South African History Online Lives of Courage Series:

My Life

The Making of an Afrikaner Revolutionary in the South African liberation struggle

by

Stephanie Kemp

South African History Online

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For all the people over the centuries who gave their lives for our freedom
All those who risked their lives for our freedom
And all those millions who survived the horrors of white minority rule

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DESCRIPTION — SIGNALEMENT

Height / Taille: 5' 4"

Hair / Cheveux: BROWN

Colour of eyes / Couleur des yeux: GREEN

Nose / Nez: STRAIGHT

Shape of face / Forme du visage: OVAL

Complexion / Teint: FAIR

Special peculiarities / Signes particuliers:

CHILDREN — ENFANTS

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FOREWORD

It is an honour to be asked by Stephanie Kemp, the author of her autobiography, MY LIFE: Through an Unforgettable Storm. Cde Stephanie tells a poignant story of her life with poise that is befitting such a beautiful soul, but also comprehensively in as brutally truthful a manner as would shock all the race apologists and revisionists that our country is endowed with plenty of. She is a Master (sic!) story-teller.

The story gripped my soul from the beginning. It tells of the beginnings of her life in Steynsburg, in the Karroo. One would never have guessed that the likes of her would have been reared in such a sheep and merino country. But she does not start with her own birth, but with the early Kemps, she tells a family story that is enthralling in its detail, but also heart-rending in its pathos. Like a historian, Stephanie Kemp does not judge. She tells it like it is. But she is no bland historian because she is unavoidably part of the story. She is the history of her tale.

South Africans and readers of this book will find Stephanie Kemp an enigma till the end. What exactly and how, did she end up the way she has? As a young student activist in the 1960s, I remembered being very curious about the young white students who were arrested following the Park Station bombing and the execution of Harris. We were very familiar with the security police repression in the townships, but the activism of young white students to this extent caused us much excitement. But more curious still, among them was a young Afrikaner woman, Stephanie Kemp. I remember how the newspapers made much of this, especially how she was viewed as a traitor. I also remember when she was sentenced, and the "bargaining" that Prime Minister John Vorster was seeking to make political mileage out, but it led to her early release. The inside of that story is told in this book.

But Stephanie Kemp was no ordinary Afrikaner meisie. Her father was an educationist, steeped in the rural culture of her time in church and the rural community that he and his family were so much a part of. One gets the impression that she came from a good home, in a carefree rural existence. Her father was also partly educated at Wits University, and that could have had something to do with her landing at the University of Cape Town to study Physiotherapy. One has insight into the curious young woman she was, and a fearless and questioning of the strictures that those days were a part of the protection that young female students were subjected to at university residences. But she does seem to have drifted into strange company- and she became politicized.

One has a sense throughout this book that Stephanie was someone whose life has breached so many boundaries: male / female, she breached the confines of an Afrikaner Dutch reformed Church Calvinist upbringing; she ended up marrying her Jewish advocate, and later had a relationship with another. As a young working mother in London who was often alone, she became part of the exile movement, and engrossed in the domestic life of British society.

I had reason to be very interested in her story of betrayal by Adrian Leftwitch, a leader of the ARM, who became a state witness in her trial. She was confronted by him while both were in detention, and when both were under interrogation. He simply told her that he had told the security police everything! Instead of being crushed by this news of betrayal, she endured hostile interrogation and became even more determined, petulant, defiant and at times playing on her femininity. In the end, she could not escape being charged for some of the most serious offences that the apartheid police could prefer against her.

In exile, she was an active member of both the South African Communist Party and the African National Congress. I remember her from those days in London. She was rarely voluble, but she was held in high regard by comrades. At a time when at times the exile community was divided by ideology, race, and 'regionalism'. She seemed to have ease of navigating the contours of such differences, and made friends regardless of race or faction.

Back home, Stephanie put her life together back home again. She re-connected with her roots and her family and like all of us she was caught up in the euphoria of the Mandela years. But, with the skepticism in the AIDS debate within the ANC, her conscience was caught in a tension. But with the Zuma debacle – from rape to the resignation of Thabo Mbeki, she took a stand. Political animal that she is she found her way as one of the founding members of COPE. She resigned from the SACP, that opportunistically supported Zuma, and from the ANC, that protected Zuma at all costs. She spent a short, rather uneasy time with COPE, until eventually she cut ties altogether.

Recently, Cde Stephanie announced that she had re-joined the ANC. That is the measure of confidence that Cyril Ramaphosa has instilled in many comrades. The debate within and among the Stalwarts and Veterans about the future of this structure is evidence of the hopes for the renewal of the ANC.

This book is a candid account of the history or histories of our liberation struggle. It tells vignettes of the life of the early Kemps, and the home life of the contemporary

Kemps. But it is a story of women in our liberation struggle from the perspective of a white Afrikaner revolutionary. Cde Stephanie Kemp is up there among the Bram Fischers, the Breyten Breytenbachs – and today Stephanie Kemp is counted among them! This is a book that women cadres in our Movement should read, and one that young students and activists must absorb. At a time when our country is confused about race, Stephanie Kemp will always be a name to remember.

This book was first published by Amazon Books on line. Thanks to Omar Badsha, South African History Online is publishing it in hard copy.

N Barney Pityana GCOB

Pretoria, 30 March 2018.

Kemp grandparents who lived the Boer War.

ONE
ANCESTRY

1. My story starts

My story starts in 1652, perhaps earlier, when my first ancestor arrived in Africa. At first Pieter Kemp plied the seas between Antwerp and the East.[1] Trading spices and people.

Jan van Riebeeck bought from Pieter Kemp two people called Angela (also known as Engela and Maaij Ansiela or Mother Jagt) and Elisabeth (also known as Lijsbeth and Domingo). It seems that Angela and her family were captured by slave raiders somewhere in the Ganges delta area of Bengal. There were only a few personal slaves at the Cape then. Pieter Kemp captained the Amersfoort that on 28 March 1658 stole from a Portuguese slave ship heading to Brazil, half her cargo of 500 people captured in Angola. 76 Angolans died on the Amersfoort and 174 were sold in Cape Town. The first large sale of people there.

In 1657, Piet Kemp together with other ships' captains assisted in measuring the plots along the Liesbeeck River when the Dutch East India Company allowed the first whites to settle as burghers. The beginning of land theft, that continued apace over more than 300 years from the Liesbeeck to the Limpopo – and beyond. Piet Kemp was there when Autshumato[2] rose in revolt against this invasion of grazing grounds of the indigenous Khoi people. With their horses and guns, with their cannons the settlers drove back those Gorinhaikonas. Khoi resistance was to continue for more than 200 years. From the outset the settlers hunted the indigenous hunters, the San, as if they were wild game all but wiping them out. Destroying their culture and languages.

My Afrikaner[3] ancestors were melded in the 17th century from Protestant Christians fleeing the ruthless and persecuting Catholic Church in Europe. The majority of these early settlers were German and the French Hugenots, as well as Dutch. But Dutch was the official language. All were devout Calvinist Christians. My own ancestors came from Bruge in Flanders, Friesland and France, Huguenot women from Lille and Normandy, and there was also a slave descendent from Bengal.[4] In 1665 there were three freed Bengali women slaves who could legally marry white men. The freed slaves' adoption of Christianity held fundamental significance for such marriages rather than their race. To be a Christian then, you had to be part of a Christian family. Many of these slaves at the Cape lived in Christian households. According the early church, you were saved by the grace of God, not by being good – or white. In 1715 my forebear, also named Pieter Kemp married Luitje (or Leùtien) Willemsz[5] the firstborn child of a freed Bengal slave Magteld (or Maria) Cornielisse who herself had married a settler, Gerrit Willemsz. After that my Kemp ancestors worked hard not to taint any further their white heritage allowing them in due course to become proud white Afrikaners. "Racially pure".

In the mid-1700s by the fourth generation, Gerhardus Kemp had moved away from Cape Town to the Stellenbosh district. One of his sons Jacobus Johannes[6] moved further away to the Swellendam district to escape British colonial control[7] at the Cape. The Kemps remained in Swellendam for two generations. Jacobus Johannes's son, Gerhardus Philippus Kemp the third of twelve children, was born in Swellendam. The tenth child, yet again Jacobus Johannes was born in 1820 when the family had moved to Eersterivier, Humansdorp where they remained for over 50 years.

In 1852 and 1853 the Calvinists, or Boers[8], founded their own two Republics where they could worship their God and ensure the British were kept at bay. The Republics - the Transvaal and Orange Free State - were recognized by the British. They were formed at the expense of the indigenous people, the majority whose land was

seized and who were excluded from citizenship and brutally crushed by the Boers. The British had second thoughts about recognizing Transvaal independence once gold was discovered. They tried to annex the Transvaal in 1977. Between 1880 and 1881, in an outbreak of conflict between the Boers and British, the Boers inflicted significant defeats on the British at Laing's Nek, Schuinshoogte and Majuba Hill during the so-called First Boer War. In March 1881 Britain once again recognized the Boer South African Republic or independent Transvaal. By the end of the century the Boer Calvinists had cohered into a fiercely independent tribe, the Afrikaners. Pure white, deeply religious, poorly educated farmers - God's chosen people. So they believed.

Having gradually moved away from Cape colonial rule under the English, my forebears embarked on a final trek even further north. From 1881 until 1886 several families uprooted themselves and housed in oxwaggons, over five years trekked north to the farthest reaches of the Transvaal. The land of the Bapedi. Unlike the Great Trek of 1838, this five year trek took place across friendly territory with established infrastructure easing the hardship.My great grandfather, Gerhardus Philippus Kemp with his wife Aletta Moolman and their children trekked from Humansdorp just south of Port Elizabeth. Their son Jacobus Johannes was 14 years old at the start of that trek.[9] The Geldenhuys family lived in Nieu Bethesda and joined the trek with their daughter Martha Louisa who was 10 years old. The families settled far north in the Pietersburg[10] area. In 1890, a few years after the end of the trek, the two young people married and settled on Fairlie Farm in the Pietersburg district, becoming my grandparents. Their five children including my father, the lastborn, started life on Fairlie Farm. The farm remained small and poor. They all returned there after the second Boer War against the English.

2. The Boer War - moulding my identity

The two Boer republics, the Transvaal and Orange Free State, did not succeed in keeping the British at bay. Particularly once the precious soil threw up massive riches, diamonds and gold. Greed proved a strong motivator for invasion by a sophisticated British army against the determined Boer defenders with their horses, *voorlaaiers*, farms and knowledge of the terrain. They were excellent marksmen, shooting from horseback.

War broke out in October 1899. My grandfather fought on the Boer side as part of the Soutpansberg commando[11] in the Boer War.[12] He fought from 11 October 1899 when he had just turned 32 until the end of the war on 31 May 1902. His main terrain of combat was in the Colenso area under the command of General CF Beyers.

He became a *Bittereinder* refusing to lay down his arms at the first attempt to end the war and fighting to the bitter end. My great grandfather, who was 57 years old at the outbreak of the War fought alongside his son until he died of natural causes in June 1901, a year before the end of the war.

My grandmother, Martha Louisa Geldenhuys, *ouma*, spent much of the War in Kitchener's concentration camps first at Pietersburg and then in the Merebank camp south of Durban. She took with her her four small children – a son and 3 daughters. Gert was the oldest being 6 years old at the beginning of the war. Aletta, the fourth child was born in 1899, the year of the outbreak of the war. My father was the last-born, *'n laatskapie* arriving in 1906 four years after the Boer War had ended. But he was always more angry than his family who had lived the war.

Merebank concentration camp was opened in September 1901 on wet, marshy land, and was one of four camps in the Durban area. Merebank camp eventually housed over 8,000 women and children making it the biggest concentration camp in the Boer War. Women whose husbands were still fighting –"*Bittereinders*" - or women who were too militant in other camps were sent there.[13] My grandfather was awarded a Boer War medal that I still have, held by a ribbon with the Transvaal Republic colours of green, red, white and blue - *die Vierkleur* - and the Orange Free State colours of orange, red, white and blue. *Die Vierkleur* remains to this day the flag of choice for those white Afrikaners who refuse to give up the dream of an all-white Afrikaner republic.

The British won the war. After the war, the British parliament having passed the South Africa Act, in 1910 united the two British colonies – Cape and Natal – with the two defeated Boer Republics into a white minority ruled Union of South Africa. The British gave political control to the defeated Boer Generals while they, the British, kept control of the economy and most of the land. The sense of injustice occasioned by the English victors in the War - the Boer defeat, the scorched earth policy that destroyed Boer farms, crops and stock, Kitchener's concentration camps - fueled burgeoning Afrikaner nationalism leaving the next two generations of Afrikaners bitterly determined to take back what they had lost. It left a legacy of bitterness in generations to come, even as many Afrikaners broke out of the laager and advanced into the new capitalist world.

After Union, in the first half of the twentieth century, the Afrikaners successfully clawed their way out of poverty and ignorance. With unrelenting affirmative action for white Afrikaners, even the most inept of them were guaranteed jobs in state owned enterprises and the public service. They built Afrikaans schools and

universities. They turned their co-operatives into large corporations. They made the Afrikaans language their own, an expression of white Afrikaner nationalism, turned it into a modern language that could rise in all fields – literature, science, politics and more. They won formal recognition alongside English, for the Afrikaans language in 1925.

In 1948 by a narrow majority in white minority elections, those for whom the humiliation of defeat by the English still rankled, the hardline chauvinists finally won South Africa back. They immediately set about dragging South Africa backward to their lost dream, tightening the legal entrenchment of white minority race rule. Apartheid.

My grandfather died in 1935. His firstborn son, Gerrit, left Fairlie Farm to farm in Kenya. He died there in the 1950s. My grandfather's three daughters married moving away from Fairlie Farm with their respective husbands. His lastborn, my father, went to school. He was the only one in the family to go to school.

3. Two centuries later

My mother's English forebears, the Gladwins arrived in the Eastern Cape just less than two centuries after Pieter Kemp sailed around the Cape. They came as Wesleyan

Adoptive parents, Arthur and Popsie Gladwin with Fred and Millie.

Methodist missionaries in the first half of the nineteenth century. Of all eastern Cape missionaries the Methodists were the most embedded with the British colonists who were to spend one hundred years at war killing and dispossessing the San, the Khoi and the Xhosa people of their land and destroying their traditional systems of legal and social organization driving them into poverty in the Eastern Cape. They visited the same fate on other indigenous people they encountered further north sometimes taking over areas that had already been subdued by the Boers as the latter moved and settled even further north in their attempts to escape the English yoke. The Sotho, Tswana and Bapedi people, the Zulus, and all other people with advanced social and legal organization, were defeated, their land taken and their cultural organization belittled, all but destroyed.

The Methodists were instrumental in convincing the Mfengu who had migrated from across the Drakensberg, that the traditional hospitality accorded them by the Xhosa under Hintsa, was suspect. The Mfengu who were the first African people in the eastern Cape to accept conversion to Christianity, moved in under the protection of the Rev. John Ayliff's Wesleyan Mission at Butterworth. He persuaded them to don Western clothes and wave white cloths when 2,000 of them became allies of Britain in the 6th and following three Wars of Dispossession. They were rewarded with stolen land and cattle after each war. The Mission base of my maternal great great grandparents was Clarkebury and later Ngqamakwe near Butterworth in the Eastern Cape. Rev. Frederick Parker Gladwin and his wife found themselves embroiled in the conflict raging in the area.

In the socalled 'War of the Axe' 1846-47[14]

> …..*Gcalekas, armed with guns and assagais, invaded the* [mission] *station, intent on robbery and violence. The Rev. F. P. Gladwin, who was unknown to most, having only arrived two months previously* [from Clarkebury Mission station], *moved unruffled amongst the excited mob with nothing but a switch in his hand, calmly directing the inspanning of the oxen, and the placing of his wife and children in the waggon. Quietly he mounted his horse, and they all passed through the fierce-looking rabble before the Gcalekas realized that their intended prey, and most of the people on the station, had escaped, and were on their way to Clarkebury.*
>
> *Within a few hours of their departure Butterworth was looted and burnt to the ground. Night came on, and as there were numerous bands of roving Kafirs* [amaXhosa], *mattresses were placed on the sides of the waggon to protect the sleepers from stray shots.*
>
> *The following morning they had not proceeded far when they were met by hundreds of Tembus, in full war costume, who had set out from Clarkebury to rescue their former*

pastor. At the sight of Mr. and Mrs. Gladwin they threw their shields into the air, and shouted: " You have come out of the mouth of the pit. You are safe now."

The waggons halted for refreshment, and then the travellers started again, escorted by the Tembus. They had got but a short distance when they met the women of Clarkebury, who, after hearing Mrs. Gladwin relate the peril through which they had passed, exclaimed: " Never mind : we have got you, whom we never thought to see again. Forget your troubles now." Mr. Gladwin had been six years at Clarkebury (1839-1845), and had won the love and reverence of the Tembus.

Butterworth rose out of its ruin. The Rev.F.P.Gladwin returned, and, at his first service, held in the open air, Kreli [Nkosi Sarhili] *came in state, and, sitting at the feet of the missionary, paid great attention to the sermon.*

And later in the following war ……

Butterworth was again the chief sufferer. First came a message from Kreli [Nkosi Sarhili] *that he could not restrain his men, and that Mr. and Mrs. Gladwin must leave.*

The next day Kreli [Chief Sarhili] *sent another message, that where they died he intended to die. Gladwin was his child, and would not be harmed. Later news was brought that the Gcalekas were moving on Butterworth with the intention of destroying it. Mr. and Mrs. Gladwin betook themselves to prayer, and God, in His mercy, answered not by fire, but by water. For five days a thick, driving rain fell, turning the ground into a swamp and flooding the rivers. Kreli's warriors, destitute of shelter, cowered before the persistent storm, and, wet and cold, turned home again.*

At another time the war cry was raised in the church during the service, and the whole congregation rushed out to rescue their cattle, which were being driven off. The position became perilous, for the Hottentots [Khoi] *were eager to attack the station. In their distress Mr. and Mrs. Gladwin sought the Lord: "O God, undertake for us ; we are reluctant to leave. Guide us aright!"*

In December, 1851, the British troops, under Colonel Eyre, after a sharp skirmish at the Kei [River], *reached Butterworth, and on their return to the border, by the order of Sir Harry Smith*[15] *, Mr. and Mrs. Gladwin accompanied them to King William's Town. The morning after their departure, a huge column of smoke showed that Butterworth for the third time had been given to the flames.*

For a whole year Mr. and Mrs. Gladwin had remained at their post, undeterred by the surrounding perils of war; but now that safety was attained the effects of the long strain were felt. Mrs. Gladwin sickened; her new-born son died, her little strength was exhausted, and she passed away from earth. She was only thirtytwo years of age, and she and her infant son were buried in the same grave.[16]

So my great-great grandmother died. Her husband, my missionary great-great grandfather found himself in the middle of the wars but he survived. As the British colonists turned missionaries into magistrates to replace the chiefs, the Gladwins made the Transkei their fiefdom.

4. Colonel Frederick Xavier Schermbrucker

The last of my ancestors to settle in South Africa was my mother's maternal great grandfather Colonel Frederick Xavier Schermbrucker - the grandfather of her mother Ilva and her Uncle Lionel Schermbrucker. A Catholic Bavarian and a Royalist, Colonel Schermbrucker was recruited by Col. Stutterheim in 1853 as a volunteer into the British German Legion. He fought in the Crimean War waged by the British and French against the Russians. At the end of that war 300 officers and men of the British German Legion accepted the reward of land for their loyal service to the British flag. In 1856 Colonel Schermbrucker settled on land near King Williamstown then the capital of British Kaffraria initially a separate British colony.[17] In 1858 up to 2,000 additional German civilians were settled in this area as part of the assisted immigration of white settlers. A bulwark against indigenous Africans.

Much land became available for such European settlement when thousands of Africans perished in the so-called "*Cattle Killing*" of 1856[18] and the British were pushing ahead with land dispossession and destruction of traditional African socio-economic organization. Nongqawuse, a young girl of 15, had seen figures in the misty reeds at the mouth of the Gxara River in the soft light of early morning. It is still held by many people today[19] that the figures she saw were planted there by Sir George Grey deliberately to manipulate the young woman. The hazy figures identified themselves as ancestors and led her to believe that if all the people would kill their cattle and destroy their crops as an act of faith, then the ancestors would arise and the white people would disappear back into the ocean from where they had arrived. This was not the first time such a prophecy had been heard in the area. Makhanda, also known as Nxele, had declared the same prophecy some thirty years earlier before he was sent to Robben Island where he perished during an attempted escape. Some people believe that these were the ancestors who appeared to the young girl. Nongqawuse's prophecy was believed. Mass starvation drove people off their land. They were compelled to offer themselves as labour in the nascent capitalist economy of the very white people who did not disappear into the ocean but reinforced their power and control. 40,000 people were to die as a result of the prophecies. Land became available for white settlement.

During the 9th War of Dispossession in the Eastern Cape, 1877 – 1879[20], great-great grandfather Colonel Schermbrucker was commissioned as a Major in the British Colonial Frontier Armed and Mounted Police. He fought particularly in the Amathole area near King William's Town where Nkosi Sandile of the Ngqika was the senior chief inside the Cape Colony. Sandile mounted a fierce resistance to colonial aggression but eventually he was shot in the Amathola mountains - but not by my ancestor himself. I visited Nkosi Sandile's grave where there is a memorial in the Denge forest near Stutterheim. Two white soldiers are buried, contiguously on each side of Sandile. Schermbrucker delivered the funeral oration and dramatically pointing to the two English soldiers' graves declared: "*That will keep the blackguard quiet.*"

Colonel Schermbrucker continued to have a checkered career that took him as a soldier to help the British colonists in the disarmament of the Basotho in 1878 and he fought against the Zulu army at Luneberg in 1879. He launched and became the first Editor of the Bloemfontein *De Express*, a bilingual newspaper supporting the Boers' republican independence cause – rather at odds with his royalist commitment during his time in the German army before he came to South Africa. Finally he had a long career as a successful member of the Cape parliament and a cabinet minister under four times Premier, Sir Gordon Sprigg. To this day he is still regarded as a conservative[21] in the King William's Town of 19th century white Liberals John X Merriman, John Molteno, Saul Solomon, W.P.Schreiner and others. Nonelessless, Col. Schermbrucker showed remarkable insight in a 4 hour-long parliamentary speech[22] in 1885 during which he is recorded as saying, with much scathing humour and in a still strong German accent, that

> *"…the doing of the most potent and highly civilized powers of Europe sending out their tubs of war all around the world, like unto the lion of scripture who went about roaring, seeking whom he may devour ? Why ? Is it because the aboriginal possessors of the soil had a wish to be so devoured ? Witness only what happened lately even in this part of the world.*
>
> *"An adventurous, smart pioneer of civilization sets out armed with a harmonica, attached to which may be a bottle of gin or rum, and therewith he purchases from some chief tens of thousands of square miles of land, conveniently bounded by a strip of sea shore……*
>
> *"This, sir, is the Book of Genesis of the newest acquisitions of colonies…*
> *"First day, the foreign flag is hoisted;*
> *" Second day, the bewildered nations want to know what this means;*
> *" Third day, those who ask inconvenient questions are declared in rebellion;*
> *" Fourth day, troops land;*
> *" Fifth day, the rebels shot down, their houses, huts or other habitations leveled or burned to the ground, and their cattle or movables destroyed or carried off as spoils of war;*

"Sixth day, land confiscated, and the Protectorate of the foreign flag is an accomplished and no longer a disputed fact.

" Then, sir, comes the seventh day of rest when all the other Powers are invited to take notice of and recognize the slight alteration effected in the colouring of the map of the world, which all the friendly Powers invariably do recognize accordingly, accompanied by many thousand felicitations to the conqueror upon the glorious result of his brilliantly short, sharp and decisive campaign!

" Now, Mr. Speaker, what shall we call this mode of proceeding? Are those who do these deeds to be called robbers,……? [23]

Colonel Schermbrucker died, still a Cape cabinet minister, in 1904. He was buried in Maitland (Cape Town) with a state funeral.

5. Arthur and Popsie Gladwin

James Arthur Faithful Gladwin was born in 1870. His parents were Rev. Frederick Parker Gladwin and Margaret Elizabeth Garner who had ten children. The first-born, Arthur married Gertruda Natalie Thomas and they did not have children. She was called Popsie or Gertie. Arthur Gladwin was my mother's uncle, the much older brother of her father Theo Gladwin. They lived in Lusikisiki where Arthur Gladwin was the magistrate for many years. When he was due to be transferred at the turn of the century, he received a letter signed by the "*Natives of Tsolo*" requesting that he should not be redeployed as they found him to be a fair magistrate.

A Gladwin Esquire
Acting Resident Magistrate
Herschel.
Sir,

We the undersigned residents and Hut tax payers of Mehlomakulu's Location, and other Locations in this District have the honour of humbly requesting your worship to be good enough to inform and request the Government, on behalf of our people that your Worship may be permanently appointed here as our Resident Magistrate and Civil Commissioner of this District.

We also humbly request that if the Government cannot comply with our wishes, in this respect, we may be allowed to have an old and trusted Magistrate Major Cook.
It is needless to inform your Worship that during the few months you have sat on the "Bench" as our Magistrate, you have thoroughly pleased all parties by your sound Judgments and care in deciding Native cases that have come before you.

We can be heartily pleased if personally you can have no objection to this our humble request.

Anticipating a favourable reply from your Worship and the Government of your earliest possible convenience

Signed

1. *Ngesiman Mehlomakulu*
2. *Mpisi Hlutyana*
3. *Ranini Mhlengi*
4. *Pahlana Mvumelo*
5. *Tsepe Masonyile*
6. *Mtubelezi Gabayi*
7. *Dunzela Masayile*
8. *Nani Dambuza*
9. *Lifutana Mlanzana*
10. *Mfundisi Mpambo*
11. *S. Boy Mawa*
12. *Joseph Fanana.*
13. *Msindo Becana*
14. *Mbaliso Mehlomakulu*
15. *Booi Mehlomakulu*
16. *Dyanti Tamana*
17. *Wellem Fanana*
18. *Mfokozana Fanana*
19. *Jacob Manzi*
20. *Mtshumo Dela*
21. *Mpambani Dambuza*
22. *Sheleni Tshabane*
23. *Makasini Pindwayo*
24. *Janki Wellem*
25. *Masole Ndukwana*

A press cutting from the time notes

" *At a meeting held with the Pondos by the Acting Chief Magistrate, Mr. W. T. Welsh,* the *following address was presented to Mr. Gladwin who has been Magistrate here for the last ten years, by the Paramount Chief Marelane.*[24]
As may be well known Mr. Gladwin was ARM at Flagstaff at the time of annexation of Pondoland East.[25] *It will be seen from the address that the Chief deeply regrets that circumstances have caused the transfer of Mr. Gladwin.*

At the meeting one could not but feel the absence of the late secretary, Mr Elijah Tshongwana.[26] *The Pondos, partly because of their limited vocabulary, could not find words adequate enough to express their feeling and partly because on such an occasion, and particularly when one is deeply affected, he is always at a loss for the exact word.*

"Mr Gladwin has many good qualities. He is called by the Pondos "MNYAMEZELI" .[27] *It has been admitted on all hands that he richly deserves that name, no matter what English equivalent you give to the word. His perseverance and sympathy have been his outstanding features. He was accessible to all – the high and low alike. He thoroughly understood the people and surprisingly mastered their dialectic variations. As an administrator in Native Affairs he is second to none. On the bench he was an unbiased administrator of justice. Very few (if any) of his judgments have been reversed. He was able at once to detect a Pondo when not speaking the truth. Because*

of his even temper Court work went smoothly. It must be admitted that "those whom God appoints to govern others should in the first place be able to govern themselves." Friendly relations at all times existed between him and the side bar. This was due to his tact. It is impossible for a [not clear]…*like myself to expose the qualities of Mr Gladwin.*

We conclude by wishing him every success in his new sphere of work. We hope he will speedily recover from his continued ill-health to enjoy a happy, healthy and long life.

