinzi Mandela

Rolihlala Mandela to try to raise funds for the treason trial.

This 'business' relationship slowly developed into something else until the day when he told her that they were getting married and he proceeded to fill her in on all the details.

When their first child was born, Mama felt that she was compensation for so many things she had been deprived of as a child. This was the reality of being a woman in the absence of so many things at home.

Another interesting factor was that this baby had the privilege of going to prison even before she was born, as Mama was detained while expectant. With the second child, Tata wasn't even there.

Mama has always been a health fanatic. She only uses vaseline and carbolic soap for her face, exercises regularly and follows a health diet.

At school she used to be an athletics coach and she surpassed in shotput, baseball, American basketball, netball, hockey and swimming. As a young girl she taught herself piano and the harp and was a leader in traditional dances.

She has an interesting taste in clothes; anything with African print or in military khaki, especially trousers, berets and shirts with lapels.

Musically speaking anything black goes, although she does appreciate other music since she has a natural musical ear. Her favourite authors are Mqhezi Ntabozuko, Jolobe Jordaan and 'acceptable' Russian authors. She never says 'no' to historical biographies.

Who knows what my grandmother meant when she gave Mama a belt on her dying bed and said: 'Here my child, you will tie nations!'

11 months 'freedom'

NGEXESHA utulumente waye vala umlomo u Nomzamo Winnie Mandela kwidolophana encinci ebizwe Brandfort e Frayistat ngo 19717 wayecinga ukuba uyamthulisa kwaye nehlabathi lakulibala ngaye.

Kodwa abantu bomzantsi Afrika nehlabathi zange bamlibale u Winnie Mandela. Njengomyeni wakhe u Nelson usengomnye wenkokheli ezibahule kileyo kweli loMzantsi Afrika.

Phya eBrandfort ubizwa ngapha nangapha ngabantu befuna uncedo namacebo kuye ayo yonke into ukusukela ebantwaneni uyakuma kwezekhaya. Kuninzi lwabacineze-lweyo boMzantsi Afrika usisibane esiqaqambileyo esikhanyisela wonke ubani.

Ubomi buka Winnie Mandela ibebubomi bambandezelo nentshushiso ubomi bokunyamezela nobenkuthazo.

Ube etshatile iminyaka eyi 26, kodwa ubenekuhlala nomyeni wakhe iminyaka ye emibini kuyo yonke lomi nyake. Kwaye ukusukela ku 1963 soloko ephantsi kweliso egadiwe ukuba angathi, agayi ngapha ahlele ndawenye ngaphandle kwan-yanga ezilushunu elinanye apho wakhe wayekwa wadakasa.

Ube ebanjwa, eginwendlini evalelwa. Ngo 1977 wayakuphoswa EBrandfort, apho wahlala kwa no. 802 elokishini.

Wawalwa umlomo nog 1963. Yaphindwa yahlaziywa ngo 1965 nango 1966. Kunyaka alandelayo wafumana isigwebo senyanga eziyi 14 etsalanzima emiva. Wophulelwe ye iintsuku ezilishumi elinesine. Wagwetywa anatyeli amabini ezio-ishumi elinesine.

Wagwetywa anatyeli amabini ngokuphula uvalomlomo. Le inxulumene notyelelo lwasesiqhithini e Robben Island.

Nog 1969 u Winnie Mandel nabanye babanjwa. Yena wahlala iintsuku ezi 491 yedwa engahanjelwa Bohlwayelwa ukuqhubela phambili iinjongo zombutho o-walwa umlomo umbutho wesizwe. African National Congress yena

nabangamashumi amabainin anaye. Bafola kwesityholo bakhululwa kodwa baphi nda babanjwa Bavela ekundleni phantsi kwesityholo sobunqolobi kodwa bonke bakhululwa.

Emva kweveki ezimibini ekhululwe wawalwa umlomo isithuba esingangeminyaka emihlanu.

Wavunyelwa ukwya kubona umyeni wakhe okokuqala emva kweminyaka emibini kwakungo amathathu ukuba bathethe. Babohlulwe yigoss bethetha ngomnxeba omnye komnye.

u Winnie Mandela ubanywe amatyeli ngamatyeli ngokophula imqathango eyimiselweyo ngabasemagun-yeni. Wabantinta i inyanga ezintandathu e Kroonstad ngo 1973. Aexsha amaninzi ebegwetyelwa ngaphandle.

Uvalomlomo lwafikelela esiphelweni ngo September ka 1975. Okwexeshana wakhe wayekwa ingahlaziywa. Wabanako ukukhe ahambela izizalwane nezihlobo wakhe waye nasezintlanganisweni.

Kodwa loo damsese yathatha nje iinyanga ezilishumi elinanye yap-hela. Ngo Agasti ka 1976, yena nabanye be Black Parents Association ikomiti yabasali abamnyama bathathwa phantsi kokhuseleko bavelelwa.

Phambi nje kokuba babanjwe izindlu zabo zahlaselwa.

Wakhululwa phambi kwe krisimesi ngo 1976, waphinda wawalwa umlomo. Kancinci nje phambi kwesikhumbuso sukuqala se June 16, wayakulahlwa eBrandfort apho wavalelwa khona umlomo.

Apho kulo Brandfort uphantsi kwemiqathango emininzi.

- Akanakubizwa
- Akanakufumanandwendwe zing-aphezu kwesinye ngexesha
- Funeka esindlini ngokuhlwa nangempelaveki neholidi.
- Amapolisa soloko emgadile yonke into ayzenzayo.

Ikhona incwadi esandula kup-huma ngo Winnie Mandela. Kodwa ayifumaneki apha eMzantsi Afrika.