The address is as follows:-

Dear Mr Gladwin, - I am directed by the Chief Marelane to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 19th ultimo informing him that the Government in consequence of your continued ill health has decided to transfer you to Herschel.

The Chief Marelane desires me to convey the following words to you on behalf of the Pondos, he cannot permit you to leave Lusikisiki without requesting to be allowed to present to you the sentiments which he entertains concerning the services which you, in your capacity as Civil Commissioner and Resident Magistrate of Lusikisiki have rendered to us as a community. The Chief Marelane desires me to express the unqualified admiration of your intellectual caliber and keen insight into Native policy. The Pondos regard younth which he has watched your career since the day on which you took over the administration of justice here. How deeply he has been impressed with your impartiality and even-handed justice in your dealing with cases on the Bench.

You are leaving Pondoland just at the time when your services are greatly needed when the Native question has taken the first place in the political arena. The Chief Marelane believes that the Native question would soon be solved if we had many Magistrates of your intellectual caliber and keen insight into Native policy. The Pondos regard you not as a Magistrate, but as a father, in times of trouble they always come to you for advice. It is a fact that you are leaving Pondoland on account of your ill-health which reconciles us to the loss which Lusikisiki will sustain in your relinquishment of the Resident Magistracy of this district, and this it is which emphasizes the Godspeed which the Chief wishes you on your departure from our midst.

With every hope and prayer, that God may spare you yet many years to the country you have served so well.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your Obedient Servant,
G.S. Dana,
Actg. Sec. to Para.Chief, Pondoland."

While she was the wife of the Resident Magistrate my grandmother, Popsie laid the foundation stone of the Methodist Church in Cofimvaba[28] in 1903. She was presented with a thick biography of the great Methodist, John Wesley, "*John Wesley, his Life and his Work*" by Matthieu Lelievre, D.D.[29] The book is gold embossed on the front cover "*Presented to Mrs. Arthur Gladwin on the occasion of her laying the Foundation Stone of Wesley Church, Cofimvaba, July 13th, 1903*".

6. Theo and Ilva Gladwin, my grandparents

Arthur had a younger brother born ten years after him in 1880, Theo Gladwin who went to the Methodist school Kingswood College in Grahamstown. In 1900 when he was 19 years old he fought for a year with Lord Roberts on the English side in the Boer War. On 12th October 1900 Theo wrote from Olifant's River Station, Transvaal to the Editor of Grahamstown's Kingswood College Magazine[30] under the heading "Letter from the Front:

> "……*On one occasion when we were in pursuit of De Wet in the Free State, we camped for the night on the banks of the Rhenoster River. At about twelve o'clock in the night the camp was alarmed and we were ordered to "Stand to Arms". Shortly afterwards, Lord Kitchener came riding past our lines very quietly, and said, "Look sharp, lads, saddle up your horses."* ...
>
> *"The number of "Old K.C.B.'s" at the front has reached the grand total of eleven now.…… We have a Boer-hunt every day (no licence necessary), and although we see them, we can never get close enough to do any damage. I went up to Middleburg a few days ago and while there I saw Commandant Derksen of Spion Kop and Colenso fame. He was on his way to interview Botha about surrendering. He is a fine, intelligent-looking man, and was dressed in a black uniform.*
>
> *"The News that Kruger had left the country[31] was brought to me by a Tommy in these words – "I say, mate, you heard the latest?" No, says I. "Well, ole Krewjer has done a went with all the country's 'oof."*
>
> *" We are all looking forward to coming home."*

Sergeant Theo Gladwin of an irregular Regiment, Nesbitt House, at the age of 19 years was discharged at his own request in Grahamstown on 13th November 190l.[32] He had fought with Lord Roberts in engagements at Paardeberg, Poplar Grove, Karee, Brandfort, Vet Rivier, Sand Rivier, Warm Baths, Rhenoster Rivier, Johannesburg and Pretoria. He was entitled to a medal but the only medal that was passed down to me was a school swimming medal dated 1899 from Kingswood College.

Theo married Ilva Schermbrucker, granddaughter of Colonel Frederick Schermbrucker. They married in 1911 in Lusikisiki, Mpondoland from the home of Theo's older brother, Arthur Gladwin. Ilva and Theo had two children – my mother, Mary Ione Raymond born in 1913, and her little brother, Frederick Arthur Melville born in 1917 during the First World War. My mother was always called Millie or Mixie. Days before her birth on 1st June, the firstborn child, her mother Ilva wrote a letter to her husband, Theo, to be opened a long time later in 1930.[33]

> *"May 27th 1913.*
> *My darling darling Husband,*
>
> *Should anything happen to me when our baby comes – give our baby to Arthur and Gertie[34] to bring up until it is big enough for you to look after – if a boy, call him "Fredrick Raymond", if a girl "Mary Ione Raymond" and call her Millie.*
> *My signet ring and wedding ring you must wear darling and my stone ring keep for Baby. Give my Bible Hymn Book and all my fancy work to my dear little friend Mary Roberts.*
>
> *Burn all of my letters from you to me which you will find in the big brown wooden box.*
> *Give my sewing machine and music to my sister Stella.*
> *Send Sr Raymond those prayer books and medals – they are in the big wooden box.*
>
> *O my papie I have been so happy with you these two years. You have been such a dear darling papie to me and O how I love you. Always be a good Christian, my darling – never forget your God – read your Bible daily and always say your prayers.*
>
> *Your little girleen will always be with you.*
> *Ilva*

Despite her anxiety, Ilva survived the birth of my mother. My mother wrote me a note in 1987, saying "*Sister Raymond after whom I was christened – is from Ilva's convent days – she was a Roman Catholic during this period. ….She had a lovely singing voice.*"

My grandfather, Theo Gladwin joined the South African Allied army in the First World War. He was hard of hearing and therefore considered not fit for the regular army. Instead he was deployed becoming a Lieutenant in the South African Native Labour Contingent. He spent time with the Native Contingent in Dakar, West Africa. He sent a stream of postcards to Ilva from both Dakar and France. Little is said in the postcards and there is no mention of the SS Mendi but the dates on the postcards make it very likely that he was in Dakar when the Mendi passed on its ill-fated journey to the war in France.

The South African Native Labour Contingent[35] of 80,000 black South Africans were sent to France unarmed as building labourers. The SS Mendi[36] carried the last 805 of these troops to France. It took them over a month and they reached the English Channel on 16th February 1917 in a thick night time fog. In the early hours another ship, the SS Darro rammed the Mendi at full speed despite the dark and the fog. The Darro was a mail ship, twice the size of the Mendi. She drove into the side of the Mendi amidships cutting into the hold where men lay asleep. Within twenty minutes the SS Mendi sank. 607 Mendi troops lost their lives along with 9 of the 21 white officers and 31 of the 69 crewmen. Three chiefs from Mpondoland died – Chief Henry Bokheni, Chief Dokoda Richard Ndamase and Chief Mxonywa Bangani.

Among those who died was the well-known writer and intellectual, Rev Isaac William Wauchope Dyobha. He had been involved in the formation of the newspaper *Imbumba Yamanyama* in 1882 and in 1906 joined an education movement that culminated in 1916 in the founding of Fort Hare University. As the SS Mendi was sinking, Rev Wauchope Dyobha called on the troops to assemble on deck saying:

Grandfather Lt. Theo Gladwin Native Contingent 1914

Grandmother Ilva Gladwin with Millie and Fred about 1918 just before she died in the so-called Spanish flu epidemic that swept the world.

"Be quiet and calm, my countrymen, for what is taking place is exactly what you came to do. You are going to die but that is what you came here to do. Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers, Zulu, Swazis, Pondos, Basothos and all others, let us die like warriors, the sons of Africa. Raise your war cries my brothers, for though they made us leave our assegais back in the kraals, our voices are left with our bodies…."

When her father came home on leave from the War when she was three years old, my mother refused to recognize him. She said her daddy wore a khaki uniform with a helmet; now this strange man was in a navy uniform with a cap. While Theo was at war my mother moved about from place to place with her mother to various family members. Her little brother, Fred was born in Aliwal North while his father was in France; they were in Kokstad while her brother was a babe in arms. All three of them stayed on a farm in Tarkastad with her Aunt Raby who was married to Mr. Newton King – two of their three sons were killed in the war. When Theo returned from the war the family settled at St Lukes Mission near East London.

At the end of the war my mother's father, Theo Gladwin wrote to his sister, Ruth:

P.O. St Lukes
East London
20.9.18

My dear Ruth,

Thank you very much for your letter – I am very glad to learn that Mother left Millie that 5/= brooch for I know she will cherish it when she is old enough to appreciate its intrinsic value.

You say you have come across several things for me. I would be very glad if you would let me know whether any of these things were left by Mother or Father for me. Did Mother say the enlargements of G-father and G-mother Garner were to be given to me?

Thanks very much for deciding to send these things to me – will you please rail them to "T.A.Gladwin c/o Mr. Cyril Adkins, Fort Jackson" and let me know the amount of carriage I have to send you.

I am very sorry to hear that Ray is suffering from headaches – I suppose they are neuralgic.

Yes I was grieved to hear of the death of Edward Trollip and the Galway Castle

catastrophe was a shock to me too. When I hear of such calamities of the sea I cannot help feeling grateful to God for having taken me safely through the seas.

With love to all

He wrote a follow-up letter to his sister dated 14th October 1918.

My dear Ruth,

Thanks for your letter and the parcel – I heard of the latter's arrival whilst over at Fort Jackson yesterday but having no money with me for carriage I left it with the S.M. and will send for it tomorrow, so of course I'm sure I shall be pleased with everything the parcel contains – I hope the scraps of paper you say mother left for me are there too, because she and I used often to look through the recesses of her boxes and cupboards in search of newspaper a/cs and letters relating to old events, for my scrap or record book.

Thank you very much indeed for the enlargements – you may depend on it they will be jealously guarded by me and now that our house at Fort Jackson is going to be a realized fact and most probably our permanent abode for many years to come, my photos and pictures will have a good resting place.

As to serviettes – we only have one that I know of, and that I brought with me from France. If you are certain you will never have any use for the serviettes you speak of, we certainly would be glad of them.

I looked out for and travelled down to E.L. with Barton on Saturday and went along with him to the Drill Hall where he attested. He left by the night train for Lady Frere to go and see Gladwin and I met the train at Fort Jackson and said goodbye to him when he passed.

The Spanish Influ. has commenced its tricks down here and today I have called a big meeting of my blacks to explain the epidemic to them – I believe I have a touch of it today – but of course any ache or pain anywhere in the body will be Spanish Influenza now. *[my emphasis]*

With love to your Ray and the others
Yr affect. brother, Theo.

The influenza pandemic of 1918[37] infected 500 million people across the world including remote Pacific islands and the Arctic, and killed 50 to 100 million - three to five percent of the world's population - making it one of the deadliest natural disasters in human history. It killed more people than had been killed during the

four years of the First World War. It is said that this flu killed more people in 24 weeks than AIDS has killed in 24 years, more in a year than in the four years of Black Death Bubonic Plague from 1347 to 1351. One hundred years after the 'Spanish' flu, the Ebola epidemic of 2014 also gave rise to similar haemorrhagic symptoms and a relatively high fatality rate – 4,500 people having died by October 2014.

Wartime censors minimized and suppressed early reports of illness and mortality in Germany, Britain, France, and the United States; but newspapers were free to report the epidemic's effects in neutral Spain including the grave illness of King Alfonso XIII. This led to a false impression of Spain as especially hard hit — thus the pandemic's colloquial name '*Spanish flu*'. Symptoms in 1918 were so unusual that initially influenza was misdiagnosed as dengue, cholera, or typhoid. One observer wrote, "*One of the most striking of the complications was hemorrhage from mucous membranes, especially from the nose, stomach, and intestine. Bleeding from the ears and petechial hemorrhages in the skin also occurred.*" The majority of deaths were from bacterial pneumonia, a secondary infection but the virus also killed people directly causing massive haemorrhages and oedema in the lungs. Up to 20% of those infected died, as opposed to the usual flu epidemic mortality rate of 0.1%.

At least 100,000 people died in Ghana. Tafari Makonnen (the future Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia) was one of the first Ethiopians who contracted influenza but survived, although many of his subjects did not; estimates for the fatalities in Addis Ababa range from 5,000 to 10,000, or higher. In British Somaliland one official estimated that 7% of the population died.

By the end of the pandemic, only one place on the entire planet had not reported an outbreak: an isolated island called Marajó in Brazil's Amazon River Delta. In late 1918 new cases dropped abruptly – almost to nothing after the peak in the second wave. In Philadelphia, for example, 4,597 people died in the week ending 16 October, but by 11 November influenza had almost disappeared from the city.
In 1918 children skipping rope, chanted the rhyme:

I had a little bird,
Its name was Enza.
I opened the window,
And in-flu-enza.

South Africa was the fifth hardest hit country in the world. Almost as many South Africans died as did Americans. It is likely that almost half a million people died from the flu epidemic in South Africa. 62 percent of those who died lived in the Cape.

140 000 people died in seven weeks from September - October 1918. Exact figures are difficult to determine in South Africa as no official death toll figure were recorded amongst large sections of the black population[38] - especially those living in rural areas.

The flu epidemic reached my family too. In 1918 both my mother's parents Theo and Ilva Gladwin contracted the "*Spanish flu*". They were admitted to a medical facility in Berlin near East London. They died within an hour of each other.
In a letter to me sixty years later, my mother said

"*My parents had only about six years of married life, so their marriage remained a romance, untarnished by disillusionment or disappointment in one another.*"

Much later when my mother was 13 years old and having a tonsil operation in King Williamstown in 1926, the nurse noticed my mother's surname and asked who her parents were. She told my mother that she had nursed my mother's parents, Ilva and Theo, in East London taking their notes of love and encouragement, one to the other between the male and female wards. When Ilva died Theo was too weak to be told. But within minutes he himself lay dying. He told the nurse that she was not to tell Ilva as she was too ill to stand the news. Then suddenly, with a smile he looked up and said: "*It is all right Nurse – there she is, calling me*" and died. They were buried in the same grave where they had died, outside East London. Suddenly orphaned my mother, just 5 years old and her little brother, Fred, just one, spent a year being passed between family members some of whom left additional scars of loss and rejection with her. The two small children also spent time in an orphanage. Having given it thought for all that time, Theo's older brother, Arthur Gladwin[39] and his wife Popsie[40] eventually relented and did their Wesleyan duty. They adopted the two little orphans. Arthur and Popsie had been married for 20 years but did not have their own children. My mother felt a passionate love for her new mother while Popsie found it difficult to bond with the little girl.

* * * * * * * * *

This then is my ancestry, my heritage. My African beginnings hang heavily on me – I was birthed in the selling of people and the stealing of land.

There was never any doubt that out of this heritage I am an Afrikaner. This is my tribal identity. I know the culture. I feel it.
A part of me responds to the story of my forebears. A part of me wants to be proud of their pioneering spirit, their sturdy character. To admire both Afrikaans and English ancestors.

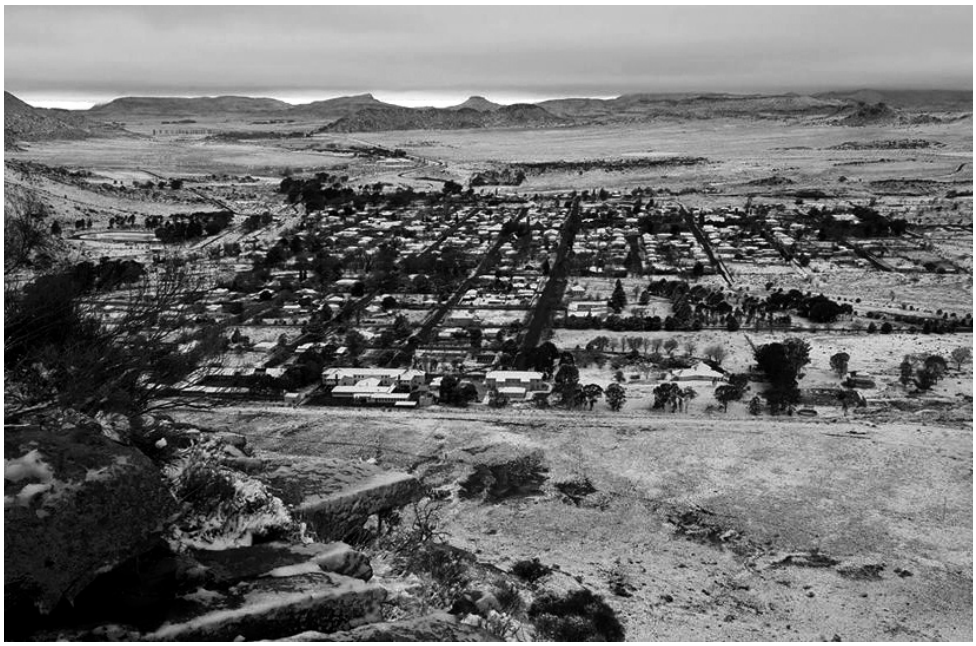
But I wonder how can I – how can any white person with roots in South Africa - be proud of a history that is soaked in so much cruelty. A history of arrogance that visited humiliation on generations of indigenous South Africans and will continue to be felt for generations to come.

Footnotes: Part One

[1] Karel Schoeman
[2] Autshumato was chief of the Gorinhaikonas. In 1658 he waged war against the Dutch settlers after Autshumato reclaimed cattle that were taken from the Gorinhaikonas people by the Dutch. In 1659 after losing this war, he and his two followers, Simon Boubou and Khamy, became the first prisoners on Robben Island. After one and a half years he and another Khoi man escaped from the island in a rowboat.
[3] The name "Afrikaner" as a description for this group of white people became established only in the nineteenth century with the rise in their national consciousness fanned by a hatred of British colonialism.
[4] In 1657 there were 12 slaves at the Cape, 8 women and 4 men, most of the women from Bengal. By the 1660s there were also Guinean and Angolan slaves at the Cape with children who had been born at the Cape.
[5] "Onse Kemps", a genealogy by Maans Kemp 1986.
[6] A pattern of naming children was followed among Afrikaner families. With sons, the first-born was named after his grandfather and the third-born son after his father. A similar pattern was followed in naming girls. If a baby died, the next child was named after the deceased child. It can be confusing.
[7] The British first 'won' the Cape in 1795 and again in 1806, a domination that lasted into the 20th century and captured increasing southern African land in imperialist expansion.
[8] As the first settlers moved away from the Cape to escape British control, they farmed the land they captured and became known as "boere", Afrikaans for farmers. The term "Boers" – pronounced 'boors' in English - is used scathingly in English to refer to Afrikaners; it was the preferred term in the liberation movement for Apartheid state functionaries. However many Afrikaners use the term rather proudly to refer to those with chauvinist tendencies.
[9] I still have the - now very fragile - square silk scarf he wore on the trek.
[10] Now Polokwane
[11] Personal document – a short memoir of my grandfather's experiences in the Boer War dictated to my father in 1933 not long before my grandfather's death.
[12] I call the war of 1899-1902 the Boer War. Others call it the Second War of Liberation, the South African War or the Anglo-Boer War.
[13] paper by Annette Wohlberg and Andre Wessels, Department of History, University of the Free State "*The Interaction Between the Merebank Concentration Camp and the City of Durban, 1901-1902*" in *New Countree, No.48 (November 2000).*

[14] The Colonial army invaded Xhosa territory following the ambush of an English patrol sent to arrest a Xhosa man accused of stealing an axe, starting the 7th war of dispossession.
[15] In his second tour of duty at the Cape, Sir Harry Smith was governor of the Cape Colony. He was an arrogant man reported to have placed his foot on the neck of the Xhosa leader, Nkosi Maqoma proclaiming, "*I am your Paramount Chief, and the Kaffirs are my dogs!*"
[16] *THE STRENUOUS STRUGGLE WITH HEATHENISM* pp 222-223 : full online text of *"History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of South Africa"*
[17] later it became the Ciskei Bantustan, one of the most congested, poverty-stricken and discontented regions in the whole of the future Apartheid South Africa.
[18] Jeff Peires "*The Dead will Arise: Nongqawuse and the Great Xhosa Cattle-Killing Movement of 1856-7*" Zakes Mda wrote " Heart of Redness ", a novel based on this story.
[19] Oral communication from Jeff Peires, gleaned when he was teaching at the university in the Transkei, now Walter Sisulu University.

[20] Jeff Peires "*The House of Phalo*".
[21] Two of his decendents became Communists in South Africa, myself and my mother's first cousin, Ivan Scherbrucker who served five years imprisonment as a member of the SACP Central Committee.
[22] Schermbrucker who was a Cape cabinet minister then was defending the allocation of land by Chief Mankoroane to Boer mercenaries who fought for Mankoroane and who went on to establish the two short-lived Boer republics of Stellaland and Goshen in the strategic western Transvaal, posing some threat to Cecil John Rhodes's imperialist ambitions.
[23] I found the full four hour speech in the National Archive, Cape Town.
[24] Inkosi Enkhulu Marelane Sigcau 1887 to 1905
[25] 1894
[26] Trained at the Missionary Institute, Lovedale, and an emerging voice in early political organization.
[27] Translated into English as "endurance"
[28] This is the home of the family of Chris Hani.
[29] It is a new revised and enlarged edition translated from the French and published in London by Charles H. Kelly in 1900.
[30] Kingswood College Magazine, No.4 Vol.111
[31] A frail President Paul Kruger was sent out of the country to Switzerland where he died in 1904.
[32] On the original parchment Certificate of Discharge he was described of "v good" character.
[33] the letter was left to my mother by her father, Theo.
[34] Arthur, Theo's older brother and his wife Gertie or Popsie.
[35] "*The South African Native National Congress (SANNC) later the African National Congress (ANC), which was holding its annual conference in Bloemfontein, passed a resolution of loyalty to the empire and promised not to criticize the government publicly, while continuing its agitation against the 1913 Natives Land Act. Although General J C Smuts had declined African and Coloured offers to fight because it was a 'white man's war', 83 000 Africans and 2 000 Coloured men did serve in a non-combatant capacity.* Military History Journal Vol 10 No 1 - June 1995 : *SOLDIERS WITHOUT REWARD, Africans in South Africa's Wars* by J S Mohlamme
[36] en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_Mendi
[37] https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/
[38] As late as 1990 no birth or death figures were kept for Africans and photos would be taken from a helicopter flying over a dense urban area, population figures being extrapolated for census purposes.
[39] Arthur and Popsie were devout Methodists and Arthur - Captain Arthur Gladwin - was Resident Magistrate at Lusikisiki in the Transkei.
[40] Gertrude nee Thomas, the fourth daughter of RF Thomas of Herschel.



Steynsburg 2014

TWO
CHILDHOOD

1. Small beginnings

I was born in Steynsburg, a small hamlet where only white people lived, during a bitter winter that turned the mornings white with frost, in the middle of an unforgettable storm "*with hailstones the size of tennis balls*". There was no hospital there then and I was born in my parents' home on Aucamp Street in June 1941.

Steynsburg is in that part of the arid Karoo where the hills rise with distinctive flat tops and sheep graze amongst small hardy grey bushes. Where years go by without rain, and people are few. The same place in the soulful Karoo where Paul Kruger was born on his parents' farm, Bulhoek in the Steynsburg district some 120 years earlier. Oom Paul became the doyen of white Afrikaner chauvinism. I became a Communist.

I spent the first year and half of my life playing in a large yard of our home in Aucamp Street. At the back behind our yard, the Dutch Reformed Church kept a constant eye

on our morality. Across the street from our front door stood the Steynsburg primary school where my father taught the already narrow content of what was to become in a very few years, the Christian National Education of Apartheid. There remains a photo of me in nappies and a broad smile under a dripping tap in the yard. For years after we left there my mother and my older sister, Bernice, talked fondly of Elsie, our *aia* (nanny). We left Elsie behind in 1943 when the family moved to Malmesbury in the Swartland. Bernice missed Elsie and remembered her fondly.

Malmesbury was as far south as my father's childhood home was north. His family home Pietersburg where he was born on Fairlie Farm, in 1906 after the War. Poor and so far away, my father's family largely drifted away from us into the mists of history.

Malmesbury is located in the *Swartland* region renowned for its rugby, wheat, grapes and the guttural *brei* as people spoke Afrikaans, a trait peculiar to the area. "*Malmesbury se boere vreet growwe brood*" we used to show off our vibrating "rrr's" at the back of the throat. [Malmesbury's farmers eat rough bread]. *Swartland* (black earth) is so called for the *renosterbos* that turns black in the dry summer months and is rejected by cattle but good for the digestion in traditional lore. Swartland Laerskool was a promotion for my father. Malmesbury was an Afrikaans *dorp* somewhat bigger than any village he had taught in. Bigger than Kenhardt, Carnarvon, Bedford or Steynsburg where the education department had deployed him at the start of his career. He became principal of Swartland Laerskool to oversee the integration of white boys and girls into one school. At first our family moved into the girls' boarding house, Arcadia.

When I was not yet four my mother disappeared. It seemed that my mother had gone forever. Disappeared. My grandmother, Popsie lay dying of cancer a thousand kilometers away in the Frere Hospital in East London and my mother spent months there taking care of her until she died. Seeing her beloved mother becoming increasingly confused and demented, falling out of her hospital bed, reaffirmed my mother's already deeply internalized fear of death and personal loss. My first memories begin at this time in Arcadia, aged a little over three and suddenly and inexplicably without my mother. My middle sister, Colleen was almost two years older than me, demanding and hyperactive – *'n woelwater* – and could not be left with my father. So she disappeared with my mother.

I wandered around with my oldest sister, 7 year old Bernice and her friends through a gloomy pinetree wood looking for a lost pig. Pine needles underfoot. Their voices drifting through the wood as I hung back, fearful of the pig and fearful too of being alone, abandoned. Still without my mother, I celebrated my fourth birthday by

causing a frisson of excitement when I ate purple irises growing in a neat row next to a footpath in Arcadia. Dominee Heese gave me a packet of Marie biscuits for my birthday. It is perhaps at this time that my only doll came into my life. I called her Muggie after the small gnats that were everywhere. Soon my father rented a modest house in Industry Street and I think it was from there at the age of four that I ran away from home. I fell asleep on the front door mat of the small house that Miss Klue shared with another woman teacher. In the dark I lay curled up on Miss Klue's front door mat. A search party of excited adults found me sleeping. They woke me stroking my silky blond hair calling me "*sybokkie*" (a little angora goat with long silky hair).

My mother returned. With a kitten for me. I recoiled, more so when the kitten followed me as I jumped onto a bed. The bewildering excitement of that moment remained with me - the whole family on the bed, my mother's dismay and disappointment at my rejection of the kitten and my father's laughter as he lay back on the bed to bounce me on his bent knees. Colleen took to bullying me - relentlessly, endlessly tickling me. I would cry and scream to no avail – the tickling became harsher. It wasn't long before my father bought *Montana Vista*, a grand house in Ford Street. People also called it the "Bride's Cake" for its double bay gables decorated with many small pillars. It stood on a rise and looked across the town to the blue mountains in the distance where the sun set.

My mother, aged 20 and my father, aged 27, Bedford 1933

My mother in Malmesbury

2. Ralie

It was here at Montana Vista that we had our first servant, Ralie. Left at home when my sisters went to school, I played with Ralie's two young sons, Kosie (named after my father) and Boetie. We played in the strip of yard between the kitchen and their room. An open drain ran through our play space. Kosie and Boetie were not allowed anywhere else in our large home and garden that covered two plots. Our Bantam chicken that I loved very much roamed freely across all spaces outside pecking away at worms and fruit that dropped from the many trees in our fruit garden. One day we had chicken for supper. I immediately suspected it was the Bantam and my mother gently confirmed this. I surreptitiously spat out the food moving it underneath the empty squash shell on my plate so that my father woudn't see. My father always forced us to eat all our food. "*Children in China are starving*", he dished out guilt. That was when the Chinese were not eating babies. Later, sharing my grief with Kosie and Boetie, I went to bury the masticated chicken under the lemon tree next to the open drain where Boetie and Kosie were allowed to play. I knew little else about Ralie, mother of my only friends. There were knowing mutters from my parents that Ralie's two sons were from different fathers. Kosie was small, fine boned, with a mop of dark curls. His voice too was small, careful, quietly excited. He was more or less my age. Boetie was a chubby round bundle in nappies.

Ralie was the descendent of the first people of Malmesbury, the original people of the southern tip of Africa. In 1655 Jan Wintervogel led the first settler expedition in the direction Malmesbury by order of commander Jan van Riebeeck of the Dutch East India Company. But it was only in 1703 that farms were allocated there to white settlers. Before the Boer settlers arrived, Khoi and San people inhabited the area. A hundred years later Malmesbury was also the place of the first uprising of slaves in 1808 under the leadership of a slave tailor called Louis of Mauritius. 329 slaves and Khoena took over 40 farms capturing the slave owners. When they marched on the Castle in Cape Town, they were overpowered and Louis and the other leaders were hanged. Ralie's history. Our history.

I was not yet at school when I had a sense of wrong, unfairness that Ralie lived with her two small sons in a single ugly, dark room with no electricity into which only a single iron bed could fit. The room was part of the building that housed our Ford motorcar in a large bright double garage with two strips of fluorescent lights. This was not right. I thought it was unfair. When there was the crunch of spilt sugar on the pantry floor both my parents became agitated accusing Ralie of stealing sugar. I had spilt the sugar. Their noisy accusations stopped when I owned up. They thought I was sweet when I made a tiny hole at the bottom of the condensed milk can, laboriously

"stealing" the sweet thick liquid. There was also noise when the dahlias disappeared from the large terraced flower garden in front of the house. My mother's pride. I don't know who took them – nor why. Perhaps a neighbour. But there were dark mutterings about Ralie. Ralie was suspected of everything that went wrong in the house - even trivial perceived misdemeanours evoked ire. Ralie melted into the background doing her household chores and I have no voice for her. We children were expected to make our own beds, keep the bedroom meticulously tidy. My mother cooked our meals. I locate Ralie only in the dark ugly back room where her love floated out to her small children and some reached me too.

I wandered behind my father in the garden, in silence. We did not employ a gardener and that was so unusual that someone called from the front gate to my father in his old khakhi clothes as he tended the flowers "*Outa, is die Baas by die huis*?"[41] When not in the confined space around the drain outside the kitchen or following my father, I spent a lot of time alone in our fruit garden. The border between the two plots was marked by a row of three large almond trees that I climbed, two fig trees covered with ants, and a loquat tree. Behind them stretched a garden with every deciduous fruit that grew in the Western Cape – plums of different colours, apples, guavas, grape vines lining the street fence. There was a beautiful silver tree in the front garden and at its foot was a gooseberry bush. I collected silk worms in a cardboard shoebox with holes in the lid so that they could breathe. I fed them on gooseberry leaves from the front garden. I remember my worms because I inadvertently killed them all when I left the box in the sun.

My sister, Bernice who was about four years older than me, seemed quite distant and full of complicated knowledge about the world. I retained a strong respect for her as we grew older. My middle sister, Colleen was not quite two years older than me and knew secrets. She had secrets about everything. She used her secrets to keep me in her control. As we walked to school she would revel in my pleas to tell. I grew up at around seven years old when on a walk to school in our bare feet and swinging our small box suitcases, I found a defence "*ek will nie weet nie*" - "I don't want to know (your secret)". Much as she cajoled, I had turned control on its head. Throughout my childhood I used this weapon. I learned to keep quiet. "*Stop sulking*" exasperated family members would plead while inwardly I longed for someone to ask me just one more time to talk, to explain my unhappiness. In those years before I started school, the Milk Board took advertising photos of me sitting on a stool, my hands clutching the teats of a very large Friesland cow. My straight blond hair in curls and my smile laced with apprehension. I also appeared in Swartland Laerskool's bi-annual plays, in the year before I started school as a bee with gold-painted elastic bands along my legs and a yellow satin crawler carefully smocked by my mother.

In Sub B I was some sort of princess in a long white dress with a crown waltzing alone on to the stage to Tshaikovsky's music from *Swan Lake*.

3. Church, School and Culture

My father was important in Malmesbury but not as important as Dominee Landman who presided over the white gothic Dutch Reformed Church that rang its bells over the white population of our town. As elsewhere amongst Afrikaners the church drew over 95% of white people to services every Sunday. There was a separate church for brown people who also spoke Afrikaans as a first language and formed the majority in the district - farmworkers, labourers and servants. The third DRC church - *Sendingskerk*, Mission Church helped the African population who was hardly visible in Malmesbury, helped them to find God. My antie Aletta later devoted herself to this task.

My father was a primary school teacher, the last-born of five siblings and the only one in his family to attend school. He went to school by accident. His much older sister, Gertruida or antie Ous as we called her, took her little brother with her to her work as a cleaner at the Marabastad primary school near Pietersburg. When he was eight the teachers noticed he was intelligent. He was. He started school at eight years having never heard English spoken. By sixteen he entered the prestigious English Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg, studying history – and psychology – under the famous somewhat progressive historian Professor WB. MacMillan.

Later when he was an Afrikaans teacher at Templeton High School in Bedford, he met my mother. She was a very beautiful English-speaking schoolgirl whose father was a retired magistrate. They married after her family sent her to Britain for a year, away from him because she was seven years younger than him and just finished school. The English called him Kempie. My two sisters, Bernice and Colleen were born in Bedford in 1937 and 1939 respectively. My mother did not want more children.

My father came from illiterate farmers, an amalgam of tough European Protestants who by the late nineteenth century looked inward to their exclusive new nationalism as they tried to fight off British colonial control and interference in their inward looking lives. As earlier generations in Europe they had fought off the Catholic Church. White Afrikaner history of suffering, bravery and purity dominated my childhood environment. At school the story of idyllic lives at the Cape, ruined by the arrival of the English first in 1795 and then permanently in 1806 were repeated over and over. My father was my history teacher. Our Nationalistic songs were often Nazi songs adapted to our situation. We sang with one voice, united and with

My father with white horse at Frank Louw's burial

no acknowledgement of the schisms from which Apartheid was to launch itself triumphantly on South Africa in 1948. Indigenous African South Africans, the 80% majority, always the majority in every farm, village, town and city throughout the country, really didn't feature in this history except as uncivilized barbarians from whom brave Afrikaner women protected themselves and their children especially when their men with their horses and *voorlaaiers* [muskets] were away struggling against the English. It was mostly the protracted struggle between Afrikaners and English that carried stories of Boer hardship, courage, heroes and death.

My father didn't talk much about his past but in his very private and obsessively tidy wardrobe was a photo of him as a young man standing next to and holding the reigns of a white horse. The horse belonged to a widowed woman farmer in the Waterberg, Mevrou Louw. She had provided my father with a loan to further his education first at the prestigious Heidelberg Volkshoërskool in the Transvaal and then at Witwatersrand University. The photo was taken on a visit to the farm when he was about 17 and already at university. A bolt of lightening killed Mevrou Louw's only son. There was no one there except the young Kosie to console the mother, an almost sacred experience for him. Throughout my childhood he diligently paid back the loan to Mevrou Louw.

As a child I spoke Afrikaans almost exclusively – English only to my mother, and then only sometimes, and once yearly to her family in East London where we went for the

Christmas holidays. In Malmesbury everyone spoke Afrikaans. In school there were about eight children who were in special class because they spoke only English. My mother could not speak any Afrikaans when she married. She came from an elegant middle class family, from a culture sure of their right to rule South Africa, rule the world. Fragile teacups with elegant patterns in gold, red and purple. Heavy silver plated cutlery embossed with the family crest. They came early in the 19th century as Wesleyan Methodist missionaries to the Transkei. In the second half of the nineteenth century in their project to break the hold of traditional leadership of the indigenous African majority, the British turned missionaries into magistrates. But she learned quickly and embraced my father's culture with enthusiasm. Amongst my first memories of her is being lulled to sleep as she sang: "*Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag. More kom nog 'n dag..*" [sleep my little child, sleep peacefully, tomorrow another day arrives]. My mother had a clear, sweet soprano voice. She sat with her straight back in front of her upright piano and sang from the FAK Bundel [Federation of Afrikaans Culture] songs like "*O Boereplaas, geboorte grond, jou het ek lief bo alles*" .[42] [Oh Boer farm, earth of our birth, I love you above all else…].

I walked around barefoot and made clay oxen in the local *spruit* [creek]. I avidly searched for trap-door spiders on the dusty pavements and for scorpions under stones in the veld where koekoemakrankas grew. I danced to tunes like '*Jan Pierewiet*' at Volkspele [folk dancing] wearing the Boer traditional clothes, a simple long dress with a kappie tied in a bow under my chin and a scarf draped over my shoulders and fixed on my chest with a brooch. In 1949, to join in celebrations across the country for the consecration of the massive Voortrekker monument outside Pretoria, we held a march in Malmesbury. I struggled with a burning torch and a burning pain in my chest. I was diagnosed with pleurisy – inflammation of the lining of the lungs – but bravely carried my torch. At lunchtime at Swartland Laerskool, we were served thick nutricious brown bean soup under the *bloekombome* [blue gum trees].

I imbibed South African history as interpreted by white Afrikaners and felt that sense of being an inferior person from an inferior culture, backward, lazy and ignorant in a world where the English were successful and superior. Civilised. And our enemy. My early stories were about *Jakkals en Wolf, Brokkels en Bittergal* and later stories from Langenhoven – of sawing a leg to level a wobbly wooden table. My father told the story slowly with great enjoyment. A little too much of the first table leg was sawed, and still the table wobbled. Another leg was sawed and then another. But the table was never leveled and ended against the floor. My father's implacably stern demeanour was occasionally pierced with a gentle humour about small things. Afrikaans poetry, developed from the time of the Boer War was integral to burgeoning Afrikaner chauvinism and filled my life - the poems of Louis Leipold, AG

Visser and Eugene Marais' "*Vinnig langs die paadjie trippel Mabelel*…". [quickly along the path, skips Mabalel..] of which I still own a small copy bound in brown velvet signed by my father in 1924. "*Ek hou van 'n man wat sy man kan staan*…"

I was born in 1941 during the Second World War when most Afrikaners supported the Germans and Nazi fascism. There were two Jews in Malmesbury. One, Otto Frank, was a lawyer and an occasional family friend. There was another Jew who sat on a pavement like his 19th century Cape ancestors selling pumpkin *tameletjies* [fritters]. I must have been very young but I have memories of hushed anxiety around me when we spent our summer holidays on the coast north of East London - an atmosphere of ominous alarm amongst the adults, centred on the fear of enemy submarines roaming up and down the east coast of South Africa. Beppie de Braal was my classmate at Swartland Laerskool. She was small and quiet, with long black plaits. Her father was Dutch, a refugee from Nazi persecution. He ran his own photographic shop in Malmesbury and kept to himself. He was rumoured to eschew God. When a gang of children chased Beppie in the school playground taunting her that she was a 'child of the devil' [„*die duiwel se kind*"], I organized my gang to protect her.

We children were not aware of any "*swart gevaar*" (black danger) but instead rather raucously chased the figure of Antjie Somers, the mythical danger in every small Afrikaans town – but in reality a bedraggled old white woman of unknown origins. A spectre of white Afrikaner poverty needing to be chased away. In April 1952 when I was still 10 years old we drove the two hours[43] to Cape Town for the Jan van Riebeeck Festival marking the 300th anniversary of his arrival in 1652. The beginning of European invasion, settlement and conquest of the land by white people from across the sea. One of the Festival exhibits that people gazed at curiously was people – Bushmen[44] in an enclosed stall. Real live people who were small and wrinkled. They were exhibited behind glass in 'traditional' surroundings wearing loincloths, carrying bows and arrows and next to rudimentary shelters. I unexpectedly made eye contact with a man behind the glass and I cringed at the humiliation. He was old, I was a child. He looked steadily into my eyes with a piercing look that could never be forgotten.

Like all good aspiring Afrikaners from poor backgrounds, I started piano lessons at a young age; I loved ballet with a teacher that came to Malmesbury from Cape Town once a month. I was good at athletics, particularly high jump. I was also good at egg races, three legged and sack races. On Saturdays a group of us would go to the bioscope and watch thrilling films of people caught on conveyer belts heading toward lethal slicing machines. None of our homes had swimming pools but on some Saturdays we went to the municipal swimming pool. There I had my first view

of death when one of the boys from school dived in hitting his head on the bottom and floating to the top, lifeless. My standard four teacher, the only other man at school apart from my father, was Archie Sauerman who played full back for the prestigious Boland *voetbal* [rugby] team. I sat with my father on top of the roof of our car, wearing a handkerchief knotted in four corners to keep the sun off my head, and proudly cheered on *meneer*.

On Sundays my mother roasted lamb or chicken for lunch. On Sundays we could not knit or sew because that would be piercing Jesus's heart with a needle. Jesus was nicer than God. I went to the imposing Dutch Reformed Church with my sisters, all of us wearing large hats, white shoes and socks. Men sat separately from women and we sang very very slowly and lugubriously "*Op berge en in dale, en overal is God*…" It felt a relief when later I was given the choice to attend my mother's Methodist Church in an unadorned hall on the side of town. Where the singing was not so slow. God had always played a role akin to that of my father in my life. As a little girl I was told that the moon was God's eye constantly watching whether I sinned. I attended the Malmesbury Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk *Kinderkrans*. [Children's garland -Sunday School]. One Sunday afternoon the teacher went round the circle of little children sitting cross-legged on the floor, asking if Jesus was in our hearts. *Ja, Juffrou*, [yes, Miss] they concurred in obedient, sing-song voices. One after the other. She came to me. I was on one knee doing up my buckled sandal. I took her question literally – there was no one there inside my chest where I thought my heart was located. So I earnestly said "*Nee, Juffrou*". [No, Miss]. She led the little group in prayer for me. Since then there have always been Christian friends who have prayed for me, to no avail. Once I started school I shone and I was a very good, obedient child. Miss Jackson in standard three wrote on my yearend report "*Stephanie speaks the truth as she sees it*". Truth as we saw it was important and was dictated by God and the government. As a tiny child and all the way through my childhood I prayed desperately that God should make me "a good girl". God was strict and angry. He kept his eye on me through the omnipresent moon shining from the sky.

4. My father, Jacobus Johannes Kemp

My father's influence over me was enormous. He was extremely controlling, authoritarian. He ran our family with an iron rod, or at times with a fly swatter. He chased Bernice around the block once with the fly swatter aloft. She outran him. Table manners was a particular area of opprobrium from my father with his daily, emphatic and irritable warnings that "*no man will ever marry you*" - if you put your elbows on the table, talked with food in your mouth, and a series of other infringements of good table manners.

He never forgot the indignity of the poverty of his younger days. He constantly harped on this poverty. Instead of shirts, as a child he had worn mieliemeal bags with holes cut out for his head and his arms. Ma, his mother, had to go round the neighbourhood soliciting pennies until she had the one shilling it cost her to visit him in Johannesburg when he went to university there. As we grew we became increasingly mocking of these stories of poverty. Sighing impatiently when he tendentiously repeated them. There was a relentless war between him and my mother whom he accused of undermining his discipline toward us. "*Stop undermining my discipline Mill*" was a constant yelled frustrated admonishment. Which she did quite bravely at times. A war between them raged around me without let and I always felt in the middle, responsible for my sweet mother's misery. I was very fearful of my father both for my mother and for me.

At Swartland Laerskool I was 'the principal's daughter'. I remember the feeling of misery when I watched boys and girls queue up outside my father's office waiting to have him dole out corporal punishment with a cane. My father was a powerful personality. He was highly intelligent, undereducated but reasonably wellread with a passion for South African history. All his life his short stature contributed to his sense of inferiority. He held his views strongly and defended them loudly. He seemed quite brave in adhering to his sometimes maverick positions even amongst his rigid Broederbond family. Perversely he would insist that he be served in English in the post office where most workers were Afrikaans affirmative action appointees struggling to speak English. And white people had their own queues.

He remained unpretentious all his life believing if he had a shirt he did not need a second shirt. My mother and I once 'kidnapped' his very old over-coat and forced a new one on him. He had the grace to laugh. He was frugal and counted our pennies. He did not believe in buying books when it was possible to borrow books from libraries. Yet when he died, he left for me a handful of interesting books, beautifully looked after over many decades, clearly treasured, and annotated in his neat handwriting. He taught me to save water, to switch off lights, to wash fruit before eating, to wash my hands. "*Get enough sleep, work hard, look after your health*" was his oft repeated mantra.

He felt bitter about the Afrikaner defeat by the British in the 1899-1902 Boer War. He was bitter that his mother was held in Kitchener's concentration camps. He was bitter that white Afrikaners were driven further into poverty by the War. He was born after the War but like so often, those who were in the war felt less anger than the later generations. However, none of this seemed to give him any empathy with the black majority of people around us whom he regarded as being at a lower level to white people,

without the capacity to advance. From black people he expected obsequious respect, obedience and as much honesty and cleanliness as they could muster. He anticipated that they would be drunk and steal at every opportunity. He saw his role in their lives as telling them what to do. Always the *Baas*.

Despite my mother's British origins and quite dramatic history, the stories of Boer suffering under the British in the War triumphed in my consciousness. I have never felt any sense of identification with the English culture or South Africa's connections with Britain. On the contrary, I retained the strong anti-British feelings that my father bequeathed to me. My father was a passionate Afrikaner nationalist. Throughout my childhood he practised a strict affirmative action never asking anyone to do any skilled work, or taking his business anywhere, except to white Afrikaners. Yet he married my mother, a young woman who could not speak a word of Afrikaans when they married in 1933 in the Methodist Church in Bedford. None of his family was present at the wedding. My mother thought he married her as revenge for an earlier rejection by *'n ware Afrikaanse meisie*. This marriage had consequences for him. He could not join the Broederbond[45], the secret organization founded in 1916 to promote Afrikaner nationalism and practising affirmative action with great success. The organization recruited white Afrikaner men only but your recruitment was barred if you married a non-Afrikaner. Affirmative action even in marriage. That was my father. Angry and bitter. Unforgiving.

5. A journey round South Africa - 1950

In 1951 when I was 10, my father had six months' furlough and we went on a slow, long car trip around South Africa visiting all the iconic Afrikaner historical monuments and places. We made our way, all five of us and our luggage crammed into our Ford motorcar, from one member of my father's family to the next. "*Stop bickering*", my mother would plead over her shoulder to the three of us. I had a Brownie box camera and took pictures of the historic sites like the Sand River Convention memorial for the treaty that was signed between the British and Andries Pretorius one hundred years earlier in 1852. The Convention recognized the independence of the Dutch South African Republic. Missionary David Livingstone broke the Treaty by providing arms to African forces; the Afrikaners broke the Treaty by continuing the practice of capturing African children into slavery.

We made our way to the small town of Dewetsdorp in the Orange Free State, home to my father's oldest sister, Ous / Gertruida and her husband Gert Olivier. In their yard was a large mulberry tree that stained our clothes, hands and mouths. We ate *krummelpap* and *boerewors*, [dry crumbed porridge and sausage] sitting around a

fire on clear nights under an explosion of stars. My father loved cooking outside over an open fire but he never allowed us to modernize the practice. We collected wood and small sticks, made the fire on open ground sitting around the hot coals that insisted on sending smoke straight into our eyes. He did modernize enough to use matches rather than rubbing sticks together but we were never allowed to use a torch to see what was going on or to see into the dark looking for snakes or other animals.

Then on to Pretoria, home of white Afrikaner nationalists, President Paul Kruger's headquarters in the old Transvaal Republic that tried vainly to beat back the English particularly after gold was discovered. The youngest sister, antie Aletta and her teacher husband Gert Bezuidenhout lived in Menlo Park in Pretoria. Oom Gert was a member of the Broederbond. They had three children - Rina, Gertjie and Jaco whose ages more or less matched those of my sisters and me. Of course, we visited the newly dedicated Voortrekker Monument standing huge and ostentatious on a hill overlooking the city. The foundation stone was laid in 1938 and the monument was completed and inaugurated 11 years later in 1949 when nearly 250 000 Afrikaners attended covering the hillside outside Pretoria and white Afrikaans people celebrated throughout the country. We gazed in awe at the high domed ceiling with a hole through which the sun shone every 16th December on to a cenotaph inscribed with a vow to God. Promises were made to God in anticipation of victory over the Zulus after Dingaan treacherously massacred Piet Retief and the other heroes. Lest we forgot there were intricately crafted friezes around the walls depicting the blood curdling slaughters, fear and victory.

We stopped for some days on Zebediela (Sebetiela), the largest orange orchard in the world. I don't know whom we knew there. There were a lot of other children and we ran about excitedly shouting. I was younger than all the other children and I trailed behind amongst the orange trees. I was hit on my head by a lemon used as a weapon in an obscure game. At night when we played Monopoly I lost.

Far north on the other side of Pietersburg, at Fairlie Farm we found Ouma, already 80 years old. This was the only time I visited Fairlie Farm, home of my father's family since 1885. I didn't see my Ouma again and had little contact with my father's sisters. Ouma spoke what we called "*hoog Hollands*" - High Dutch rather than Afrikaans. "ik" instead of "ek". Like a grandmother should, she sat in a rocking chair knitting, her hair pulled back into a grey *bolla* or bun. Her husband, my grandfather Oupa, had died in 1936 before any of us were born. She was to die a few years later in 1958 at the age of 87 years. My mother loved Ouma who did not hold any grudges despite her bad experiences at the hands of the English during the Boer War. When my father

first took my mother to meet his new bride, my mother could speak no Afrikaans and there was no English spoken in Ouma's world. But she welcomed my mother warmly. My mother, just a young girl then, never forgot this generosity of spirit and told the story frequently when I was a child. How lovingly Ouma welcomed her. My first knowledge of personal forgiveness and reconciliation.

Also on Fairlie Farm were my father's middle sister Martie and her husband Hendrik Botha with their daughter, Teresa. Cousin Teresa was regarded with some awe by us children. Although she was in her twenties, she was already divorced. We knew divorce was a sin. She was sparkling and had a very small waist that was greatly admired. A waspish waist. The song, "*O perdeby, O perdeby, jy moet jou lollery laat staan. Dis a mooi noointjie met 'n rooi mondjie. Jy moet jou lollery laat staan*….." [Oh wasp, you must leave your nuisance nagging. It's a pretty girl with a red mouth, you must leave your nagging] was very popular at the time and I still associate it with cousin Teresa. Nice Afrikaans girls didn't remain unmarried but remarrying when your first husband was still alive also seemed wicked. When asked if she would marry again, Teresa laughed in her newfound modernity: "*I won't stick my head into a hornet's nest twice*". But she did marry again, had several children and remained happily married for many years. My father's only brother and the first born, Gert Kemp, had gone to farm in Kenya. He never returned. News of his death reached Fairlie Farm just before we arrived there.

Kemp Family: back row is Gert Kemp who went to farm in Kenya, my parents in the middle back row, Ouma with grey hair and (infront of my father) is Oupa who died soon after this photo. My father's three sisters are Antie Ous next to Oupa, in the front row on the left is Antie Martie and on the right Antie Aletta. Behind Antie Aletta, standing is her husband Gert Bezuidenhout.

From Pietersburg we drove to the very top of the Kruger National Park, Pafuri, and then slowly down to the very bottom. It was September and the rains hadn't come yet. It was very dry but my father was in his element. My mother had wonderfully sharp eyes finding lions with just a twitch of an ear in long yellow grass. I picked up my parents' love for the veld and the wild animals. There were no tarred roads then. And only white people were allowed. One night my mother heard me crying in the tent where we children were sleeping. She rushed out. It was a hyena sniffing about near the tent and calling, sounding like a crying child. We were sleeping peacefully. Our joke for a long time. Later, after visiting Mozambique, we re-entered at the most southern gate over the Crocodile Bridge. It was getting late. My parents argued over barking sounds – baboons, my mother said. Disagreeing, my father switched off the engine to hear more clearly. In the fading light a large group of large elephants loomed. My father panicked. The car wouldn't start. On the one side the herd of elephants threatened, on the other the closing gates of the camp as darkness fell. Another story. It was wonderful in the Kruger National Park. We were happy.

We went to Mozambique in search of Voortrekker leader Louis Trichardt's grave in Lourenco Marques [now Maputo]. And in search of rice, our staple that was then in short supply in South Africa. Trichardt was an 1838 Great Trek leader who encountered the formidable enemy of malaria that wiped out many Afrikaners as they reached the Low Veld with no immunity. In search of a route to the sea most of Trichardt's party died. His grave is in a small enclosure just off the mosaic tiled central square in Maputo.[46]

As the six months' travelling drew to a close we spent our usual Christmas holidays in Bonza Bay north of East London on the warm Indian Ocean. Bonza Bay then had pristine beaches with sandpipers and shells and sand dunes backed by lush growth hiding sand orchids. My father taught us to float on our backs in the lagoon mouth. He taught us to surf the sea breakers by holding our bodies stiff with our arms stretched above our heads, faces in the water. He taught us to follow the sand pipers and find their nests in the sand with little spotted eggs in them. Being with nature was the one place where my father smiled and did not seem constantly irritable.

6. My mother being English

When he retired as a Magistrate in the Transkei Arthur Gladwin, my mother's father – Grandad - was given a long lease for a cottage on Crown land in Bonza Bay. It was the last plot before a lot of steps down to a promenade next to the Quinirha River that was mostly closed in a lagoon but sometimes at high tide broke through running

into the Indian Ocean. Every summer we would take the drive of over 1000kms from Malmesbury to East London passing through Riviersonderend where every time my mother excitedly pointed to the outline of a young reclining woman, "*sleeping beauty*", etched in the silhouette of blue mountains running parallel to the National road.

As we approached East London and reached the top of a small hill from which the sea was visible, we would sing lustily "*I joined the navy to see the sea, and what did I see, I saw the sea.*" Getting into an English groove. We stayed at Bonza Bay for the six weeks of school holidays. We visited my mother's family - Grandad and Uncle Fred and Auntie Ella and their four children – Marie, Theo, Tertia and Lucy. They lived on a small farm, "Kloof", in Greenfields south of the Buffalo River that runs through East London. We always had a Christmas tree in our Bonza Bay cottage, a large single room divided by a curtain. We cut strips of crinkle paper that we twisted, intertwined and draped across the ceiling, crisscrossing in patterns understood by my older sisters and secured with thumbtacks. Christmas lunch was cold chicken, watermelon and mielies, often on the beach. We went for long walks picking up beautiful shells, all the way to Gonubie and swam for hours.

Other families also came to Bonza Bay every Christmas and we ran around exuberantly with all the children. The Flemmers with four children, the three Dekker children including the youngest who was my age - Ben Dekker who in later years became quite famous as a hippy recluse living in the bush above the sea at Port St. John's for more than thirty years. Every morning we children would walk to the

At Bonza Bay about 1947 with my mother

Bonza Bay hotel to fetch milk in a jerry can. We sand-surfed down the dunes on candle-waxed wooden trays. We used beautiful paraffin lamps and candles in the unelectrified cottage. There was a long-drop toilet up the hill from our cottage where at dusk I once found a large snake curled up on the seat.

My mother was a beautiful woman. She had fine features, green eyes and thick black hair. She never put a step out of her bedroom without her make-up and her long hair swept up and pinned with very long hairpins, in an elaborate style of the time. She always wore high-heeled shoes and if she took her shoes off on the beach, she walked on her toes. She was often thought to be the sister of her three daughters. My mother did not own her beauty. She herself, the person she knew, was not responsible for the way she looked. She recognized that her beauty attracted people to her. And that left her feeling extraordinarily insecure. It was not the person inside that was loved. As she aged she believed people would stop loving her as her beauty faded. Reaching 40 was a major crisis for her. She was ashamed of her beautiful voluptuous figure and always dressed modestly and elegantly. But she was a tense person, her voice a little too high in company. She walked with a straight back, her shoulders slightly raised - a symptom of the asthma she suffered from.
My mother had a compliant personality and she was no intellectual. She did not seem to think beyond her immediate life nor explore or question the history she had grown up with. She unobtrusively remained a Methodist believer all her life. She was a sweet and lovely person. She did not go on with her education after school when she married my father but her dream had been to be a nurse. She loved the Transkei where she had lived as a child. She knew Lusikisiki and other small towns like Mount Frere and Mount Fletcher. She acquired the Afrikaans habit of over-using diminutives compounding a patronizing tone when she spoke of Africans, whom she loved. "*Oh look at their small little houses*" or "*isn't she wearing a beautiful little dress*". She had that kindly and loving way with black people as she had with her children. She also lived with the fears and suspicions towards black people that continue to plague most white South Africans.

There were large parties at home in Malmesbury, my mother a gracious hostess, her laughter tinkling, my father affable. But as alcohol flowed, the laughter subsided, my mother retired. Voices became louder as arguments about politics took over into the early hours. Was Donges to be preferred to Verwoerd? I carry an image of her sewing. She made pretty clothes when we were small, dressing the three of us in identical dresses that she smocked across the chest, aprons with frills over the shoulders and cherries appliqued on the pockets. In later years she sewed curtains by hand, squinting while she tried to thread the needle. She was protective of her children while also trying very hard to please my father, or more accurately, not to

displease him. On her first night of marriage my father chased a mosquito in the bedroom round and round until he swatted it – "*muskiet, ek sal jou kry; van jou sal net 'n bloedkol bly*…" [mosquito I'll get you; there will only remain a bloodspot of you]. The marriage was not consummated on that first night. She remained close to me and as she grew old we would sit together as she confided in me for two or more hours while my father took an afternoon nap, often unburdening herself about him. Telling and retelling stories of her childhood. When my father was with us, he took over and told her stories.

7. To the cities : alone with my Mother

When I was 11 years old my parents separated. They were divorced after nearly twenty years of marriage. My mother had had a special but platonic friendship with a male friend. My father had an affair with a teacher 25 years his junior, Ansie Visser. My sisters were at boarding school in Paarl and Ansie would come along when my father and I drove them to the school. He was a painfully cautious driver. He knocked over and killed a small dog on one of those trips. The journey felt uncomfortable. I heard about my father's affair from my friend Margie Strydom about a year before it all came crashing down. She told me her mother had told her and she used the word "*naai*" [fuck] with appropriate actions. I didn't understand. I felt ashamed. My mother told me when we were on holiday at Bonza Bay. She took me for a walk on the beach one evening by myself. She talked beautifully. She said I was to live with her and my two sisters would live with my father. "*Coll can go with you, mommy*", I offered bravely thinking Colleen really needed my mother more. Not clearly understanding this was the future.

We left Malmesbury. My father gave up teaching becoming a peripatetic careers advisory officer at white schools across the Eastern Cape, based in Grahamstown. He married Ansie and divorced her after 7 years. When asked, he said he would not bring more children into such a terrible world. Ansie didn't marry again and declared perpetual devotion to him. I moved with my mother to East London in the Eastern Cape in 1953. Even before we arrived there, I sensed a growing fear and foreboding from white people around me, like a large dark mist over us.

It was a time of the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya against British colonialism. "*They hack people to death in their beds and drink human blood*", the stories went. Moving to East London felt like descending into the heart of darkness. White people around me exuded fear heightened by the closeness of large areas of African occupation in the Ciskei and Transkei – "*they can overrun us at any moment and obedient servants will turn into blood-lusting hordes*", we thought. A white nun was murdered in East London

just before I got there with my mother. Irish Sister, Dr. Mary Aidan Quinlan worked among the deprived and oppressed of Duncan Village. In late 1952 during the supposedly non-violent, non-racial Defiance Campaign, Duncan Village exploded and Dr. Quinlan was burnt in her car as she came to work. Her flesh was eaten.

When my mother and I settled in East London my day-to-day life was tranquil. We shared a room in a house in the pleasant suburb of Vincent. My mother bought me a bicycle and I had a sense of freedom as I cycled to Grens Laerskool every day through quiet white streets. With approaching adolescence my flaxen blond hair started darkening. My mother, clinging to past happiness, decided to give me a blonde rinse. The rinse turned my hair a permanent light pink and there seemed nothing my mother could do about it. I remained academically clever and was entered into an English spelling competition that I won spelling 'mosquito' correctly.

For my mother her divorce was a shocking tragedy. She felt punished for her own failure and inadequacy as a person. She was torn away from the town where she had standing. From her home that she had so lovingly decorated, and from two of her children. My father also took her piano. She was hopelessly unqualified and inexperienced to cope on her own and with an adolescent child. She turned to religion and became emotionally attached to the charismatic Baptist Reverend Spann in East London. She took me to a rousing Baptist meeting where we sang: "*Softly and tenderly Jesus is calling, calling for you and for me*…." She was surprised and a little worried when I walked up to the front almost in a trance as people were called to be saved.

I finished standard 4 at Grens Laerskool in East London. Then, while my mother moved to Port Elizabeth and tried to find her feet, I spent 1954 in standard five with my father, Ansie and my two sisters in Grahamstown. For the first time I was at an English medium school, Victoria Girls School. I remember little about this year except that I discovered and voraciously read Biggles books. My first English reading. Biggles was a daredevil English pilot who had adventures all over the world. Despite Biggles being fluent in Hindi, he had some very dubious racial attitudes.

I still rode a bicycle. I started menstruating wearing pads made of towelling square cloths that you folded and kept in place with elastic around your waist. You washed the cloths after each period and re-used them. I rode my bicycle aware of a feint smell of old blood around me. Once when I came home there was nobody there. I was locked out. A little old lady neighbour saw me sitting on the doorstep as night fell. She took me in for the night and gave me Paul Gallico's "*The Snow Goose*" to read. I slept on her couch. I spent one holiday at the Bonza Bay cottage with my father, my

sisters and Ansie. I felt it was wrong that my father should use the cottage when he had treated my mother so badly. Then the cottage burnt down and the land reverted to the Crown.

In 1955 in standard six, I started living with my mother in Port Elizabeth. Port Elizabeth made a powerful impact on me. The change from Malmesbury was dramatic. While still remaining in the grip of white power, in Port Elizabeth African people were more visible than the Swartland farmworkers had been. As an adolescent schoolgirl I saw for the first time African proletarians in an industrial city. In Port Elizabeth the workers were people walking proudly, tall though dressed in rags. Port Elizabeth was an African city even as the majority was pushed into sprawling locations leaving the city, the suburbs and the beaches white.

At first we shared a room in a private house at the top of steep Whites Road. Then we moved to a small flat in Glen Street near The Collegiate School for Girls where I spent my high school years. My mother had a standard 10 school leaving certificate and no further qualification. But she found work at General Motors as a cardex operator. By 14 I had strongly emerging ideas and attitudes. I had a discussion with her when she considered whether to find someone to help her in the flat. My mother protested that she could not afford to pay an adequate salary but "*at least the person would have a job*". I insisted whatever she could afford, she could not employ someone for more hours – if she could only afford enough for four hours work a week then she could not employ someone for 40 hours. In the end my mother did the work herself.

I must have seemed deceptively strong, even to my mother because at this age, 14, in the intense closeness between us, she told me that when pregnant with me she had tried desperately to abort me. Hot baths, gin and other unlikely remedies. Of course, she assured me that once I was a *fait accompli*, she loved me. And she did. My mother suffered dangerously from asthma made worse by the sultry climate at the sea. A co-worker, Kathie Rodochonachie, befriended her at General Motors. Kathie became devoted to my mother and gave her the care she needed. Kathie was a provincial cricket player and a butch lesbian. Later when my bigoted father met her even he loved Kathie, a good and utterly unpretentious person. On my walk to school, I bought Alex Hepple's trade union newssheet, "*Forward*" from street sellers. I read Alan Paton's "*Cry the Beloved Country*" and Father Trevor Huddleston's "*Naught for your Comfort*". I identified with and felt for the young black girls my age who were selling bunches of lavender in the streets. On the street corners skiffle bands and penny whistlers gave me a glimpse of a new confident culture that was making itself felt elsewhere in a world I could not see, a world I was not privy to. This was a working class, an African world, a world of musicians and jazz.

By now I knew I was against Apartheid but I was battling with the belief powerfully inculcated in us that if you love your country you must also love your Afrikaner government to the exclusion of everyone else. Nevertheless, I stopped speaking Afrikaans which I identified as the language of Apartheid.

I had a boyfriend, John who was four years older than me. He called me "*Miss Iceberg 1957*" as we went dancing and surfing and necking on the beachfront after dark. I was a groupie sitting on the white sand at Summerstrand beach watching John and his male friends as they surfed on boards. My mother sewed rather flamboyant dresses for me to go dancing. The dresses were beautiful but a little over the top; being overdressed seemed the worst social gaffe in my circles. Rock and Roll had just hit South African shores and I fell in love with Elvis Presley who had scandalously long hair, a ducktail, and moved his hips outrageously. *Elvis the Pelvis*. A letter I wrote to The Editor was published in the local newspaper. I said Elvis was misunderstood and signed it "*Teenager*". After he matriculated, John was drafted, like all other young white men, into the Active Citizen Force and sent me a photo of himself, stripped to the waist and in uniform trousers and cap, polishing his boots. I learned to like cricket and through John met the brothers Peter and Graeme Pollock, later famous cricketers who also attended Grey Boys High School in Port Elizabeth. I spent long hours watching Donald McLean of the MCC playing at St. George's Park during their 1956-57 tour.

By the time I was in standard eight I had given up reading fiction. Afrikaans novels were syrupy, I thought, endlessly portraying brave white Afrikaner women living fearfilled lives on isolated farms; standing up against barbarous African people intent on raping and murdering them. English fiction too failed to inspire me. In standard 8, "*On the Beach*" by Neville Shute was the last novel I read at school. After that I read mainly biographies, apart from the prescribed books in English and Afrikaans classes. I read biographies about Jan Smuts, Cecil John Rhodes. I liked books with wonderful photos and pioneering adventures, like Scott of the Antarctic. Reading was not a satisfying activity. I played first team netball, the sport I had learned as part of my Afrikaans culture just as I had watched rugby before I discovered cricket. The more prestigious sports for English speaking ladies were hockey and tennis.

In my last two years at Collegiate I was a weekly boarder. At night I could hear, drifting through the quiet air, beautiful voices and glorious harmonies as people sang "*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*" [God bless Afrika]. I was still taking piano lessons and would often accompany the hymn singing at morning assembly. My piano teacher, Doris Anders was without question my favourite teacher. She recognized something in me that was beyond the conventionalities of our school, that side of me that was modern,

anti-establishment. I loved Mozart but Miss Anders gave me the Hungarian Bela Bartok to play at the end-of-year school prizegiving. All jumping notes, jarring harmonies. At a recital you don't play with music to read in front of you, and my fingers forgot their way halfway through. I restarted somewhere in the middle and felt a complete failure. Afterwards I miserably crawled into a recess below some stairs until Miss Anders found and comforted me. I was mortified but Miss Anders reassured me that given the unfamiliarity of most people with Bartok, she was sure no one even noticed my stumble! The school gave me the Collected Works of Shakespeare as my academic prize.

On some Thursday nights we would wear long white dresses to become ushers for concerts in the Feather Market Hall. I heard magnificent concert artists from all over the world. The world-renowned pianist, Aturo Michaelangeli was rumoured to stop playing and walk off the stage if anyone in the audience whispered or coughed. Back stage he looked up as he took my programme to autograph it and startled me in a strange accent "*You are very beautiful*". In 1959, my matric year, we were ushers for a new musical by Todd Matshikiza, "King Kong". After the exuberant performance in the Feather Market Hall, a small group of us did what we always did after concerts – we went backstage and asked the stars of the show to autograph our programmes. Nathan Ndlele, Miriam Makeba, Kippie Moketsi, Sal Klaaste, Mackay Devashee, Abigail Kubeka and other leading African artists. The next morning Miss Miller, our headmistress called me to her office. She said sternly that our behaviour the night before was "*quite inappropriate and unbecoming*". Decent white girls did not ask for autographs from black artists. She identified me as the "ringleader". I was angry and contemptuous.

In my last year at school my father came to Port Elizabeth to ask me what I wanted to do after school. Notions of piety and charity still hovered in my soul and my first choice was to be a doctor like Dr. Albert Schweitzer amongst the poor hapless natives of West Africa. But struggling to emerge was a stronger ideology that chose being a lawyer to confront issues that were not of charity but of injustice that I was recognizing more clearly around me as being politically constructed. "*No, I can't spend all that money on a girl*", he said. I readily agreed. I would become a bank clerk. "*No you should have a profession in case, one day, your husband dies or divorces you*". There was no husband in sight at the time and I was rather hesitant about the whole idea of a husband, but again I did not resist. I felt I was on a conveyer belt through life. Everything was mapped out. An aptitude test indicated that I liked both people and technical things. My father decided physiotherapy would suit me. As I had never heard of physiotherapy, he duly packed me off to look around the Physiotherapy Department of the Port

Elizabeth Provincial hospital. The head physiotherapist there had long black hair cascading down her back, long red nails and a tight wide belt at the waist of her uniform. I was not impressed.

There were two physiotherapy schools in the country, both very new. My father chose Cape Town University where a three-year Diploma in Physiotherapy was in its second intake of students. After sending the required photos of myself in a bathing costume along with my application, I was accepted as one of twelve new students in Physiotherapy housed in a prefabricated building below the medical school in Main Road, Mowbray.

Footnotes Part 2

[41] "Old fellow, is the boss at home?" The word '*outa*' is reserved exclusively for older black people who are expected to call any white man "Baas". Even "*meneer*" (mister) speaks of effrontery.
[42] Also sung to the tune of *The Red Flag*.
[43] a much shorter drive today
[44] now also called San
[45] The Broederbond was a deeply secret white, male, Calvinist organization. At its height it had about 7,000 members including successive SA heads of state, teachers, educationists, government leaders.
[46] I saw the grave again early in the 1980s in a free Mozambique, still in the enclosure, well cared for.

UCT, 1960

Arriving in exile, 1966

THREE
UNDERGROUND

1. A New World

In February 1960 I arrived at UCT bubbling with excited anticipation. Almost immediately everything was thrown into turmoil as the world around me erupted and changed South Africa irrevocably. Within just a few weeks South Africa was on fire.

On 21st March 1960 the Sharpeville massacre shocked the world and shook the regime. At a peaceful protest against the iniquitous Pass Laws, sixty-nine unarmed Pan African Congress protesters were shot dead, many in the back as they tried to flee police fire. 200 injured protesters lay on the dusty ground. A State of Emergency was declared, PAC leader Professor Robert Sobukwe was arrested and the oldest and the newest African political parties, the ANC and the newly formed PAC were banned.

Thousands of people were detained and held in communal cells throughout the country. Giving them a chance to plot the next move. Within days of the Sharpeville massacre on 30 March 1960 I stood on the pavement at Caledon Square, the Police headquarters in Cape Town. I watched as 30,000 remarkably peaceful PAC protesters arrived on foot from Langa and Nyanga with 26year old Phillip Kgosana at the front. It was a massive display of black power in response to the massacre by the white minority regime at Sharpeville 1,500 kms to the north.

On 9th April 1960, there was outrage amongst whites when David Pratt, a wealthy white businessman, shot Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd twice at pointblank range with a .22 pistol. Verwoerd survived. The regime claimed his survival as an act of God. They said Pratt was mad. In Mpondoland, Cape Town's hinterland, years of simmering peasant resistance to Bantu Authorities flared up early in 1960. There were clashes with the security forces culminating on 6th June in a massacre at Ngquza Hill near my mother's childhood home, Lusikisiki. A meeting was attacked from two aircraft. Relatives found the bodies of 11 men who had been left all day for dogs and other animals to feed on. It was held that the number of deaths rose to thirty. Detentions, criminal prosecutions and the banishment of families from the area followed. Widespread torture was reported and there were deaths in custody. I heard of detainees being tortured in a camp set up in the Mkhambathi forest where they were tied to trees for days and nights on end. This fed my determination that Apartheid had to be overthrown.

I stayed at Fuller Hall, the women's residence on campus. I had hardly unpacked my suitcase when the head girl of the residence began to pressurize me to stand for Rag Queen. She made it clear that Fuller's prestige hung on that slim thread and that I was being disloyal for refusing. Sometimes I found myself part of a group of students going dancing on visiting ships in Table Bay. In the party was a tall second year law student, Sheila Badenhorst[47] who did become Rag Queen that year, 1960. Some time during that year, barefoot and in a borrowed tennis dress with a very short skirt, I carried a tray with champagne on to a field to present to the captains of the rugby teams from UCT and Stellenbosch University, the Ikeys and the Maties. (Can they play rugby after consuming champagne?).

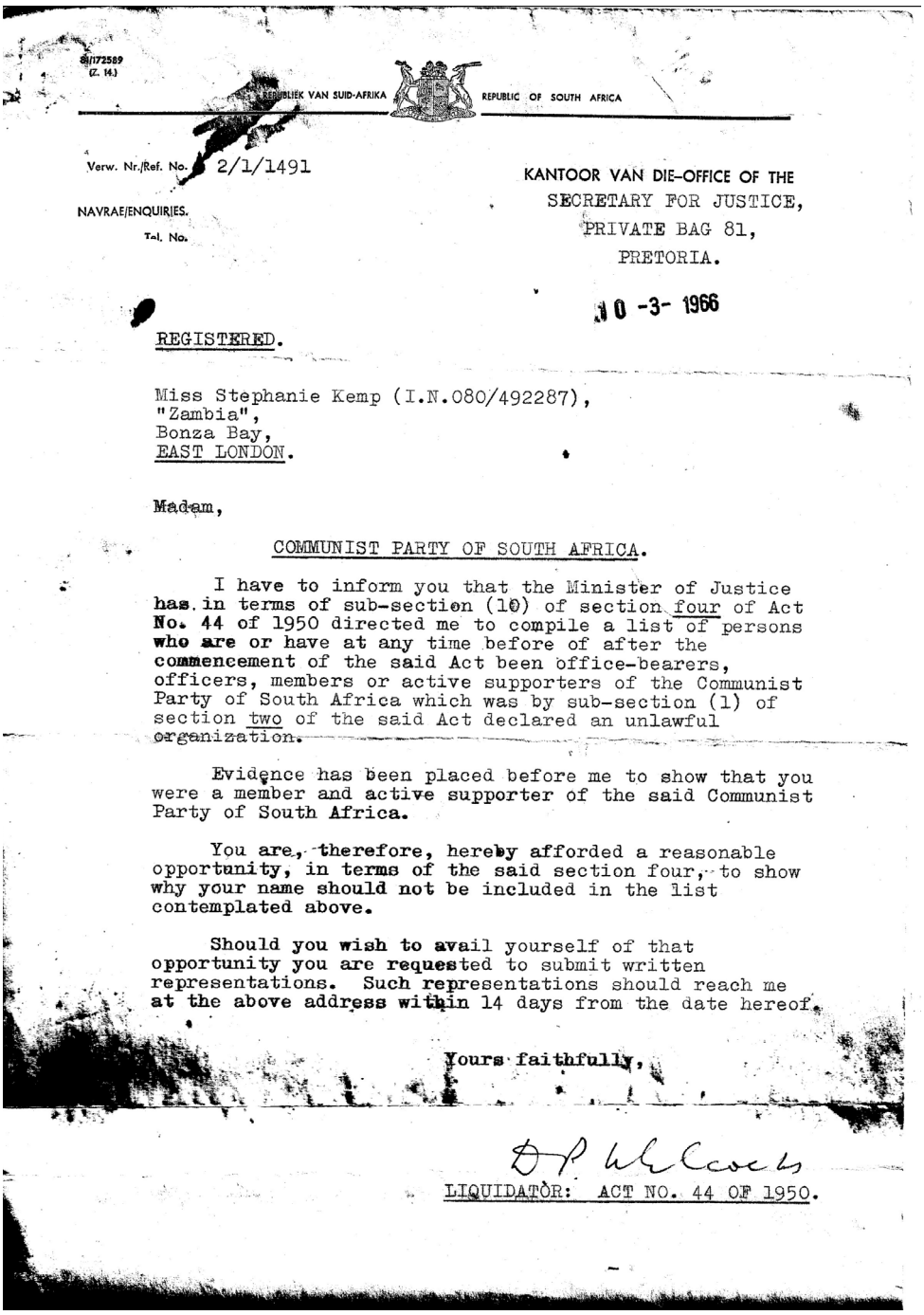
Another first year student, Libby Robb who also rejected standing for rag queen, befriended me. I could see she was beautiful – black hair, violet eyes and a rosebud mouth. She was used to success, from a prestigious girls school in Cape Town, with a posh English accent. She came from a large Progressive Party family and persuaded me to vote against the establishment of a Republic in a white referendum in 1961. I found it very difficult to vote for the continuation of the British Queen as our head of

state. But voting for the strengthening of Apartheid was worse. My head won over my heart in the only time I voted in Apartheid South Africa. But despite my vote, the Queen was defeated. South Africa became a Republic. At Libby's home, for the first time in my life I saw a privately owned swimming pool [48]. After a Saturday morning swim, her parents' rules compelled us to change out of our swimming costumes before re-entering the home. She and I alone at the dining room table were served lunch by a black servant wearing a white coat with a red sash, and white gloves. I had not encountered such rich people before.

Despite nationwide turmoil, in our white world life went on. In my class was Leslie Stevens. She was the first physiotherapy student at both Wits and UCT who was not white – in terms of Apartheid's Race Classification she was coloured. At Groote Schuur hospital where we did our clinical practice, Leslie was the only student forbidden from entering white wards - going on ward rounds, or treating white patients; she was the only student not allowed to view surgery on white patients even through the glass dome over operating theatres. In the Anatomy department, she was the only student not allowed to dissect white cadavers. She could dissect the same frogs as the rest of us did. She came top of our class in our final year. The matron of Groote Schuur hospital asked her to come to work there – Leslie replied that she had no wish to work "*in half a hospital for half the pay*". She went to work at the all-black Somerset hospital and soon left for Zambia.

On campus beyond the Physiotherapy School, my world opened up. A world of politics and ideology, a world of literature and film. I was introduced to great works of fiction, the Russian writers, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekov, Gorky. I joined a University Film Club and developed a lasting love of film – "*The Cranes are Flying*", "*Hiroshima Mon Amour*", the Russian Eisenstein's movies "*Peter the Great*", "*Battleship Potemkin*". I was determined to find people who shared my abhorrence of Apartheid, people who could explain how it worked and what I could do about it.

But at first I went to the Methodist Church in Main Road and prayed fervently that God should end Apartheid. A person without much ambition and dreams, I longed to learn to play the organ. But I never did. We attended Anatomy classes at medical school with second year medical students. Before class I went to prayer meetings led by the Anatomy professor. In a large circle of students, we would each pray aloud to Jesus. Before long on campus I discovered that it was possible not to believe in God. The moon could just be the moon, pale and beautiful. There was no angry man up there waiting to punish me. I became an atheist. It fitted me like a glove and I remained an atheist through the decades into my old age. I welcomed being responsible for the world around me.



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REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA — REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Verw. Nr./Ref. No. 2/1/1491

NAVRAE/ENQUIRIES.

Tel. No.

KANTOOR VAN DIE-OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY FOR JUSTICE,
PRIVATE BAG 81,
PRETORIA.

10 -3- 1966

REGISTERED.

Miss Stephanie Kemp (I.N.080/492287),
"Zambia",
Bonza Bay,
EAST LONDON.

Madam,

COMMUNIST PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA.

I have to inform you that the Minister of Justice has in terms of sub-section (10) of section four of Act No. 44 of 1950 directed me to compile a list of persons who are or have at any time before of after the commencement of the said Act been office-bearers, officers, members or active supporters of the Communist Party of South Africa which was by sub-section (1) of section two of the said Act declared an unlawful organization.

Evidence has been placed before me to show that you were a member and active supporter of the said Communist Party of South Africa.

You are, therefore, hereby afforded a reasonable opportunity, in terms of the said section four, to show why your name should not be included in the list contemplated above.

Should you wish to avail yourself of that opportunity you are requested to submit written representations. Such representations should reach me at the above address within 14 days from the date hereof.

Yours faithfully,

D P Wh Cooks

LIQUIDATOR: ACT NO. 44 OF 1950.

2. The Communists

I sought out political students, went to political meetings on Campus and to rallies on the Cape Town Parade. Soon I found myself volunteering off-campus in one of the few remaining legal organisations, the Defence and Aid Fund housed at the top of Plein Street near Parliament where the Liberal Party also had its offices. Defence and Aid drafted me into its Finance Committee. The volunteer Finance Committee members were all women. Older than me and welcoming. Soon I learned that almost all of them were Jewish with years of Communist struggle behind them. Deeply voiced East European accents talked of lives I had never imagined. Of a history I had never known.

There was Ray Edwards with an untidy body covered in untidy clothes, hemlines awry and colours unmatched. She had been married to trade unionist Solly Sachs[49] and they had two sons, Albie and Johnny. They divorced when the little boys were no more than 4 and 3 years old and Ray moved with them to Cape Town to a room on Clifton beach. She became a typist to Moses Kotane after the Communist Party of South Africa's Central Committee moved from Johannesburg to Cape Town in 1939. Ray briefly married again, a horn player in the Cape Town Orchestra, Norman Edwards. Dora Alexander, sister of trade unionist Ray Alexander-Simons, unglamorous glasses over a downward gaze, her gruff voice contributing pearls to the conversations. Sarah Carneson was very small with a smile and laugh that quickly evaporated as she uttered very serious thoughts, her brightness undiminished by her recent release from detention together with Dora under the 1960 State of Emergency. Sarah and Dora were buoyant wearing their detention as badges of honour.

The women were in their forties and quite different from any women I had encountered in my 18 years. A complete antithesis to my own mother who was no snob but always dressed immaculately with colour-coordinated accessories. In my family where I was the youngest of three daughters of a beautiful, elegant mother, the physical appearance of other girls, women, film stars were major points of discussion. Heads together as we whispered and giggled behind our hands "*look at her fat legs*" " *that long nose*" "*her eyes are too near together*" "*how can she wear a navy skirt with a brown blouse*". Appearance was everything. The women I met in the D&A Finance Committee seemed disinterested in, unaware even of their own appearance, or in the appearance of anyone else. They chatted about trade unionists, who was leftwing and who was wrong. They picked apart current political decisions and past political struggles. They told stories of commitment and action. They were completely sure that they were on the winning side of history and presented their views with unchallengeable certainty.

The women chatted reminiscing about past decades when they had lived a history I had never heard about. I was astonished and excited by this new version of history that was alive and lived. They gave me Eddie Roux's "*Time Longer Than Rope*" by now a banned book as Apartheid's Publications Board tried to confine and direct our minds to the other, the sanitized version of what had happened in our history. I learned of the history of earlier decades when the Communist Party of South Africa was legal. Albert Nzula, the first black general secretary who died while learning Marxism-Leninism in Moscow in 1934. Edwin Mofutsenyane, JB Marks, Bill Andrews, Eddie Roux, Yusuf Dadoo, Moses Kotane and many others. I learned of the "Native Republic" that overtook class struggle as the main contradiction in our concrete conditions in 1928 occasioning some ideological disarray in the CPSA. Until Moses Kotane pulled it together in the mid-1940s when he too returned from Moscow Nevertheless, in the early 1930s some of the first communists including Sydney Bunting, Bill Andrews, Eddie Roux and Solly Sachs were expelled, still fiercely adhering to a class struggle as the primary contradiction in the struggle.

All the women I got to know were unwavering Communists. They were from the labour movement from East European countries or from Britain, born in relatively poor circumstances. Often escaping progroms against Jews in Eastern Europe. In South Africa they continued to live simple lives despite the privilege of being white. They did not accumulate wealth and they married men who gave all their waking moments and their dreams too to the betterment of "the people", to the rise of the workers to socialism, to the overthrow of white minority hegemony. They moved in circles of communists, artists and writers who defied the ever-tightening racial strictures. Free from the fears that dogged most white people in the country.

Sarah invited me to supper at their beautiful old home in Oranjezicht on the lower slopes of Table Mountain looking out over the city bowl of central Cape Town. I got to know her husband Fred Carneson and their three young children, Lynn, Johnny and Ruth. Sarah and Fred had converted their home, *Mount Pleasant* into a boarding house to try to secure some stability in the lives of their three young children while they devoted themselves to the struggle amid disruptions that arrest brought with it. They were both staunch Communists, Sarah with a Jewish upbringing, Fred a Catholic worker. Living next door to them was Dominee Landman from my Malmesbury days. He sent soup over once when the Carneson children were all sick in bed. He was now Chairman of SABRA the Apartheid aligned South African Bureau of Racial Affairs.Supper at the Carneson home became a standing fixture for me every Thursday over a year or two. I realized that Fred was probably on the Central Committee of the clandestine SACP.

Early in 1962 when I was still 20, Fred approached me to join the SACP. It seemed that my suppers had been a period of probation, scrutiny and teaching. The Communist Party (SACP) had been outlawed and deeply clandestine for ten years. You did not ask to join. You were recruited. No membership cards in conditions of illegality. Becoming a Communist was easy. Here was the alternative South Africa I longed for. Here was the clarity I was looking for. Communists had the most radical and coherent response to the barbarities of Apartheid. Marxism-Leninism provided guidelines in charting a way forward in which history and the development of societies gave revolutionaries a distinct advantage in the quest for a new world. It was important to me that their internationalism did not expect me to give up a love of my country but expected everyone to fight for a better country in a better world. We clenched our fists with the thumb, the horn of Africa, rising defiantly into the air as we called "*Mayibuy' iAfrika*" (come back Africa).

The mayhem continued throughout the country as the people's revolt went on unabated. By 1963 people were being held for 90 days alone in solitary confinement without communication with lawyers and family, and without charges. The security police had total control of the detainee who had no recourse to courts. Immediately we started hearing about detainees being severely beaten up and subjected to electric torture. The first detainee was killed – Looksmart Solwandle Ngudle from Cape Town. We heard that even before Looksmart was detained the notorious Sergeant Spyker van Wyk had almost driven him off the road, repeatedly bumping his scooter with a police van. On 6 November 1964, Vuyisile Mini was sent to the gallows. Mini was a composer with a beautiful strong voice. He composed the song we sang for many years, "*Nants' indodemnyama Verewoerd*…" (watch out, the black man is coming, Verwoerd). Hanged with him at Pretoria's mass gallows where 7 people could be hanged at the same time, were Wilton Khayinga and Zizakile Mkhaba. They were all three prominent trade unionists from Port Elizabeth. Violent death became a reality in the lives of all who took on the regime.

3. Learning Communism

The first task as a proud new Communist was to understand the niceties of the theory. The heightened secrecy, fear and repression made it difficult. I heard there were Marxist-Leninist classes on campus led by Prof. Jack Simons of the African Studies Department. You did not invite yourself even to semi-secret activities and I was not invited. But I got to know Jack quite well off campus. He was an Afrikaner with a strong rural background. Open and bluff. Speaking his mind with strong eyes that challenged you to disagree. He had been a member of the Communist Party of South Africa in its legal days. The CPSA tried to protect its members from wholesale

arrest under the new 1950 Suppression of Communism Act by dissolving itself. In 1953 a new illegal and clandestine Party was launched in secrecy underground calling itself the South African Communist Party (SACP). Jack declined an invitation to join even though his trade unionist wife, Ray Alexander, did join. He remained an acclaimed Marxist-Leninist. [50]

There were surprisingly many white communists around Cape Town. Some were from the legal days of the CPSA and no longer members but still loyal. Others now clandestine members. My life off campus brought me in touch with them socially introducing me to a new culture. Sadie Forman's Marxist husband Lionel had died in one of Chris Barnard's first open heart surgeries the previous year, Caroline de Crespigny owned a large Borzoi dog, Laura Hitchens named her daughter Djamilla after a heroine of the Algerian War, Brenda Mercurio a single mother of two boys, and many others. Amy Rietstein thought she could find me a communist husband and I met Ray Edwards' son, advocate Albie Sachs, just once. He broke his banning order that barred him from social gatherings by attending a party in Cape Town. I had one dance with him. A graceful ballroom dancer. He risked arrest for this frivolity.

I scrounged around for Marxist books. Not an easy task in those days when books were liberally seized and banned and people clung nervously to their illegal copies. I found two books: "*Human Nature – a Marxian View*" by Vernon Venables and "*The Essential Left*" by EH Carr. I studied these eagerly and most of what I read made sense of the world around me. The intrinsic "scientific" logic was attractive, exciting, explaining the inexorable march of history through the ages. Giving me a new way of looking at everything. A theory of everything. People would change once they lived in a changed economy, greed would become unknown once capitalist profit and exploitation were overthrown. More excitingly it threw light on a way forward giving hope that, in the right conditions, activists in a powerful movement with dedicated leaders, through their own agency could indeed change the world - and bring down Apartheid. As I battled with the ideas, with dialectics, student friends around me, white friends who knew nothing of the workers' battles but assumed they knew African lives, mocked me exacerbating my instinctive dislike of NUSAS and a life-long suspicion of white liberals.[51]

I found a new way of meeting – dark streets, extreme punctuality, secrecy and surveillance against surveillance. In my Party cell there were 3 other young white people who were already known to me on campus. Our leader was Ilse Fischer, younger daughter of the renowned Afrikaner Communist, Bram Fischer. Ilse had bouncing blond curls and the frankness associated with white Afrikaners. The others in our cell were Sholto Cross, Ilse's boyfriend and Alan Brooks, not my boyfriend but a close friend of mine. Both young men were lanky quiet academics.

I was taken aback that the cell comprised white members only. But Ilse explained that it was a precaution going back even before the ascendancy of the Apartheid state in 1948, when the CPSA was not yet outlawed but suffered relentless persecution. African members were under curfew at night and could not be seen in legally designated white areas. They could be and were stopped at random in the streets by the police demanding passes. Black minorities too were confined to legally designated locations increasingly far outside the white cities and towns. Whites needed acceptable reasons and permits from suspicious white administrators to get into black areas. Having a racially mixed group trying to meet drew attention and suspicion from police and white civilians who to this day see black people on the streets as probable evidence of criminal activity. The black person risked being shot or having dogs let loose on him. At higher structures in the Party overcoming the risks was a necessity.

From the beginning of my student days, the police were everywhere. There was an evening when I sat in a car with a boyfriend in the dying light on the quiet slopes of Table Mountain at the large granite Rhodes Memorial. Soon armed, uniformed policemen who appeared out of the dark from nowhere, surrounded the car. They shone bright torches into all the windows and shouted at us to step out training their guns on us. Perhaps they thought we were breaking the Immorality Act that barred love across the colour line; perhaps they thought it was a clandestine meeting. It was neither, just two teenage white students getting to know each other. The police reaction was frightening.

I was in the struggle as an individual to change my country. Shamed by its violence and injustice. In the Party I knew that I was part of a historical movement making my own small contribution toward the national liberation of Africans. Africans who were the majority of South Africans, born of the African continent, brutalized under the centuries old barbarism of invading whites who owned guns and bibles and destroyed the very fabric of African life. I felt part of a whole with unflinching loyalty and trust in an unseen leadership. A leadership that was African.

Soon I was drawn into the production of a monthly newssheet, Focus 63. My name and address were used as the identifiable person legally required for each edition. I didn't give that much thought until one morning when I drove off, half asleep, in my red Mini Minor car that was parked overnight in the lane outside the cottage where I lived. On the highway nearby, bleary-eyed I looked dutifully in the rear view mirror and saw the word 'COMMUNIST' spray-painted in red over the back window. I screeched to a stop and jumped out only to find my whole car covered. COMMUNIST COMMUNIST COMMUNIST. Somebody knew.

Alex La Guma, a great writer and son of an early Communist, Jimmy La Guma, did most of the writing for Focus63. Jimmy La Guma had gone to Moscow and persuaded the Comintern to adopt the "Native Republic" formula. Alex and his wife, Blanche, were under 24hour house arrest in Athlone, a Coloured township. This meant I had to sneak into Athlone in the dead of night and climb over their back fence to collect copy for Focus 63 from Alex. Under 24hour house arrest orders it was illegal for Alex to write and be published for any purpose. But you could not separate Alex from writing. Alex had been born and grown up in District Six, an old and lively multi-racial area where people had lived undisturbed for generations in central Cape Town. It had narrow streets up and down the steep land below De Waal Drive that runs around the lower slopes of Devil's Peak. There were no legal restrictions on going there. There was no fence ghettoizing it and no white administration to issue permits. The white Communists I knew moved freely about District Six. They knew the people who lived there and I got to know some people there too including Zoot Mohamed, said to be a fisher of illegal crayfish that was still large and plentiful in those days. Overlooking Cape Town harbour there was a small café that I frequented – The Harbour Café where white people could indulge in eating the very large crayfish probably caught illegally, possibly by Zoot eking out an illegal living. District Six was alive with people in the streets, church bells and mosques calling people to prayer. There were picture framers and cabinetmakers, dressmakers and flower sellers. People hustled and prostitutes traded on the streets. It did not feel a dangerous place and it was just there, part of the City, an expression of the city's three hundred year history.

My new comrades talked a lot about the great and courageous Cape Town black Communists and trade unionists who were now, in the repression of the early sixties, back in the locations, driven underground, in prison, killed or driven into exile. There was Looksmart Ngudle and Elijah Loza who were killed in detention; Archie Sibeko – I found him later in exile as Zola Zembe - Mountain Qumbela, Zollie Malindi. There was Gilbert Hani who had fled to Lesotho at the same time as Elizabeth Mafekeng, a trade unionist and mother of 11 children. And many others. They became a huge and courageous, if unseen, presence in my new world. But I personally knew only a handful of black South Africans - none intimately. I met Harold Head, writer Bessie Head's husband, also Zoot Mohamed, of course Alex La Guma – I can't really remember anyone else until a little later when I met the writer, Richard Rive.

Then in the middle of all this appeared Martin Hani. He was a year younger than me, clearly a member of the SACP, already on the run having jumped bail in a trial and on his way out of the country on a clandestine route. Martin hid out briefly in my block of flats, Prince Charles Mansions on Main Road in Claremont. His father was the much talked about activist, Gilbert Hani exiled in Lesotho. I felt a connection

with Martin who had grown up in a Xhosa community in the village of Sabalele near Cofimvaba where my grandmother, Popsie Gladwin had laid the foundation stone of the Methodist Church in 1903. Martin commanded space with his powerful presence wherever he was. Even then in his early twenties, he was absolutely confident, highly intelligent, apparently fearless, wonderful, amazing. I was fiercely envious of those comrades who had the advantage of having had parents in the struggle, second or even third generation revolutionaries – like Martin Hani, Albie Sachs, Alex la Guma and many others. It seemed to me they were born into a world that made sense of it all, where struggle was part of their personal culture, and doubt was absent.

4. We were White

UCT was white. In 1959 the Extension of Universities Bill made sure it would be kept white despite liberal stirrings. I doubt that there were more than 5 black academics there during the 3 years that I studied to become a physiotherapist. Fiks Bam, later Justice Fikile Bam who passed away in 2013, was one. Archie Mafeje, later a renowned sociologist was another. Vernon February was a black Afrikaans literary figure. He fled to Amsterdam when Neville Alexander and other teachers were arrested in 1963. I was too junior to know them, except the flamboyant writer Richard Rive whom I met through Alf Wannenburgh, a white journalist. During my first year Dick van der Ross was invited to speak to a small meeting at the male residence on campus, Smuts Hall. Not a charismatic figure, he had gained a Ph.D at UCT in 1952 and almost 25 years later became the first black Rector of the then Coloured University of the Western Cape. In 1960 he made a lasting impression on me. He started his talk in Smuts Hall declaring brusquely "*Don't think you are doing me a favour inviting me here; I am doing you a favour by bothering to talk to you.*" Shaking our youthful white superiority.

It is hard to remember now what it was like to be in such a white world. A legally entrenched white world. Everything, every space in every city, town and farm was a white space. Church, sports fields and teams were white. Every beautiful place around the Cape Peninsula that we enjoyed, restaurants tucked away in beautiful mountains with elegant food, was white. White by law. Not only dominated by white people but with an absence of black people except as servants who took up almost no space, always moving about quietly, cautiously, spoken about, ordered about. Suspected and berated with every small blip in white lives. Thrown off white streets by a curfew at night. Leaving white lives mired in beauty and fear. Any white person could accost a black person to demand what business they had to be anywhere. White children emulated the haughty raised tones of their parents when ordering adult black people to do their bidding. Calling adults "*boys*" and "*girls*".

I heard contemptuous whites talk about black people – "*what do you think that k..... has in his brief-case* !" Laughter. "*A Bantu woman driving a car! Never!*" Even when it was not overtly cruel racism, white assumptions about the 90% majority black South Africans, were suspicious, contemptuous, patronizing, belittling and humiliating. Even our souls were white.

In the 1960s black people were increasingly being moved away from white areas where history might have left them. It was called the "*removal of black spots*". People were loaded on to trucks and dumped in locations far out of towns by Apartheid's rigid spatial planning; seldom venturing into our spaces, at hand in dark rooms at the back of our homes, or at the tops of blocks of flats in "locations in the sky". A friend who tended a swimming pool in a block of flats took me to a "location in the sky" once. The old men he greeted up there looked at me with disapproval assuming I was a prostitute. They were sitting on the cement outside their toilet-sized rooms, with flies and stink, sorting through huge mounds of garbage from the white flats below. Dignified men allowed no dignity. If servants were heard, there was immediate retribution. As a student in early 1960s, I visited my friend Alan on a Sunday in a small Tamboerskloof block of flats. Downstairs in the servants' quarters a black couple, the man allowed to visit his wife on sufferance from the white tenants, started arguing with each other raising their voices. Within a short time a police van drove up, four white policemen hauled the elderly couple from the room. On the pavement outside the police started beating them violently over their heads with pieces of doubled up hose piping. I was horrified. Alan and I protested. The police laughed at us while the other white tenants who had called the police, spouted venom at the couple who were unceremoniously thrown into the back of the yellow van and taken away. Probably to be deported back to the rural areas. I felt helpless and angry. Complicit.

There was a limit to how much we could escape our day-to-day white world. In the small left-wing world I got to know in Cape Town off campus, there were non-racial parties breaking numerous laws, there were friendships across the colour line – but such behaviour had become even more difficult and conspicuous invoking unwelcome police attention with the repressive clamp-down of the 1960s. At the parties whites were always in the majority, only a handful of black people ventured into the white world to share a glass of wine illegally. In the small circle of Communists who were ridiculed by the liberals on campus and hounded outside the academic space, my political education forged ahead. Our everyday conversations whirled around opinions about "*arm chair revolutionaries*" - the Trotskyists who had drifted away from the movement, cut off in the purism of their theories that were not tested in real trenches; the wisdom of starting a family in the middle of struggle – would

having children be a motivator to create a better world? Or would a protective fear inhibit activism? *Did the ends justify the means ?* No we thought, the means must contribute to the kind of ends we sought, struggle tactics must create pride and respect in our future freedom. We seldom discussed what *Freedom in our Lifetime* meant. We knew the freedom that would be ours. There would be no more poverty, no more segregation, no more humiliation and terror. We would come together when Africans had seized back the country, the land. Being amongst Communists in Cape Town was an amazing place to be in for a 20 year old with a very narrow and isolating background.

5. Rick Turner

In those first years of the 1960s on the UCT campus, I was part of a foursome of close friends who included Rick Turner and his girlfriend later his first wife, Barbara. Rick was a little younger than me with a delicate pale skin, fine features and a mop of curly red hair. He studied philosophy and read large books. But he also had a zest for life, at times taking him away from his books. He was the only child of his very English and somewhat aloof widowed mother, Jane, who lived on her apple farm, *Welcarmas* at the top of Helshoogte high above Stellenbosch. We would go out there for weekends and swim nude under a waterfall on the farm breaking down the laager of my conservative upbringing. On his mother's farm Rick organized us to give classes for the workers. I remember picking fruit off the trees to explain the earth's trajectory around the sun. Day following night. Reinforcing the white perceptions ingrained in us, that as whites we knew everything. Black people knew nothing and needed our help. Rick was a rare and bright intellect. He introduced me to the French writers Jean Paul Sartre and Existentialism, the marvelously feminist Simone de Beauvoir and Albert Camus bringing intellectualism to Algeria, our yardstick for revolution. Rick devoured the philosophy of Existentialism and in particular Sartre's great tome, "*Being and Nothingness*". He seemed to think and talk of little else. He was active in NUSAS projects and a time came when I was in the underground and I nudged him to become more active in underground political struggle. "*I don't yet understand everything*" he refused mildly as he clutched *Being and Nothingness*.

We volunteered for SHAWCO (Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation). We taught children and adults in Windermere, a miserable, dank and dark slum. I met the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Hymie Gordon and started a physiotherapy clinic treating people with bad coughs. Often undiagnosed and largely untreatable in the conditions where people lived. Made worse in the Cape Town winters when the drizzling rain never seemed to stop and everything stayed wet in Windermere. Tuberculosis was rife. One day we took one hundred or so little children from Windermere in a bus to go to the sea that they had never seen. They were joyfully

loud as we took off from Windermere early in the morning, singing a current popular song "*I have a hammer and I'll hammer in the morning, I'll hammer in the evening, all over this land…*" As we drove through Pinelands, a modest white suburb, the bus fell silent, the children were wide-eyed, mouths open at their first glimpse of the other side of the racial divide. Seeing trees lining the clean tarred streets. They were delighted splashing in the sea at Froggy Pond. After a long day when we loaded up to go home, we counted and recounted but in the end there were a few more children than those we had arrived with. We decided it was human fallibility in the counting but I continued to worry over the decades about one or two little ones we transported away from their families somewhere near Froggy Pond at the sea, to the unfamiliar slum of Windermere.

By then I was totally engaged in the underground struggle. I had serious doubts about the value of spending my time studying physiotherapy. Should I not drop out and devote myself to helping bring about a just society. The person I decided to talk to about this was a wonderful liberal physician, Bill Hoffenberg. I went to see him and without revealing my underground activities, asked *"Does it make any sense to continue this training for a profession that puts plasters on people's bodies instead of overthrowing the system?*" Bill's counsel was "Y*ou are halfway through the studying. Finish*". I am grateful he curbed my youthful militant folly. Physiotherapy was to become a secure point for me during the insecurities of a life in the struggle. Bill left the country not long afterwards, settled in the UK where he was awarded a knighthood.

6. Adrian Leftwich recruits me into ARM

In 1962 there was an upsurge in protests against the pending Sabotage Act that would tighten up already stringent security legislation. Draconian provisions would allow for six months detention without trial. Endlessly repeatable. A new definition of communism included almost any act against the state – being anti-communist didn't help; sabotage was defined so widely as to include standing with a poster on a pavement – and was punishable by death. One evening I joined a student demonstration against the pending Sabotage Act. We gathered on the fields of the UCT law school at Hidding Hall in central Cape Town and we carried burning torches. We were ready to march. Uniformed Police were there in full force, sten guns with live ammunition trained on us, Alsation dogs jumping at us barking viciously at the end of leashes in the hostile hands of policemen. Students lined the inside perimeter of the century old thick walls of the Hidding Hall field and I found myself positioned behind the ornate wrought iron gates. The police locked the gates with a pair of handcuffs. Together with another student, Spike de Keller, I stuck my torch

under the cuffs, which could have done no more harm than warm the cuffs. But the police were infuriated at our audacity. They jumped over the gates and arrested the two of us. We were taken off to the Police head quarters at Caledon Square but soon released and sent back when the student demonstrators threatened to break out and storm the police lines, guns and dogs notwithstanding. The incident was in the national newspaper headlines the next day. My father read the stories but said nothing.

Within days Adrian Leftwich approached me. I was hugely flattered. Adrian was the President of NUSAS and two years or so ahead of me academically on the UCT campus. He was above all charismatic and his small, compact stature was of no more significance than the small stature of Napoleon. He was Jewish, had unruly, thick brown hair, thick lips that could spread into a huge smile. He spoke with earnest conviction and enormous militancy against Apartheid without the usual liberal qualifications. His whole body was involved in his speeches, his hands waiving, his body swaying, oozing energy and conviction. He had a deep, well-modulated voice that seemed to be a NUSAS signature at the time. Amongst friends he was very sociable veering between earnestness and the broad smile that readily lit up his face. I admired him despite his liberalism and membership of the Liberal Party that implied anti-communism as a primary motivation. He was very ideologically aware. When he took me for coffee at the elegant Vineyard Hotel, he asked firmly for "*coffee with milk*" or perhaps "*coffee without milk*". Liberals adhered to a non-racialism that obliterated race. They did not say the words "white" or "black".

But for that first meeting he took me for coffee to Die Koffiehuis, an old-world art deco, whites-only palm court cafe in town. I did not notice how he ordered coffee. There was no small talk. He explained that friends of his had formed an anti-Apartheid sabotage organization. Would I join? He tried to suggest that he was not part of this organization. I didn't know, nor asked, who are these friends nor where do they stand ideologically. I hardly appreciated what sabotage meant. Harold Strachan had been convicted of sabotage in Port Elizabeth but I was not sure what he had actually done. I did not feel I could reveal my ignorance. *Yes, yes of course I'll join*. But Adrian insisted I should not make any undertaking there and then. *Go away and think about it*. In the coldness of my room, away from the streams of lightening that seemed to blast out of Adrian's head, I became nervous, uncertain. However when he contacted me again after three weeks, I said yes. There lurked in me a Calvinist sense of duty that told me that I could not refuse to participate in any anti-Apartheid action if I were asked. I did not tell my comrades in the SACP about his approach. Secrecy and security were powerful imperatives. Perhaps despite my *naivete*, I realized the ideological conflict.

Life with the ARM (African Resistance Movement)[52] was far more dramatic than that in the SACP. Like the newly formed Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) but unlike Poqo, the ARM was committed to the sabotage of installations of Apartheid and to avoid killing civilians. A third year student, I now found myself sneaking through the Wynberg Military camp to reconnoiter whether we could attack it. I seem to remember I was on my own but I have no clear memory. I was not given to fear. At another time, at midnight I met with Adrian on Fish Hoek beach. He laughed at my bare feet that were small with stubby toes equal in length – like my father's feet. We climbed in the dark to the top of a looming mountain above the ocean to check the security and the structure of a newly erected FM radio mast with its red light flickering at the top. We needed to determine if there was any security and how the plastic explosives could best be tamped mechanically to topple the tall metal tower. The sabotage of this mast sadly failed despite two attempts.[53]

In June 1963 I joined a small team who blew up the signal cable at four different points along the southern suburban railway line in Cape Town. After placing plastic explosives and arranging detonation at a coordinated time, the group met in a flat on Main Road remaining there through the night to listen for the results of our work. I knew very few of that group outside the *noms du guerre* of the ARM. But I did know David Russell, a close friend of Adrian from a rich Progressive family. The task was successful bringing early morning commuter trains to a dramatic halt. Filling the streets with chatter and alarm. None of these activities was accompanied by any political discussion. However, on 18th June 1964 several pylons were felled by ARM outside Johannesburg and Cape Town. We were told this action was to mark the recent life sentences of the Rivonia trialists who escaped expected hanging sentences. Within two weeks key ARM activists were arrested.

7. Arrests

4th July 1964. Police raids across the country. Thousands detained. Unusually, many white Liberals are also raided. Those not raided, panicked. Everyone felt vulnerable. I went round to Adrian's flat in the afternoon. It was Saturday. Outside his front door I saw two uncollected bottles of milk. I left, worried. Being President of NUSAS did not help. Adrian Leftwich, too, was raided. They found an incriminating document. Adrian was detained. One after the other people close to Adrian were being detained. There was a sense of uncertainty, disbelief, and fear. ARM people fled across the borders in various ways often with pre-laid plans. A few inexplicably did not. I was not privy to these plans. I did not know where to turn.

After a week, on 11th July 1964, I tried to find Jack Simons and Albie Sachs. When threatened I turned to my Communist family. I was desperately trying to seek advice as tension rose. But I could not find them. I was with a friend, Selina Molteno who lived in a Rondebosch cottage with Robert Watson, the rather politically strange ARM trainer in bomb making who had already left the country. As she drew up outside her cottage, there on the pavement was a group of men in dark suits, clearly from the Special Branch. Selina jumped out of the car shouting at them. "*You are harassing me. I will report you*." But they had come for me. Rather to Selina's surprise. As often in stressful situations I did not respond with any sense of reality – at least initially. I laughed: "*No, no, you have the wrong person*". I had a sense of relief that the tension was over. The tension as I knew it. Fearing arrest. I was to enter a bizarre new world.

They took me to Caledon Square, police headquarters in Cape Town. The building was big, cold and clattering. I slept on a felt mat and had food – bread, jam, black tea - in a tin plate, tin mug shoved through the cell door by an anonymous black hand. I had nothing to do except plan escape which, given my total ignorance, my complete isolation as a prisoner and lack of contact with the outside world, was just a nervous fantasy. I continued to plan my escape wherever I was but in the full knowledge that I had no idea how to do this and no one with whom to share ideas or courage.

I was interrogated for hours often up to four times a day and remained cocky flaunting my contempt for their racist fascism in their faces. I had read Arthur Koestler's "*Darkness at Noon*" and could feel fear creeping up from the cold cement floors. But it was possible to contain the fear. Solitary confinement was the first line of psychological assault against detainees. In earlier detentions before 1963, people were held together in large cells and although whites were always segregated in terms of Apartheid laws there was nevertheless communication between detainees. Now detainees were held incommunicado, completely isolated except for interrogators. Not allowed access to lawyers or family. Your cell was bare, little light seeped in, you had nothing in there. Suddenly, violently you were alone in a cold, gloomy box.

You are utterly powerless. Overwhelmed by naked threat. There is no distraction. Nothing but increasingly jumbled and fearful thoughts. 15 or 20 minutes in a courtyard once a day with a cigarette. Sounds from elsewhere. At times screams. Everything clanging – doors, keys, trolleys, plates. Sometimes mournful, beautiful singing. I had strange dreams, even when I was awake. Almost real images of

people that I could cling to. And then you left your body, drifting as you watched yourself, detached. As if you were watching a movie. Interrogations could be a relief. In a threatening atmosphere you were walked through passages by an armed uniformed escort to a room, sometimes an office, sometimes some other room where plain clothes interrogators waited, smoking. "*Today you are going to sing like a canary*" they smirked. Mocking and flaunting their time and complete power.

They didn't care. You felt reduced in the uncertainty. You were never given information. The intention of interrogations was not necessarily for information from you either, but to break you. So that they could triumph. To have power over you so that you would agree to anything including giving evidence or, inconceivably, becoming an agent for the system. Future detainees would know too that you had been broken. No one survives that. You were strengthened by the simple clarity of half remembered political messages. Giving evidence was the worst political crime. It was impossible to hold on to yourself, the self you wanted to be, you had thought you were. Made worse with each collapse. Making a statement crushed whatever slender threads of morale you might be hanging on to. If you were beaten up, the sense of helplessness and loss of control assumed a primal physical form. Terror was not something experienced by people outside those prison walls. You could not know that terror outside prison. You could not reason with terror.

8. Breaking

Then one day I was escorted in the middle of a posse of armed security policemen. They walked me down a passage, perhaps deliberately passing an open door. Inside a large office Adrian Leftwich was sitting quite comfortably with a couple of interrogators. He was smoking a cigarette. I barged in "*You're lucky to have smokes, Adrian*". Adrian looked at me earnestly. "*Tell them everything, there is nothing they don't know*". I was pulled out of the room not knowing how to process what I had seen and heard from such a respected leader.

In interrogations I seemed to hold my own with a certain brazenness for three weeks. For three weeks I had been entirely cut off from information about anything happening outside the cell in Caledon Square Police station. Then my chief interrogator, Sergeant Spyker van Wyk and his side-kick, Constable Zandberg entered the small interrogation room in a fury. Van Wyk shoved The Sunday Times newspaper in front of my face yelling "*See what you have done*". I saw a frontpage picture of the hated Justice Minister, Balthazzar John Vorster watching a rugby match somewhere. Bewildered by their anger I pointed to the picture and that infuriated them more. They pointed to another picture, of an old white woman and a child

seemingly injured. They told me 'your people' had bombed the all-white concourse of the Johannesburg railway station killing and maiming children.

John Harris, a 27year old teacher in Johannesburg and wellknown in sporting circles, was detained almost immediately. He was recruited into the ARM by Hugh Lewin very shortly before the wave of detentions. After Adrian's detention when it seemed possible he was talking, Hugh, a long time member and leader in the ARM, went to John Harris saying he planned to go into hiding and also indicating to John where a cache of explosives was hidden. Inexplicably Hugh didn't go into hiding, and he and his flat-mate, John Lloyd were detained. As everyone around him was being arrested, John Harris, left outside on his own, devised a defiant operation. He made a bomb in a suitcase and left it under a seat in the white concourse at Johannesburg's Park station.

Today Park Station, the main railway station in central Johannesburg, is a noisy throng of people from all over South Africa and the Continent. The surrounding streets, too, are crowded with hooting taxis, buses, cars and people in downtown Johannesburg where whites now go only fearfully. Fifty years ago in July 1964 Park Station was very different. A newly refurbished demure white space in white central Johannesburg, with separate platforms, third class carriages for quiet black people. On that day, on 24th July 1964 the white concourse became one of the very few white spaces subjected to the violence that was the daily experience of black spaces throughout South Africa during those days of struggle. John Harris's station bomb.

John expected a rapid response from the police and newspapers after he made anonymous phone calls to warn that a bomb had been planted giving its exact location and expected time of detonation. There was no response. The bomb exploded. A 77 year old white woman, Ethel Rhys died of her injuries; Glynnis Burleigh her 12 year old granddaughter suffered severe burns. 22 white people were injured, many seriously. Already in detention Hugh knew nothing of the station bomb. But that night, being beaten he gave the special branch some ARM names including the name of his recent recruit, John Harris. John was arrested, severely and violently beaten up by Captain Viktor. John confessed. Within 7 months he was hanged, the only white activist to join the roll of honour of more than a hundred black activists hanged on the Pretoria gallows in the war against Apartheid.

9. Battered

Within a day of the station bombing one thousand five hundred kilometers away, I was taken into a small storeroom in Caledon Square. I was warned: "die groot manne

kom", the big men are due. Interrogators who would brook no nonsense from me. I would '*sing like a canary*'. Captain Viktor arrived from Pretoria. He wore a white shirt and the whole of him seemed very fleshy and white. I told him he looked like a Nazi. He told me to stand for interrogation; I told him about Hyde Park in London where people could stand on a soapbox and say whatever they wanted to. I had never been there but hearing about Speakers' Corner captured my imagination. Democracy at a grassroots level. Captain Viktor was quite urbane. With him was his henchman, Van der Merwe, pockmarked, rough and ill at ease.

I didn't know that Viktor has just come from the police cells at Gray's in Johannesburg where he had interrogated John Harris and quickly and brutally beat him to such an extent that he broke his jaw. All the time Viktor was lauding his own power and clever interrogation techniques. Viktor was suave with a wider knowledge of the world, fluent in English. "*Stand here, don't move off the spot*". My initial amusement at this latest apparent foible drained as the day wore on and the standing went into the night. Once I was taken to the toilet and looked down a stairwell but the thought of ending it by leaping was hemmed in by a group of armed men.

Some time during the night Cape Town's Special Branch boss, Captain Rossouw arrived and behaved the "bad cop" routine. Impatient. Viktor took a break leaving me alone with Rossouw. Rossouw opened the door. "*Why do you think I am opening this door?*" "*It's hot and stuffy in here*". "*No, I don't want you to come with allegations tomorrow*", he replied with heavy innuendo that, in my exhausted state, I did not grasp. But I sensed a threat.

Spyker van Wyk came in, puffed up. He asked to be left alone with me. Begged. "*Asseblief Kaptein*". Rossouw hesitated. Then walked out. "*If you behave like a man*", the usually inept van Wyk screamed "*I will treat you like a man*". Then whining "*Stephanie, I know you hate me*" "*no I don't hate you van Wyk*". "*Stephanie I know you hate me*" "*No, I don't*". On and on. "*I know you hate me*". Winding himself up. Exasperated, I changed my response "*Okay, van Wyk, I hate you*".

Suddenly, completely unexpectedly, shockingly, he hit me. Slapped me across the sides of my head. With hard flat hands. Thwack thwack thwack….. Fast. My head whipped from side to side. Whip whip whip whip whip. He grabbed my long hair. His fingers meshed into my hair. He pulled me to the floor. Hit my head on the floor. Over and over and over. I lost consciousness. I came round. The room was filled with people. I saw someone kick a large ball of my hair out of sight under the table where I lay. Like a tumbleweed. "*Staan op. Staan op.*" I struggled to my knees, retching. "*Stop pretending*". Everything had changed, suddenly, dramatically. I could not speak. They demanded a confession, a betrayal. I was incoherent.

They dragged me down to the cell in the early hours of the morning, stumbling down the grey passages, passed the hole of the staircase, into the grey depths of Caledon Square, clanging my cell open. They left me on my grey sleeping mat, my head whirling with threat and fear. They left me "*We will be back for your statement*". I knew terror. It is not possible to reason with terror. Over the next day or two I lay in a miserable heap of terror on the mat on the floor of my small, dark cell. Then the weekly magistrate came to peer at me. By now my face was bruised down one side. "*How are you Miss Kemp*", he asked, perfunctorily in his usual flat dispassionate voice. "*I'm fine*" and he left. Making me feel caught in a Kafka-like nightmare.

My attorney got a message to me that there had been reports of detainees being hurt and they were concerned about me. They wrote on a small piece of blotting paper, rolled it up tightly, replaced the pith of an orange and returned the small cap that the orange provides naturally. My brave mother brought me some fruit. I can't remember if or how I got a message out to them. There were headlines that this pretty young white Afrikaans woman had been beaten up by the Security Police. My friend Alan Brooks had been similarly treated in the early hours of that morning and had his ankle twisted and twisted until it had a hairline crack fracture. I made a statement. I mentioned a name apparently new to them, David Russell. Later, to my relief, I learned that David was out of the country. I think training to be a minister of religion.

Every day, several times a day, I was told I had walked into a door, a heavy cell door causing the bruising on my face. So I was told over and over again. I began to believe the story. To question my own knowledge of what had happened. Two decades later when someone I was living with hit me across my face, I used the same legend to explain my bruised eye to colleagues at work. I had walked into a door. He said I bruised easily.

10. Wynberg, Worcester, Maitland cells

I was taken to Wynberg Police Station. The heavy cell door clanged shut behind me. As I peered into the dark corners I found inscriptions amongst the grafitti over the door. "*Sufficient Unto the Day……*" and "*A.L. Sachs was detained in solitary confinement without trial as a ninety-day prisoner for standing as advocate and citizen for justice for all*". Rather pompous I thought but it helped to know that the heroic Albie Sachs had been locked up in this cell – and survived. It was comforting. It must have taken him a long time, painstakingly scratching into the cement with the sharp back of a tube of toothpaste, or something. He was a hero I could try to emulate. Courage I could cling to.

As soon as I had arrived at the Wynberg police cells the Station Commander, Warrant Officer Snyman asked about my bruised face. When I explained to him, he said brusquely, "*Not in my police station, they won't touch you here*". He brought a magistrate who took a sworn affidavit from me. At the time Snyman's sanctimonious Christianity irritated me. And he was the enemy. It was years before I appreciated his non-conforming action to protect me. The enemy isn't all alike - there are nuances amongst them. I was still held in isolation – except for interrogations that continued unabated – not allowed any reading material or other forms of distraction. So I was quite grateful that the sanctimonious Christian, WO Snyman brought me bible after bible that I read from cover to cover in various languages and editions. I copied out in tiny script the Song of Solomon in Afrikaans with a stolen pen on a small piece of paper torn from the back of one of the bibles. I sat in the cold but sunny courtyard for 30 minutes a day, smoking. Cigarettes from my 30 pack of Perilles kept by the police disappeared rapidly and I gave up smoking not wanting the police to take cigarettes paid for by my mother. The police mocked me as I sat in the countryard curled up on the cold cement "*Sachs used to run round and round for all his thirty minutes*". Locked in the cell I could see the short lines in groups of five that he had scratched low down on the cell wall to keep track of time. I lay on the mattress hugging my knees, my eyes shut. Hour after hour. Afterwards Albie wrote "*We were prepared to die. But all we had to do was to sit day after day doing nothing*." Day after day I heard the sound of sjambok whippings, the screams of children - corporal punishment meted out by a court. Adults did not scream so much.

One day the security police loaded me into a car and drove off. They never explained where we were going or what was happening. If you asked, it gave them the opportunity to play with your fears and doubts. So it was best just to get in the car and wait for their plans to unfold. They drove me on to the Cape flats apparently on a journey without destination. I didn't mind. The atmosphere in the car was quite relaxed. They smoked and laughed. They ignored me. It was much later that I learned they had taken me to various pylons that ARM operatives had blown up and felled earlier. I had not been part of those actions but it seemed I could be used as a state witness following this mindless drive through the countryside.

Later they came again. This time I was moved to the Worcester Women's Prison about 113 kilometers from Cape Town. In police cells in Caledon Square, Wynberg and later Maitland police stations, the only window was set high and I could see nothing not even sky. Worcester seemed quite a new prison and I could see the beautiful Western Cape mountains through my cell window. On the other side of my cell was a second window. I could look onto a small courtyard where there were mating tortoises. A very awkward business. I have no memory of the cell itself but I

remember the views. The Worcester prison matron was fascinated to talk with me in her office. "*They* [black people] *don't wash*", she challenged. "*There is no water in the locations*" I educated her. That poor Worcester prison matron must have regretted her little chats with me when I, completely innocently, asked her the meaning of "*jou ma se moer*" – an expression I frequently heard shouted in prison and I learnt later is equivalent to "motherfucker". "*Wat beteken jou-ma-se-moer, Matrone*?" From Worcester I was moved back to Cape Town to Maitland Police Station. I have no recollection of this place and after a couple of weeks they came for me again.

11. "Will Accused No. 5 stop talking"

In October 1964 I was taken with four ARM comrades in the back of a police van to a Cape Town Magistrate's Court. I talked hysterically in the unexpected solidarity after three months of solitary confinement. I sang songs I had composed. Alan was accused number four. He told me to "*shut up*". In the Court there were many spectators, family and friends. Ten years after their divorce, my parents had remarried each other shortly before my arrest and stayed married until they died 40 years later. I could not imagine how they felt when I walked into the Court. There were patients in their wheelchairs from the Conradie Hospital where I had been working at the time of my arrest. In the dock I excitedly greeted everyone, oblivious of the formal proceedings. I had my back to the magistrate. "*Will accused number 5 stop talking and turn to face the bench*" he tried to control me. I was hardly aware that I was in a court. We were charged with sabotage and faced the death penalty.

I was taken to Roeland Street prison as an awaiting trial prisoner. Roeland Street prison was on the edge of central Cape Town, near District Six. It was very ugly, run down and old. I had my fingerprints taken for the first time. All my fingers. I was in an overcrowded communal cell with white women prisoners awaiting criminal trial. Roeland Street was alive, full of friendly human noise as inmates shouted to keep in touch across the prison. During the day we were all decanted into a large courtyard where white and black awaiting trial prisoners mixed freely. Once a week we could use a zinc bath outside in the yard. Between the weekly bath days rats the size of cats made the bath their home. We chased the rats and carried a bucket of hot water from the wood geyser across the yard to share. Roeland Street was an odd prison.[54] We had quite a lot of leaway and used to trade our bread and jam with the wardresses for cigarettes. I learnt to split matches four-ways, lengthwise and rolled cigarettes from almost anything, sometimes tea leaves. A Catholic priest asked the authorities to give me a glass rosary with a crucifix blessed by the Pope.

Every day there were newspaper headlines about our trial, unusual because we were unknown young white South Africans from ordinary white homes, on capital charges for sabotage. I was the only woman on trial and my photo was on the front pages of the newspapers. "*Beeldskoon*", they said. "*From the side she looks like Grace Kelly*" with elaborate details of what I wore in court. Grace Kelly was a Hollywood star, rather cool and distant who gave it all up to marry the Prince of Monaco. She had a daughter called Stephanie. I was allowed few visitors. Alf Wannenburg and Richard Rive gave my mother support and brought her to the prison with clothes for the trial. Alf wrote daily long letters to me in a tight, difficult handwriting on lined paper. He asked me to marry him. He sent me a yellow, smoky topaz as an engagement ring. Rick Turner wrote words of encouragement in his spidery handwriting from France where he met Jean Paul Satre during his sojourn to study philosophy, to understand. I heard that my sister Bernice had been walking with friends somewhere in the Namibian desert during my detention and, in what could be called the openness of Afrikaners, she momentarily broke free from the stranglehold of white propaganda and asked her friends "*What is wrong with Communism anyway?*" The story doesn't relate how her very conservative friends reacted. Just that she did return safely from the desert!

I knew Albie Sachs by his reputation as a courageous Communist and I had asked that he should be part of my legal team that included my attorney, warm Himie Bernadt who tried hard to keep a professional distance and senior counsel, Wilfrid Cooper SC who had no such problem. I saw my junior counsel, Albie often across the drab table in the drab visitors' room in Roeland Street. He has since written how disappointed he was at our first meeting to find the lovely girl of his dreams in the newspaper photos now a rough, loud harridan. But our consultations were so frequent that the wardresses would call: "*Kemp, your boyfriend is here*". And apologizing for breaching his professional conduct, he brought a rosebud for me into that ugly place that held me. Our consultations were intimate, far away from the drabness around me, from the darkness that threatened me. During his detention the previous year Albie had not made a statement to the security police. He came out a hero. But he felt that he had come close to his breaking point, that he had nearly made a statement. He was shocked by what he perceived as his weakness. I did not have such high expectations of myself – I was detained, I was beaten up, I made a statement. I was very relieved that my statement did not do much immediate damage and that I did not succumb to the pressure to become a witness for the state. Our world was dangerous and we were on the back foot. I had something of a breakdown one day in Roeland Street prison. I suddenly fell to the floor, shaking and crying out. Another prisoner took me to the bathroom and I started screaming, pins and needles running up and down my arms. I lost consciousness coming to when someone put a wet

cloth on my face. I fell into a deep sleep. The prison doctor's Valium prescription seemed to make little impact on my continued simmering state of hysteria, reliving the assault on me, watching from outside, myself small and helpless while my head was pounded on the floor.

We were five accused who appeared on the capital offence of sabotage. Eddie Daniels, accused number one, Spike de Keller accused number two, Tony Trew accused number three, Alan Brooks accused number four, and me, accused number five. The cantankerous Judge President Andries Beyers presided in the Supreme Court in Wale Street, Cape Town. Everyone was deeply shocked when still detained Adrian did not appear with us. And soon it turned out that the President of NUSAS Adrian Leftwich was giving evidence against us. Himie tried to impress on me that in my testimony I should put pressure on Adrian to try to dissuade him from his anticipated tour as a state witness. "*There but for the grace of God go I*" flitted through my head. There was no doubt in my mind that Adrian's compliance with the Security Police had saved me from further extreme pressure to become a state witness, which would have crushed me. As it crushed him.

When I arrived at the Court on the day that the trial was to begin, my lawyers explained that they had just that morning cut a deal with the State. Three of us would plead guilty to the much less serious charge of belonging to an illegal organization under the Suppression of Communism Act. The change in charge immediately reduced the maximum prescribed sentence from death to ten years with the possibility of suspended sentences. Our trial was postponed for a week. In their separated trial, Adrian gave evidence against Eddie Daniels and Spike de Keller who still faced the death penalty. The court was cleared for his evidence. Cross-examination was gentle, polite. Adrian broke down shaking with sobs as he collapsed in the witness box. "*God, I am only 24 years old,*" he wailed. The Judge President called him a disgrace to the genus rattus. Three days before our smaller trial, the trial in Pretoria in which John Harris pleaded guilty to the Johannesburg station bomb was over and he was sentenced to death.

Tony Trew, Alan and I had our trial separated and the much nicer Judge Banks, with two assessors, took over. A large crowd was there outside and inside the Supreme Court as we pleaded guilty to the lesser charge. Adrian was to be the only witness for the State in our trial. We would not mount a defence. He was due to go to Johannesburg to testify in another trial that hadn't started. I was delivered to court late and as I walked up the steps to the dock that reminded me of a Dutch Reformed pulpit, my lawyers gave me a statement to be read to the Court. I had not worked on the statement and my lawyers had put it together from my hysterical outpouring

after 3 months of human and sensory deprivation in detention. For years afterwards I bridled under the tone of the statement that I spoke from the dock for all the world to hear. It painted me as a confused girl. I cringed particularly at that part of the statement that read "*I did it for Adrian and for humanity*". Newspapers made this their headline story. Die Burger ran its front-page story: "*A person can only wonder how a girl like the lovely Stephanie Kemp could appear in court on such a charge. And she pleaded guilty……..The answer is a man – Adrian Leftwich….*" I bridled with renewed humiliation when Albie included my statement in a book he wrote later. I was a revolutionary willing to die for freedom. But I was young, a woman with looks that apparently made it difficult for people to take me seriously.

My father gave evidence in mitigation of sentence – something I had not expected him to do in a thousand years. I felt sorry for him as he stood in the dock, brave, small and alone. He said I had been a good girl, a good daughter. Dr. Hymie Gordon with whom I had worked in SHAWCO was a second warm and supportive witness for me. My father was angry, hurt, humiliated when Dominee Landman attended the trial. "*He is just gloating*". Judge Banks lived up to his reputation as a kind judge and our sentences were light. It all seemed unreal to me. The Special Branch who still hovered about, told me I would get five years and then were pleased that they were right. But of the five years of my sentence, three were suspended. The other two accused got four years with two suspended.

The Minister of Justice, Balthazzar Vorster announced that if our parents could show that we had been influenced by NUSAS he would consider our early release. Later my father went to see Vorster in Pretoria. I never learnt what my father said to the Minister but despite my disdain for NUSAS, my sentence was reduced by a year. I was angry that my father had pleaded with the regime and that I had privileged treatment. I protested that I was privileged as a white prisoner, as a "helpless girl". Four of us in the Cape Town trials, all white, had our sentences reduced; Eddie Daniels spent his full 15 years on Robben Island. Early release or parole was unheard of for political prisoners. The lawyers said it would set an important precedent. Nelson Mandela sentenced to life just months before, wrote to the Minister from Robben Island mentioning me by name and pointing out this precedent. He requested that early release should be extended to those on Robben Island. Unsurprisingly, he was ignored. On 1st January 1965 at the end of the trials in which he gave evidence, Adrian was expelled from the country to Britain. He was reviled by all his erstwhile colleagues and friends. Later when he got a job at Sussex University, Alan spearheaded a campaign that got rid of him. Eventually he found sanctuary in the Quaker town of York.

12. "Vooruitsig"

A few days after I was sentenced on 11 November 1964 I was taken to a military airport. It was summer and I was wearing a red dress with a broad belt. In the cavernous back of a military aeroplane young new soldier recruits gazed at me with open mouths. They had not been informed of their terrorist co-passenger. No one dared speak to me. Like a distant queen I was silent as we flew for two hours to Pretoria, probably to the now notorious Waterkloof military airport base. I was escorted by the head of prison security, Colonel Aucamp who had the last word in the lives of political prisoners throughout the country. When the plane landed Colonel Aucamp took me to his home in Pretoria to have tea with his wife. It was humiliating to be on display. I remember the tea in elegant cups but I don't remember what we chatted about. I probably smiled and giggled nervously. Aucamp was to see me every few months while I was in prison. He was quite jovial, like a sympathetic uncle and for the first time since my detention I was willing to speak Afrikaans to a state functionary. Interrogators were mostly Afrikaans and struggled with English which gave me a little spurious advantage as my English was fluent.

Col. Aucamp was very rotund. He related to me that the prisoners on Robben Island told him that one day when they were free and we had an African government they would boil him in a large three-legged pot big enough for his large round body. He laughed uproariously. I think he died of natural causes before liberation. From Pretoria he took me by car on a two or threehour drive to Kroonstad in the OFS, site of the main prison for criminal white women serving long-term prison sentences. Historically the prison in the centre of the country was where African women political prisoners were held. In 1913 when Charlotte Maxeke led women across the Free State in demonstrations against attempts to extend the Pass Laws to African women, they were held here in Kroonstad prison. In 1964 black woman political prisoners were still held there in a now modernized prison, *Vooruitsig* in Kroonstad. Black men were sent to Robben Island, white men to Pretoria. At the time I was the only white woman political prisoner in the country.

When I arrived there, I was returned to solitary confinement and I assumed that would be my fate for the two years of my sentence. Going back to solitary confinement was unbearable. The first time it seemed possible to hold out partly because I did not know how solitary confinement felt. This time I could anticipate it. For a whole week I lay curled up on a bed, my eyes closed, not eating, hardly moving. At the end of the week I was taken into a room next to the office of a rather pleasant matron, Erica van Zyl. I felt stifled when the door closed. I did not look up. All I saw in front of me were many shiny black shoes and the bottoms of black trousers. Special Branch. I started

screaming and I could not stop. The matron came flying in, took me into her office, gave me *sal volatile* and swore she would never let "them" near me again. Again protected by an Apartheid functionary: "*As long as you are in my charge, they will not come near you*". I never saw their faces. What did they want? The prison doctor prescribed vitamin pills. Aucamp instructed that I would be allowed to join the criminal prisoners for work and lunch during the day. So I joined all the other white women who numbered about 30 with long-term sentences in South Africa. During lock-up and weekends I was alone in my own brand-new prison wing. The women had been warned of the dangerous terrorist who was to join them. I entered their communal space, timidly and defeated. They were horrified about the unwarranted warning and their collective sympathy swung in my favour. I was 23 years old but must have looked years younger – very thin with a drab ponytail, bewildered. A hare caught in car lights. They taught me how to clean my wing sweeping the large area, polishing by standing on a cloth and turning my feet in a sort of twist dance popular at the time as I moved across the floor. "*Let's twist again, as we did last summer*…".

Our hard labour was crocheting very large white tablecloths that were sold by the prison to supplement its budget. Sometimes we had to iron shirts belonging to the chief matron's husband. She yelled at us if the ironing was not perfect in her opinion. I can't remember her name. Small and cruel. She called all black women political prisoners "*Poqos*". She frequently boasted of the vicious treatment she meted out to them. A Unity Movement activist from Athlone, Dulcie September had been sentenced to five years on 15 April 1964 and must have been there – a poqo. Brutalised by this little chief matron who enjoyed it. She curled her hand over the top of my shoulder and squeezed mercilessly. She offered to smuggle an uncensored letter to Alf. I refused. It would probably have cost me punishment of "three meals" – meaning one was locked up in a punishment cell and missed three meals. Or a further sentence. This same matron gleefully informed me that my cousin, Tertia Gladwin was imprisoned in East London for perjury. Tertia had been caught with her boyfriend in a stolen car. The boyfriend was a member of the proto Nazi organization, *Die Boerenasie*. The matron told me that Wilton Mkwayi had been detained. Watching to see me burst into tears. I didn't know him. I spent that Christmas in Kroonstad prison. I sang a solo '*Silent Night*' in German "*Stille nacht, heilige nacht*…" under a tall Christmas tree before the collected Prisons Department Officers and fellow white women inmates. Before being locked again in my solitary wing of the prison. There were '*jollers*' and '*battlers*' amongst the white women. The jollers enjoyed their lives outside in a vibrant non-racial world that thrived in neglected corners of the white cities, hitch-hiking from city to city. The battlers were hard workers, struggling to put food on the table for their children. They resorted to prostitution, fraud or illegal abortion services. Battlers were strong women, stern and

a little frightening. There were lesbians who made lewd signs. But all the prisoners were protective toward me.

A young woman probably younger than me who lived in a caravan in, then, South West Africa was there for murder. For reasons that she was quite incapable of explaining she had shot dead her sixmonth old baby. And then she shot and wounded her fiveyear old daughter. She was the only prisoner admitting guilt. Everyone else insisted they were falsely imprisoned. Some women with life sentences for murder of love rivals, husbands and lovers, had spent time in the Pretoria death cell before having their death penalty commuted. One boasted that after she attacked her, the nipples of her adversary were found in her faithless lover's trouser turn-ups. They talked a lot about the death cell for white women. Of course, in Apartheid South Africa there were distinct death cells for the different race categories. But the mass gallows where 7 people could be hanged at one go were probably racially segregated only when in action. The last white woman to be hanged in South Africa was Maria Rheeder in 1959, my last year at school. In Latin class that day I looked at my watch and exactly at 11am I put my hand up and announced: "*at this very moment Mrs Rheeder has been hanged.*" The teacher said nothing but wrote on the board – in English – "*there but for the grace of God, go I*".[55] The phrase stuck with me. Possibly the most famous white woman hanged was Daisy de Melker who poisoned several of her own husbands and sons in the 1930s. The women at Kroonstad who knew, told me that the death cell had black painted walls and you could see stains where Daisy de Melker had sweated blood in the days before she was hanged. On some days you could still hear her pitiful wails.

As a D category prisoner, I was allowed a visit of 30 minutes every six months and one exchange of letters of 500 words. Kroonstad is in the Free State, hundreds of kilometers from my family. When I left Kroonstad after some months, again by car back to Pretoria, we passed Bernice and Jack on their way to visit me, a fruitless trip. The prison authorities must have given permission well before for the planned visit. Knowing I would not be there. This time we entered Pretoria through defence force back roads. Everywhere men in uniform stopped to salute our car carrying now Brigadier Aucamp. I could feel the might of the state with endless kilometres of armoured cars, men in uniform and bristling with weapons, camps and barracks.

13. Death cell

After several months I was back in Pretoria in a prison cell. For a few nights I had nightmares of a lifeless body wrapped in a blanket sharing my narrow bunk. It hit me. I was in the death cell. I recognized the black painted walls with "*Daisy de*

Melcker's bloody sweat stains". On Saturdays when the shrill prison siren was tested, I could hear her wailing. The cell was in a tower and if I stood on a locker, out of a small window I could see the world move far below. I could see long lines of black prisoners being marched off to work. The black warders guarding them carried spears; the white warders assault rifles. Once I saw a small dog that had fallen into a swimming pool used by warders. It looked like the only dog my family ever owned, Dickie. It couldn't get out of the pool and swam round and round for hours. When the white women warders eventually rescued it at the end of the day, the little dog's back legs were paralysed.

For two hours every day I was taken into a small courtyard. They were wonderfully encouraging minutes. Black female prisoners hanging laundry in the courtyard smiled and whispered to me from behind the laundered sheets, calling softly "*Khongolose*"; under the circumstances it seemed too complicated to explain that I was not there from Congress (the ANC), so I left it, basking a little guiltily in the warmth of their admiration and camaraderie. They called me '*Hlengiwe*" because the harsher my situation, the more I smiled and laughed. One strong and dignified woman held longer stolen conversations with me from behind the hanging sheets. When she was caught, she asked the crass 19 year-old white wardress "*Now has anything fallen down, fallen from the sky*?" Even the warders had been instructed not to talk to me. But there was an 18 month old prisoner's child, born in prison. No one stopped me talking to him. Tertius was skinny with bandy legs. He rushed every day to play with me, happy with the attention. "*Nona, nona*" in a trusting little voice as I arrived. He ate mud in the courtyard and thrust his hand down the front of my shapeless khakhi dress when I carried him, wanting milk, nourishment. His innocent love was a joy for me in the relentlessly harsh world. A Methodist minister was my only visitor. We discussed Jane Austen. The bread in Pretoria was remarkably good. Like soft buns. Called "katkop" [cat's head]. I never had butter.

Only once was I allowed to take a book from the prison library. I was thrilled to find Jean-Paul Satre's "*Iron in the Soul*" there on the shelves. It is a novel about French partisans in the Second World War. Somewhere in the middle of the book I stumbled on a line: "*We committed ourselves to action before we knew what it is all about.*" I thought of Rick Turner. One night I listened as the whole prison sang right through the night, in rousing rich harmony, sorrowfully, strongly "*God be with you till we meet again*". At 5am on 1st April 1965, a very young wardress came to my cell and whispered through the spyhole: "*John Harris has just been hanged.*" Singing through the night was the prisoners' farewell to those who were to be hanged at dawn. When he was hanged, John Harris had a baby son, David. As he was led to the gallows John sang the American civil rights song, " *We shall overcome, we shall*

overcome some day; deep in my heart, I do believe, we shall overcome some day". The bitter three-century struggle against unimaginable injustice in our country claimed another courageous life.[56]

14. Barberton farm prison

After a few months I was moved again. I was left in the courtyard at the Fort women's prison in Hillbrow. I sat on a small wall around a palm tree[57] in the courtyard of the Women's Prison. Waiting. Six other white women had just been sentenced for their membership of the SACP. They were in high spirits when I joined them in the back of a police van. I did not know them, nor even heard of them. They were all from Johannesburg. Esther Barsel was the oldest and provided the rest of us with stability. Her husband, Hymie, was already imprisoned for SACP membership. Jean Middleton a teacher who was angry and uncompromising, previously married to Harold Strachan. Ann Nicholson, my age, an art student later a lover of Thabo Mbeki. Flo Duncan who many years later married Paul Trewelha, a fellow accused who turned on the Movement. Sylvia Neame was particularly provoked by the prison officials. She was the girlfriend of Ahmed Kathrada, a Rivonia trialist. Bram Fischer's niece, Molly Doyle who was softly spoken, unsmiling and vulnerable.[58] We were driven across the eastern Transvaal without knowing where we were going. We stopped 'for lunch' in Middelburg where there were the smallest cells I had ever seen. It was impossible to stand upright in any one of the row of tiny cells.

Late in the afternoon we reached Barberton farm prison at the foot of the mountains of Swaziland. We tumbled eagerly out of the back of the van. We were quickly silenced by a large, intimidating deputation of prison matrons and officers. We were taken into a room. Two wardresses ordered us to undress and stand in a naked row. Awkwardly one or two of us were made to tausa.[59] For weeks we were constantly shouted at, provoked, constantly watched by a wardress close by. We were not allowed to speak to one another. Miss Taljaard, a teenage wardress admitted later they were "on orders" to treat us harshly. Later Brig. Aucamp said he had given the orders. Within a day African male prisoners appeared outside to erect metal cages over our already barred windows in our small section. Amid the loud banging they gazed at us silently, wondering. We gave them the "Mayibuy' iAfrika" thumbs-up salute. Barberton is in a semi-tropical area and large colourful flying *goggas* [beetles] banged loudly into the new metal cages. Armed guards patrolled outside. When one of us tried to shut a window, a guard shouted "*Pasop ek sal jou kop skiet*" [watch out, I'll shoot your head].

Hard labour for us was washing clothes in cement washbasins with cold water and bars of red soap for 8 hours a day. Washing the uniforms of the African male prisoners. The seats of the short pants African men had to wear were frequently caked thick with blood and medical salve. Evidence of whippings. In that first week we were so determined to prove we were not spoilt white madams that we unknowingly washed a week's supply of laundry in one day. We were not allowed to talk at all to one another. Wardresses remained close by, even at night, to make sure we did not talk. Gradually this rule became eroded. We were never allowed out of our section. Later we were allowed a 15 minutes break in the tiny courtyard once a week on Sunday. But this too increased and later we would cut the lawn with garden shears. There was a rabbit that died. And another. After weeks of struggling to get hold of the prison rules, we were given a four-page summary and the first rule read "*All prisoners will be issued with a copy of the rules*."

A very young wardress on guard outside our silent locked section, played the guitar in the warm evenings singing in a plaintive voice a popular song of the time "*I wanna go home, I wanna go home, O how I wanna go home*". We could see the African women working in the hot sun in the sisal plantations that shredded their hands. If these women washed their ugly bloomers more than the prescribed once weekly they were punished with 'three meals', missing 3 meals. If they sang outside the officially sanctioned songs and times, they were punished with 'three meals'. In every other prison it was the continual beautiful choral singing that flooded the dark corridors and offset the clanging of doors and tin plates and lifted one's spirits. Barberton prison was not a good place.

On his first visit to me there Colonel[60] Aucamp warned me "*don't be misled by the Communist Jews*" who had joined me. I quickly discovered that only Ester Barsel was Jewish. In prison it was always advisable to claim one's religion as it meant visits from rabbis, pastors, priests. But in this case it also meant that for all her sentence of three years Esther could not eat the quite good pork from pigs raised on the prison's farm and instead she got tough beef probably bought from a local shop. Rumour had it that our food was laced with stuff called "blue grass" to inhibit our sexual drive. Some of us stopped menstruating while we were there. I used unused sanitary towels to arrange my long hair in an elegant bun on the back of my head.

I learned even more about the Party and the history of the struggle from my fellow prisoners, their own experiences in their Johannesburg SACP district. They also reminisced about Johannesburg city where I had never been, the Florian café in Hillbrow that was then a whites-only flatland. I found myself day-dreaming about Albie. In the months I was locked up with these SACP members, I never revealed

that I was also a member of the Party. Despite my evident enthusiasm, it never occurred to them. I learnt from them an Afrikaans version of The Red Flag that a criminal prisoner had worked on with Bram Fischer – a revered member of the Central Committee –

"Begroet, begroet die moregloed	Greet, greet the morning glow
O vaandel rooi soos mensebloed	O flag red as human blood
Wat in jou vlamme voue dra,	that carries in your flame folds
Die Vryheid van Suid-Afrika.	The Freedom of South Africa.
Omhoog, omhoog die rooi banier	On high, on high the red banner
Te lief, te sterf, te seëvier.	To love, to die, to conquer.
Vir broederskap, geregtigheid	For brotherhood, justice
In heel die grote wereldwyd.	In the whole great worldwide.
Die Vryheid het ons siel gevoed	Freedom fed our souls
Ons offer gees en hartebloed…..	We offer spirit and heartblood……

There are more verses but they have died with my memory.

NUSAS organized for me to study through UNISA, South Africa's very large correspondence university. I studied Philosophy, Anthropology, Sociology and Psychology. Prison authorities, probably Colonel Aucamp who had dictatorial control over our every move, refused permission for the prescribed Anthropology textbook "*Reaction to Conquest*" by the highly regarded UCT anthropologist, Monica Hunter. An essay in which I used the word "*African*" rather than the official "*Bantu*" was also held back. But I enjoyed the studying. And all the books that went with it.

For the first time in my life I had toothache. I was not surprised that the prison authorities took an inordinately long time, three months, to respond to my complaint of having a toothache. Eventually I was loaded into a prison van and taken into town. I was put into the dental chair surrounded by a lot of guards. The dentist leaned over me with his little instrument and we recognized each other. It was my cousin, Gertjie Bezuidenhout. I did not even know then that my cousin was a dentist in Barberton. I hadn't seen him since I was 10 years old. We were stunned but neither of us said a word in recognition, although the authorities clearly knew. So strong was white Afrikaner affirmative action that they would rather send me to my cousin than to an English dentist. Gertjie refused to pull my tooth as the authorities were insisting. He filled it. He dropped my mother a note saying "*God, Millie, ek het my byna doodgeskrik*" [God, Millie, I nearly died of fright]. My father came to visit me there for the 30 minutes I was allowed once every six months as a D category prisoner. It was the only visit I had during my time in prison. Tension rocketed in anticipation of a rare visit. I made an agenda. Finding ways to

discover what was going on "outside". I had a letter from the Department of Health saying I was barred from being employed as a physiotherapist. It seemed distant, not important.

Just before Christmas in 1965 I was suddenly transported back to Pretoria Central Prison. A row of single cells was open at the top of the separating walls helping prisoners to communicate even though we were not allowed to. Leslie Schermbrucker was in an adjacent cell. I didn't know her and only discovered after my release that her husband was my mother's first cousin, Ivan Schermbrucker. He was serving 5 years for membership of the Central Committee of the SACP. I was given cigarettes but knew that the smell of tobacco smoke would reach everyone and other prisoners were not allowed cigarettes. Also in the row of cells was a senior nursing sister whom I had known at Kroonstad Women's Prison. I can't remember anymore why she had a long, 15year prison sentence – perhaps for fraud. She was in Pretoria prison now after having had a leg amputated for Burger's Disease. This nursing sister knew as well as I did that Burger's Disease is directly linked to smoking that can lead to peripheral circulation difficulties that lead to limb amputations. She knew, as I did, that if she continued to smoke the disease would progress and more limbs would have to be amputated. That if she stopped smoking this would immediately arrest the process. Between the stomping of prison warders, she begged me to smuggle cigarettes to her. She said it was the only thing that made imprisonment bearable. I thought and thought – she was an adult, a highly trained health worker, informed. I understood how unbearable imprisonment was. I made sure that she clearly knew the implications. I smuggled the pack of cigarettes to her. And I'm still filled with doubt and guilt. I don't even remember her name.

Colonel Aucamp briefed me that following my father's intercession with the Minister of Justice, BJ Vorster, he had decided to release me one year early. Vorster wanted to know from him whether I had changed my politics. Col. Aucamp in turn wanted to know from me whether I had. "No" I said emphatically. Aucamp assured me that that was his response to Vorster, only adding that some of my "*rough edges had been smoothed*". At least this time my dignity as a militant revolutionary was upheld.

I was released just before Christmas in 1965.

15. Outside

My mother and father fetched me from Pretoria prison. We spent the night in a smart hotel. I vomited when I ate butter for the first time in months. I couldn't sleep. At 4am

I got up, lit a cigarette and stood at the window watching the moving lights of the city far below. The next morning my father walked with me through the streets of Pretoria. It was nerve-wracking. So many people and so much traffic. So much noise. At Van Schaik's Bookshop his intentions became clear. There was a huge window display of a new book "*The Fourth of July Raids*", a potboiler written about the ARM by two journalists, Miles Brokensha and Robert Knowles. My father had clearly read it and did not approve. It was all about clammy hands and thighs as young women went into the dark to set bombs. Once I was politically exposed, my father's attitude toward me always seemed deeply disapproving but with an underlying admiration that I had the guts to do what I did, to act on my beliefs. He was ambivalent about his own refusal when approached to join the pro-Nazi *Ossewabrandwag* sabotage organisation during the Second World War. The book about the ARM, however, won his disapproval mainly for the sloppiness of the writing and I now have a copy littered with his comments on its inconsistencies.

As the only condition of my parole from prison I was compelled to live with my parents in the then still underdeveloped Bonza Bay up the coast from East London. On that condition I was not served restrictive banning orders as was usual when political prisoners were released. The 1000kms or so drive from Pretoria southeast to the Indian Ocean at East London was strange. The countryside was beautiful. Green after the rains. I remembered. The fear I had for my father as a child returned compounded by my experiences with harsh men during my imprisonment. Whenever he walked behind me I felt myself sweating, turning cold. Somewhere in my adolescence I started calling my father "*Basie*" (little boss) and never called him anything else after that.

"*Zamia*", the rented house where my parents lived in Bonza Bay since remarrying each other, was lovely. A sprawling bungalow set in a wild sub-tropical piece of unspoilt land. The isolation, the wild orchids, birds and monkeys, and the gentle sea of my childhood felt like a warm enfolding tjalie. I struggled to find work. I was blacklisted as a physiotherapist. I applied for a receptionist job at a medical practice of four doctors. "*Rather over qualified?*" When I explained, two of them wanted me, two didn't. I applied for a Physiotherapy post on the mines. "*Where were you those two years missing from your CV?*" I didn't bother to reply. I attended the then all-white technical college to study shorthand typing and to continue Xhosa lessons I had started in Cape Town three years earlier. Outside was a strange world. I went to parties. People danced weirdly. I felt out of place. It was wonderful being with the sea again, feeling the warm sun on my skin. I was 24 and had been through a lot. I felt strong, defiant of my parents' authority. I came home at 2am one night and Basie was sitting on the stoep waiting for me. I walked straight passed him and went to

bed. He got the message and the following night I found a Cadbury's chocolate under my pillow. I said nothing. Barry Streek, a young journalist from a liberal family in East London, befriended me. He took me to political meetings including a meeting of the ruling Nationalist Party. We nervously put up our hands, the only hands against the resolution in support of the NP candidate. We were hustled out of the meeting. Straight from prison back into the heart of the beast.

Through a new friend I was given a job as a telephonist/typist at the local branch of Firestone SA in East London. An African worker at Firestone came to speak to me. He needed money for someone's registration fee at Fort Hare University. I gave him the money without conditions. The Branch Manager found out and made the worker repay me over several months. It was not acceptable and drew unwelcome attention for an African worker from the warehouse to have a conversation with white staff in the reception offices. Perhaps the conspicuous conversation was related back to the Manager who questioned the worker and made him pay me back. It was easy for whites to get jobs from which the 90% majority of South Africans were barred by law and convention. I knew nothing about switchboards or tyres. I mistakenly ordered small white-walled sports tyres for a farmer's tractor. Which didn't go down too well with the farmer when the useless tyres arrived on his farm.

16. General HJ van den Bergh

On a Friday three security policemen from Pretoria turned up at Firestone to see me. They said I needed to fly with them to Pretoria immediately for further interrogation by the head of the Security Police, General van den Bergh himself. If I refused I would be arrested. So I went. General v.d.Bergh had started the notorious secret police, the Special Branch that would become the sinister Bureau of State Security (BOSS) in 1969. In time he would blatantly admit to having secret hit squads that committed gross human rights abuses, killed and disappeared people.[61]

General van den Bergh's office was in central Pretoria, high up in COMPOL building, the 10th floor where torture and death were sanctioned. MK operative, Babla Saloojee, was the first detainee known to have been thrown from a 7th floor interrogation room at another police building, Grays, on 9 September 1964. Others were to follow over the years of Apartheid. I stepped into v.d. Bergh's huge office. The door shut and I was alone with him. I felt cold. Frightened. I sat down facing him across his heavy, ornate desk. Behind me hung portraits of Hendrik Verwoerd and BJ Vorster. Van den Bergh was an imposing figure - thin, very tall, pale with rimless glasses. I was 24 years old, pretending confidence. He opened a desk drawer. He said he wanted to show me that there were no recording devices in his office.

His eyes searched me and he said I did not fit the image that he had formed of me from reports by his underlings. He expected a "*gytjie*" (viper) and instead I reminded him of his late daughter, killed in a car crash. He became lost in an extended sentimental reverie.

It was an all-day interrogation. He wanted to know about the SACP. He told me that Fred Carneson had given my name as a member of the Communist Party. Fred was the Central Committee member who had recruited me four years earlier. He was in detention. I flatly denied membership. My story was that they might have intended to recruit me but that my impression was that they were in such a chaotic state that the intention remained unrealized. He was very curious about my Thursday night visits over almost two years to the Carneson home. He let it go when I insisted that I simply had supper with Fred and his wife Sarah, a family away from home. But now here I was, sitting high up in Compol Building across a portentous table from the Ossewa Brandwag General and I am clinging to secrecy, protecting my membership of the SACP. Vd Bergh is not getting anywhere. He is sidetracked into a sort of fascination that I do not fit his picture of a dangerous Communist terrorist. He seems to expect me to be loud and aggressive. I am too intimidated. Perhaps he wonders if his beloved daughter could have become a communist. Narcissism interferes with his interrogation. He tells me a story of a problem solving exercise he posed to "*my manne*" [his men] during training. He asked them what they would do if they were unarmed in the veld and a lion charged at them. With personal knowledge of these things of the wild, they said they would climb a tree. Believing that lions generally do not climb trees. The Colonel says "*Maar wat as daar nou nie 'n boom is nie*". [what if there is no tree]. After pondering for a while, perplexed, one recruit blurts out "*Maar Kolonel, daar* ***moet*** *'n boom wees*". [But Colonel, there **must** be a tree]. He loved the story.

Eventually as the day draws to a close and my denial remains firm, he plays along. I doubt he believes my story. He says congenially "*Nou ja, Stephanie* [pronounced in the Afrikaans way with a long emphasised 'a'] *sit jou regterhand op die Bybel, hou my hand vas en kyk in my oë - dan sweer jy dat jy nie 'n lid van die Kommunistiese Party is nie.*" [OK, Stephanie, put your right hand on the Bible, hold my hand and look in my eyes – then you swear that you are not a member of the Communist Party]. Even now I feel the revulsion of that moment. I put my right hand on his Bible, put my left hand into his hand, looked into his pale eyes and swore I was not a member of the Communist Party. Then he let me go with the chilling warning "*If I ever find you have lied to me, I will have no mercy on you.*" I got back to East London with his threat swirling in my head. With the fear of that encounter mounting I started trying to find a way to cross the border into Botswana. At this point I had no contact with anyone

in the underground – underground structures had been ripped apart throughout the country in the two years following the Rivonia trial, no one got in touch with me. The Botswana border was a long way off. I perused maps but I had no knowledge on how to get out illegally. No passport. The Special Branch was everywhere. Spies and informers were everywhere. It seemed hazardous if not impossible. Within a couple of weeks I received a letter from the so-called Liquidator [set up with the 1950 Suppression of Communism Act to annihilate all signs of Communism.] The letter informed me that I had been listed as a Communist with the attendant restrictions. I found vd Bergh's postal address and sent him an irate note challenging him: "*Was our discussion and my denial of membership meaningless?*" Very soon I received a retraction from the Liquidator.

17. Leaving South Africa

In the meantime, in 1966 following my release from imprisonment, life in South Africa was continuing. People were detained, murdered, put on trial, hanged.

I was anxious to get to Cape Town to see Albie. I had brought a civil case for assault against Spyker van Wyk and Vorster and that allowed me to go to Cape Town to see Himie Bernadt, my attorney. And Albie. After my trial, over the months of my isolated imprisonment in far-off prisons, I daydreamed about Albie. I had decided that he was really the only marriage candidate available to me – anyone else was either politically unacceptable or legally out of reach under the Immorality Act. I was young and had not yet fully embraced the possibility of avoiding marriage altogether. Albie is 7 years older than me but there was a generational political difference between us. He had grown up with Communist parents and a memory of Bolshevik and Soviet heroism in a unified, monolithic Communist world in which heroic Communists withstood the most brutal treatment. It was a world of heroes. In my newly discovered Communist world the Soviet Union and China were breaking apart with ever increasing venom. There was a greater realism about human weaknesses even of Communists. Albie and I met on Clifton Beach. As we sat on the warm sand looking at the calm Atlantic ocean lapping at our feet, we noticed two white men in black suits standing at the far edge of the beach where the sand began, licking ice-cream cones, watching us. Special Branch. Albie had a room on Clifton beach and I rose on to my toes as he kissed me. Gently as I anticipated. We agreed to marry.

I returned to my parents's home in Bonza Bay. Albie was detained for a second time in Cape Town, this time as a potential witness in the trial of Fred Carneson. I had to consider whether I would wait for him. The story of women, including Winnie

Mandela, waiting for their men was by now becoming familiar. I was still making up my mind when Albie was released. Things could have been much worse for him and other comrades detained at the same time. Fred Carneson was part of the MK Western Cape Regional Command. In those early days they were part of a team who spent three weeks running training workshops for new Umkhonto we Sizwe recruits at a secret camp in Mamre north of Cape Town. Fred was detained in 1965, kept awake for five days and nights until he collapsed and needed oxygen to revive him. He was charged in May 1966 and decided to plead guilty obviating the need for witnesses. Albie and others were released. Now Albie was determined to leave the country as he had intended before I was detained two years previously. He had stayed in South Africa after his first harrowing detention because his heart grew soft at the sight of my photo in the newspapers and a fleeting memory of our illicit dance! I too would leave the country.

My parents were disconcerted when I announced that Albie and I were getting married. They seemed less concerned that I would leave the country as a stateless person unable to return. They had got to know Albie during my trial and they liked him, a quiet polite lawyer in his early thirties. But he was a Jew. Afrikaners did not like Jews. My mother came to me – no doubt at the instigation of my father – and murmured with concern about "*differing cultures*". I brushed her off. My father did whatever one did before Google and suddenly realized that Albie was Solly Sachs' son. He might have liked Albie's veneer of modesty, but Solly was quite another matter. My father was absolutely appalled. I was impressed that he had even heard of Solly Sachs, a trade unionist who had left the country in 1952.[62] Later someone asked me if the Jewish Sachs family did not mind their son marrying outside the faith. Both Albie's parents were atheist Communists and in fact, Solly was delighted that his son married an Afrikaner.

My civil action for assault against Spyker van Wyk and the Minister of Justice, BJ Vorster was due to be heard in the High Court in Cape Town. Spyker van Wyk had made his sworn statement two years earlier in response to mine while I was still a detainee. He declared that I had jumped on to a chair and hysterically begged him to hit me so that I would have an excuse to make a statement. He said he had obliged. He said afterwards I thanked him. Not even in Apartheid South Africa could such a laughable 'defence' stand. The day before the case was to be heard, the State settled. I was geared to confront them in court and wanted to continue but my attorney, Himie, advised that it was a victory. As an act of solidarity I left the small amount of money I won in trust with Himie for the SWAPO founder, Toivo ya Toivo who was suing the state for assault. He had been arrested, badly tortured and brought to trial with 37 other Namibians under the South African Terrorism Act.

They refused to recognize the foreign court. Toivo ya Toivo was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment on Robben Island.

At his trial he ended his speech with words that made a lasting impact on me.

> *"We do not expect that independence will end our troubles, but we do believe that our people are entitled--as are all peoples--to rule themselves. It is not really a question whether South Africa treats us well or badly, but that South West Africa* [at independence in 1989 renamed Namibia] *is our country and we wish to be our own masters…… "Many of our people, through no fault of their own, have had no education at all. This does not mean that they do not know what they want.... we are entitled to freedom and justice."*

* * * * * *

What made me leave? Leaving my country was a daunting prospect. Emotionally traumatic. Being ripped from the womb.

There was huge pressure on comrades, often self-imposed, to stay in South Africa. Leaving was 'running away', even to this day.
Some comrades were legitimately deployed out of the country by the liberation organizations for specific work; some got permission from the liberation organization before they left. Others left legally of their own accord after varying levels of threat to themselves and their families, or simply distaste for the gathering storm of repression.
Some, on being refused passports, became stateless on one-way exit permits. Others left with passports only to find they could not get these renewed abroad. Others had access to western passports through family ties.

From the very early days African South Africans were seldom issued with passports and seldom had the financial means to get out by normal transport. Often writers, artists, musicians largely ignored at home, saw huge international opportunities fade and chose exile.

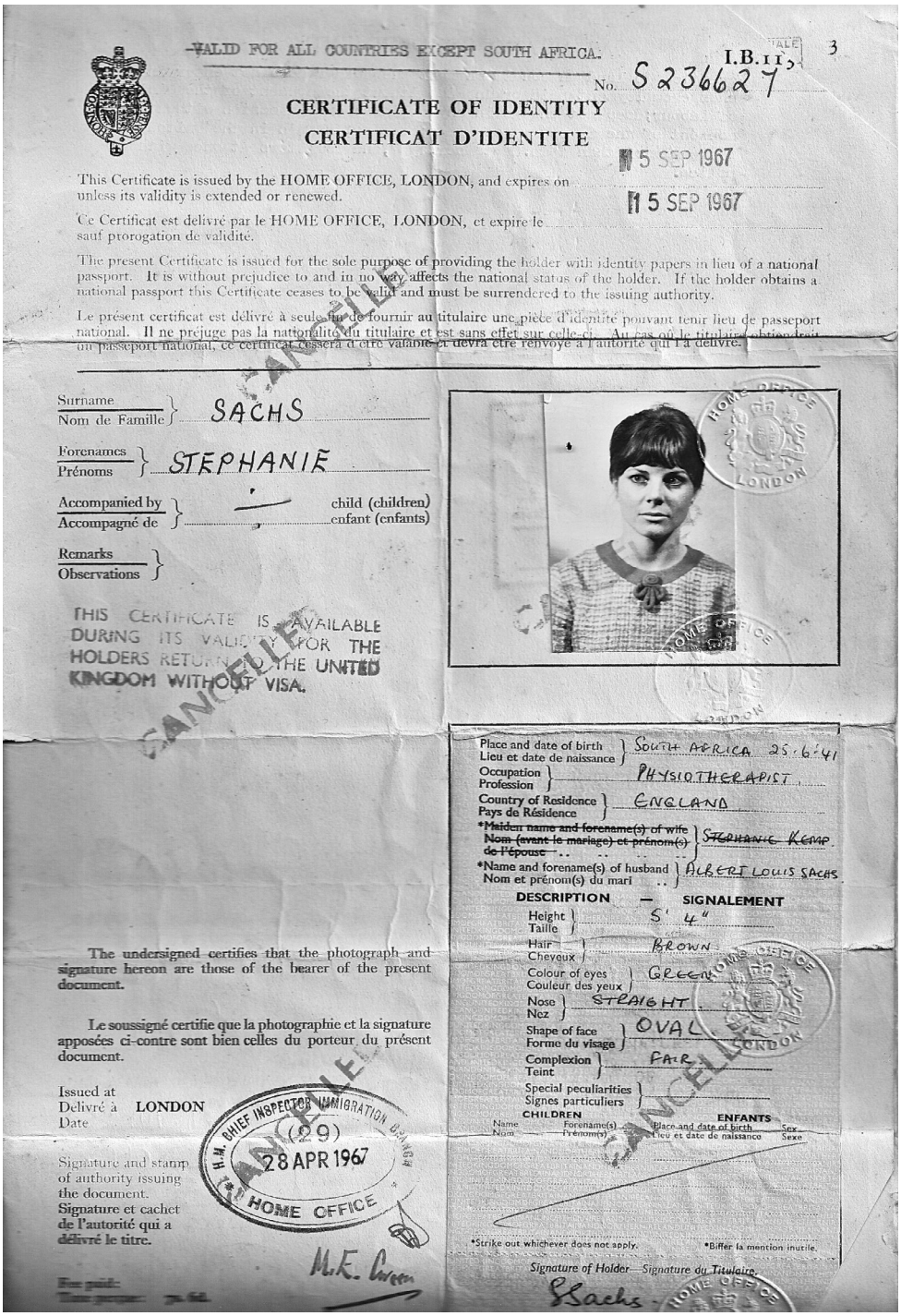
Some could make use of the Movement's underground structures to be assisted illegally out of the country. Others were forced to leave by climbing over border fences – some with organized political assistance, others more haphazardly.

I don't think I felt frightened about staying in South Africa despite diligent attention from the Special Branch. Other than the brief excursion in 1952 to then Lourenco Marques, I had never left South Africa. Nor did I have any wish to travel outside the country. Although not frightened to stay, I did feel lost. Adrift. I had no contact with anyone in the Party. Structures and systems were smashed. I was openly under 24hour surveillance making it dangerous to make such contact. I wanted to marry Albie. He was determined to leave.

Leaving was an enormous journey filled with uncertainty, loss and fear.

Footnotes Part 3

[47] Also known as Sheila Badenhorst-Durrant and later as Sheila Camerer.
[48] I went to a party later at the home of Patrick Duncan who became PAC representative in North Africa. He had a pool in the shape of the African continent. I thought it pretentious.
[49] Solly Sachs was elected Secretary General of the Garment Workers Union from 1927 until 1952. Its members were white Afrikaner women pushed off the land by poverty. He was a member of the CPSA until he was expelled in 1933. For a political history of Sachs, see "*Some Background Notes to the Story no 4. The Bogeyman Solly Sachs, Albie's father*"pp 240.
[50] Later he became a highly regarded political teacher in the guerrilla camps in Angola.
[51] See my view on *NUSAS and the White Liberals in Background Notes pp 236*
[52] See Background Notes on the ARM pp 238
[53] Recently on a visit to the firstborn Carneson child, Lynn McGregor in Simon's Town, I noticed the red light still blinking victoriously on top of the mountain near Fish Hoek.
[54] Roeland Street prison has now been painted and transformed into the elegant National Archive.
[55] I was reminded of this story by my former class mates in 2009 at our 50th anniversary matric get together in Port Elizabeth .
[56] Searingly poignant letters between John Harris and his wife Ann while he was in the death cell were published in David Beresford's "*Truth is a Strange Fruit, a memoir of Apartheid*". Beresford did not comment on the letters. What can one say.
[57] The palm tree is still there in the Women's prison that is now part of the Constitutional Court precinct.
[58] Their men were important but the women were individuals in their own right equal to the men in their activism. They were with their men precisely because they were committed activists.
[59] Tausa – the naked prisoner has to jump into the air, legs and arms spread-eagled. The idea is that if you have hidden any contraband in your armpits, anus or vagina, it would fall out.
[60] I never did call him Brigadier. In any case I'm not sure if a Brigadier is higher than a Colonel.
[61] For a 1997 obituary of Hendrik v.d. Bergh see Background Note 3 on page 240



VALID FOR ALL COUNTRIES EXCEPT SOUTH AFRICA.

I.B.II. 3

No. S 236627

CERTIFICATE OF IDENTITY
CERTIFICAT D'IDENTITE

This Certificate is issued by the HOME OFFICE, LONDON, and expires on 15 SEP 1967 unless its validity is extended or renewed.

Ce Certificat est delivré par le HOME OFFICE, LONDON, et expire le 15 SEP 1967 sauf prorogation de validité.

The present Certificate is issued for the sole purpose of providing the holder with identity papers in lieu of a national passport. It is without prejudice to and in no way affects the national status of the holder. If the holder obtains a national passport this Certificate ceases to be valid and must be surrendered to the issuing authority.

Le présent certificat est délivré à seule fin de fournir au titulaire une pièce d'identité pouvant tenir lieu de passeport national. Il ne préjuge pas la nationalité du titulaire et est sans effet sur celle-ci. Au cas où le titulaire obtiendrait un passeport national, ce certificat cessera d'être valable et devra être renvoyé à l'autorité qui l'a délivré.

CANCELLED

Surname / Nom de Famille: SACHS

Forenames / Prénoms: STEPHANIE

Accompanied by / Accompagné de: — child (children) / enfant (enfants)

Remarks / Observations:

THIS CERTIFICATE IS AVAILABLE DURING ITS VALIDITY FOR THE HOLDERS RETURN TO THE UNITED KINGDOM WITHOUT VISA.

CANCELLED

HOME OFFICE 28 APR 1967 LONDON

Place and date of birth / Lieu et date de naissance: SOUTH AFRICA 25.6.41

Occupation / Profession: PHYSIOTHERAPIST

Country of Residence / Pays de Résidence: ENGLAND

*Maiden name and forename(s) of wife / Nom (avant le mariage) et prénom(s) de l'épouse: ~~STEPHANIE KEMP~~

*Name and forename(s) of husband / Nom et prénom(s) du mari: ALBERT LOUIS SACHS

DESCRIPTION — SIGNALEMENT

Height / Taille: 5' 4"

Hair / Cheveux: BROWN

Colour of eyes / Couleur des yeux: GREEN

Nose / Nez: STRAIGHT

Shape of face / Forme du visage: OVAL

Complexion / Teint: FAIR

Special peculiarities / Signes particuliers:

CHILDREN — ENFANTS

Name / Nom	Forename(s) / Prénom(s)	Place and date of birth / Lieu et date de naissance	Sex / Sexe

*Strike out whichever does not apply. *Biffer la mention inutile.

Signature of Holder — Signature du Titulaire: S Sachs

The undersigned certifies that the photograph and signature hereon are those of the bearer of the present document.

Le soussigné certifie que la photographie et la signature apposées ci-contre sont bien celles du porteur du présent document.

Issued at / Délivré à: LONDON

Date: 28 APR 1967

H.M. CHIEF INSPECTOR IMMIGRATION BRANCH (29) HOME OFFICE

Signature and stamp of authority issuing the document. Signature et cachet de l'autorité qui a délivré le titre.

M.E. Green

Travel Document

FOUR
EXILE

1. Becoming Stateless

Leaving South Africa - becoming stateless, an exile - took a long time, months. Some time in 1966 I rented a room at 9 Kloof Street, Cape Town and applied for a passport. Outside in the street two cars were parked all day and night when I was there. Special Branch. Sometimes I recognized them. I tried to slink in and out of the room but they were always there, smoking, watching. I wandered a little disconsolately around Cape Town. I wouldn't miss the place, I thought. It is too beautiful with its poverty too obvious and stark lying next to the major road linking two stunning mountain ranges. The beauty was white, the ugly poverty black.I bought a large oil portrait of Albie, "*The Young Advocate*" at a Majory Wallace exhibition. I hid it in my wardrobe not wanting the SB to have confirmation of my closeness to Albie.

Long before the days of computers and databases, I peered over a counter where my passport application was being processed. At the top written in large block capitals the word "KOMMUNIS". The passport was refused. An exit permit was the next option. I would sign away my birthright of eleven or more generations of Kemps in South Africa. It would become a criminal offence to re-enter my country. I would be a person from nowhere. To enter Britain where Albie was, I needed employment there before I left. Helpfully the principal of the Physiotherapy School at UCT, Margaret Roper found a job for me at Guy's Hospital in London. She had started the physio school at UCT. In another life she was a sergeant in the British army. Although I was moving in generally hostile and frightened white circles, there were always white people like Miss Roper who surprised me a little by their willingness to go out of their way to assist me. And draw security police attention to themselves. Of course, on the streets I bumped into friends from my time in Cape Town before my arrest two years earlier. They felt enormous sympathy for me and often I found myself with my arms around them. "*It's all right. I'm all right*". Comforting them as they broke down and cried in solidarity.

I can no longer remember why I had to go to Port Elizabeth for this long process to leave but while there I bumped into my piano teacher from Collegiate School for Girls. Doris Anders. There was real warmth between us. On the pavement in mid-town Port Elizabeth she took off a beautiful broach she was wearing and gave it to me. A filigreed gold circle with small turquoise stones, a token of her love. She felt vindicated. She had been right that I was more Bartok than Mozart. While waiting for

my exit documents I travelled to Oranjemund, De Beer's alluvial diamond diggings at the mouth of the Orange River on the South West Africa side. My sister Bernice lived there with her husband Jack who was a manager of sorts on the mines. Security was strict. Extraordinarily strict for African workers. White thieves had been known to hide diamonds in golf balls and hit these over the fence to collect them later from the veld beyond. Bernice and Jack had a son, Steven, aged three. Their second child was just three weeks old. That year Verwoerd's government rewarded white people who gave birth on Republic Day, 31st May 1966 - but I'm not sure whether the occupied "province" of SWA was blessed with this reward too. My niece was born on that day and rather defiantly they named her Stephanie. I went there to meet little Steffi as my mother called her and to say good-bye to them all.

Just as my own life seemed to fall apart, vibrant District Six was torn down. People were forcefully removed from their homes and scattered kilometres away from central Cape Town to join the rest of the black poor on the Cape Flats where there was no work, no services. A pool of cheap labour. The diverse District Six community that had grown in social harmony over centuries was dumped in different areas into what the government considered their separate class and ethnic identities.

It isn't easy to enter any country as a stateless person. Fortunately for us from 1964 Britain had a Labour government under Harold Wilson who was more amenable to our entry. Albie had a high profile and his father had lived in the UK since his own exile in 1952 ensuring that Albie had a smooth entry into Britain. He left in July 1966 while my civil case went on. I was doubtful about going to Britain. I was parochial, knew very little of the world outside South Africa. In 1966 television was still kept out of reach of South Africans and would not be available for another 10 years. Despite my cerebral rejection of everything white Afrikaans, buried deep in me was an atavistic feeling of the British as the enemy. A hidden memory of my grandmother and her four small children being dumped in British concentration camps during the Boer War. Anger and bitterness that was passed from generation to generation reached me too. I had grown up in a lower middle class family in the 1940s, in a very Afrikaans environment where I felt acutely the sense of Afrikaner inferiority to English South African superiority. Civilization was the British Empire. We Afrikaners were farm people, Boers, poorly educated - without the superiority of education, culture and history in every English person we encountered. The English called us names of contempt. *Blerrie Dutchman*. They spoke proudly of England as "home". The slender victory of hard-line Afrikaner chauvinists in the white elections of 1948 did not immediately mitigate the Afrikaner sense of inferiority to the English. While we struggled to speak English, they wouldn't deign to speak Afrikaans. While they were captains of industry, Afrikaners were semi-skilled railway and post office workers. Some of us entered the middle class

as teachers, dominees and public servants. In time some clawed their way beyond to join those upper echelons owning sectors of industry and became very rich.

The day came on 1st September 1966. Clutching my one-way ticket and exit permit, I was given a good send-off by friends at the Cape Town docks, including Libby Robb from my UCT days. The Southern Cross ship would take 11 days to transport me away from South Africa. The journey by ship was considerably cheaper than flying. My departure was raised in Parliament where I was called an "*enemy of the state*". Die Burger had a similar headline on the morning of my departure. They published an interview.n "*Ek is nie jammer oor wat ek gedoen het: ek is vandag ouer, maar sal weer net so optree…. Natuurlik glo ek nog in geweld. Dis al manier om van hiedie regering ontslae to raak…*" [I'm not sorry for what I did. Today I am older but would again behave in exactly the same way…. Of course I still believe in violence. That is the only way to get rid of this regime…..."] I was twenty five years old. I was sure exile would last for no more than two years before we would be back in a free South Africa, flags flying, cheering ecstaticly with the masses. And the sea journey was going to be a fun interlude. We were enclosed in a cocoon – cut off, unreal, warm and enjoyable. The Southern Cross had made its journey from New Zealand so many of the passengers were antipodean tourists. Among them I befriended a young Australian Communist dockworker, Vic who was going to find his biological father in Belgium.

On the other hand, those who embarked in South Africa seemed to be almost exclusively people fleeing the regime into a stateless limbo. Anti-apartheid activist Isiah Stein had embarked at Port Elizabeth with his wife and eight children. I became friendly with them and with May, the wife of renowned poet Denis Brutus, also travelling with her eight children. Denis Brutus's brother, Wilfred Brutus fled South Africa by rowing out to sea in a small boat and successfully hitching a lift from a passing ship to Dubai. Sam Ramsamy was on board the Southern Cross too. As leader of SANROC[63] he had ensured that South Africa was thrown out of the Olympics in 1964. In national teams competing both within South Africa and internationally, South African sport, sportfields, spectators were for white people only.

We had a party to celebrate crossing the Equator halfway into the sea journey along the west coast of Africa. Vic and I were in fancy-dress and very carefree. The next day the ship's captain announced that Verwoerd was dead. Apartheid South Africa's Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd had been assassinated. We heard no details. The tension and division on the ship became enormous. Those of us aligned with the liberation struggle were filled with anxiety, not knowing who was responsible for the killing, fearing the security backlash that would surely follow at home while we were stranded on the high seas having no direct contact with our country. On the whole

the tourists sympathized with Verwoerd, with white South Africa. We South Africans became isolated on board. A messenger stabbed Verwoerd to death in Parliament on 6 September 1966, six years after the first attempt on his life. The successful assassin was Dmitri Tsafendas who had no links to any liberation movement. Tsafendas was given a *pro deo* defence by Wilfrid Cooper SC who had been my senior counsel two years earlier. Tsafendas was found to be insane and spent the rest of his life in prison. In Britain the satirical magazine Private Eye published on its cover a photo of Zulu dancers in traditional dress jumping high, joyfully with assegais aloft under the headline "*A Nation Mourns*".

2. Seeing London

The Southern Cross docked at Southampton on 11th September 1966. Albie was there to meet me. It was just a few days after Verwoerd's death. A journalist gave me a bunch of flowers. Our photo appeared on the front page of a British tabloid "*Couple Flee Verwoerd Torture*". We drove from Southampton to London through what I could only describe as an urban hideousness. I was accustomed to space. My South Africa had space and gardens around each house; in South Africa there were clearly defined edges to urban settlements where fields and farms began and blue sky, mountains, birds and animals would stretch as far as the eye could see. Here in England houses were strung together in long rows. Towns seemed strung together. London was big, cramped, and ugly. I could see no gardens. The urban sprawl seemed never-ending. Sunless. Bleak.

Albie and I moved briefly into his younger brother, Johnny Sachs' small duplex apartment in Highgate, a rather genteel suburb to the north of Hampstead Heath. Johnny Sachs was just a little younger than Albie. He had been a medical student at the University of Cape Town when he needed urgent open-heart surgery to repair valves ravaged by childhood rheumatic heart disease. Open-heart surgery was very new. The young Dr. Christian Barnard was pioneering heart surgery at Groote Schuur Hospital while I was a physiotherapy student there. Johnny could not get on to Christian Barnard's list urgently enough. He went to London for the surgery and remained there. An unflamboyant person, his life became dominated by his heart in quite a large measure and he had to go through open-heart surgery on a further two occasions. Johnny became my family in exile. He told me stories of his childhood and of his closeness to Albie when they were very small. "*A woman at Clifton offered me an ice-cream. I told her 'no thank you. My brother has a sore tummy.'*" He shared with me the ups and downs of his love life frequently asking for advice even though I was quite a bit younger than he was and without unmitigated success in the realm of relationships. We shared those things about Albie that irked us both. Johnny's flat

was close to Hampstead Heath a large, hilly park with beautiful English trees and children flying kites. When I arrived in September I felt cold in the English autumn. I was dressed in a jersey, coat and boots when we first walked on the Heath. English men and women were lying about in the pale sun, stripped to their underwear. English people are perpetually sun deprived - ghoulishly white.

Albie and I got married within 3 weeks of my arrival in London, on the 30th of September 1966. We had a civil wedding at the Camden Town Hall with only Albie's father, Solly, and Johnny present[64]. I wore a pale yellow suit that I had worn in Cape Town's winter before I left. A friend of Albie's gave me a lovely fresh orchid that I pinned to the lapel. I had my hair styled that morning and wore a rust-coloured beret. At the end of the ceremony Solly took us on a tour of the Camden Town Hall showing us its significance in labour history.[65] In the evening of our wedding day Albie had organised a reception in a hotel somewhere in London. I remember wearing a rather elegant dress, and finding a private corner where I could hide crying miserably. There must have been about 100 South African exiles at the reception. I knew only Albie and had just met his brother. Their father wasn't there. None of my family was there. I felt very alone. I hated being in England.

I really had hardly known Albie before we left South Africa. He was a quietly spoken, gentle person, a known second generation Communist. He made me feel safe and secure. Now that we were relatively free, without the dangers inside South Africa, Albie talked about his political life. His parents were Communists with a long history in struggle. He seldom spoke of his parents' history or of his childhood. But Albie opened up a rich world of international Communist memory to me. He taught me the national anthem of Communist China. After a secret journey to Moscow in the early 1950s, followed by a trans-Siberian railway crossing to reach Peking (later Beijing) where he learnt the anthem, he returned home with a quiet certainty of the future. Comrades in Cape Town called him "*Inner Calm*".

He spoke about the 1936 Spanish Civil War that raged between Republican government forces and Fascists when Albie was but a toddler. The International Brigade fought with the Republicans and included many Communists. Albie talked about Spanish Communist leader Dolores Ibarruri famous for her declaration "*Non pasaran*" "*They shall not pass*". They did and Franco's fascists took over Spain for forty years. Albie talked poignantly about the Rosenbergs, Julius and Ethel who were executed by the USA in the electric chair in 1953 when Albie was 18, despite a huge international campaign to save them. They had two small sons. They were dubiously convicted for passing on to the Soviet Union secrets about the atom bomb helping to fuel Senator Joseph McCarthy's destructive investigations into so-called unAmerican activities by U.S. citizens throughout the 1950s. In London we met

Americans, also exiled - filmmakers, writers who had fled the McCarthy witchhunts. The stories from Albie's Communist memory were inspiring. I felt part of a large circle of good people across the world who were willing to give up everything to create a better world. We knew in those days that we were part of unfolding world history, on the side of moral good. And on the winning side as history marched forward inexorably, helped by good people. Following our marriage Albie mocked me saying "*you're in the Big League now*". And indeed he was a Left intellectual of note, a courageous Communist leader. He made much of his own integrity and I mocked him in return.

Within a couple of weeks I asked Albie to put me in touch with the SACP in London. He told me he was no longer a member of the SACP. He hadn't been a member for over three years. Following his first detention in 1963 he had chosen not to re-integrate into Party structures. I was dumbstruck. In a way I could understand. Finding one's way back into gloomy places for secret meetings must have been frightening after five months alone in Apartheid's power. Risking detention, cracking under torture, death. But I was not happy. My whole life was wrapped up in the liberation struggle and the SACP. I knew that having this conversation in South Africa before we left had been difficult as secrecy was a dark shroud over everything. Perhaps he had not even known that I was a member of the SACP. However, it was unimaginable that I should now find myself in exile and married to someone who had left the Party. Someone who was no longer in the Party.
But it was done now and we went forward as best we could. In the summers before we started a family, we explored Europe. We toured by car both West and East Europe staying at camping sites or with Albie's acquaintances. We gazed in awe at art galleries and ancient churches. In Prague we cried as we visited Hitler's planned "*Museum for an Extinct Race*" with its 2,000 altar hangings ripped from synagogues all over Europe even as they were slaughtering Jews in concentration camps. We travelled to Lidice where the whole village had been lined up and shot by Nazis in revenge for the assassination of one of their own. I found it very difficult in an unexpectedly strange British culture, the short grey days, married and expecting of myself that I should exercise the domestic duties of an unliberated married woman, sharing a home and bed with this almost strange man, unable to run back to my country.

3. Guy's Hospital and short grey days

Every morning I walked in the dark to the tube station. During rushhour I took a packed underground tube train from Highgate to Southwark, south of the Thames River. The crowded train raced underground decanting me on to a sunless pavement

near Guy's Hospital where I worked. The huge, dark hospital had underground passages linking one part of the hospital to another. In the afternoons when I went home, it was already dark. I seemed never to see the sky during the week. Although I spoke English fluently, I was dismayed that I could not understand most of the English spoken around me in London. Homegrown British accents were very varied and impossible to understand. I learned that robots were traffic lights. The bioscope was the cinema. One did not 'pitch up' or 'fall pregnant'.

I was taken aback by the overt racism in London. I had assumed that anti-black hatred was unique to South Africa. On the streets of London Verwoerd's recent assassination and my accent elicited loud clucks of sympathy together with homilies on the venality of black people, from all and sundry. A white working class Londoner selling fruit from a large stall on the pavement outside Guy's Hospital picked up my accent from one "*thank you*", probably "*thenk yhew*". He immediately launched into a tirade about blacks ruining lovely South Africa where he had never been. I fled with my packet of apples. But soon I learnt to stand my ground and not let any racist statement or slight to those around me, pass by me unchallenged. And there were many racist slights.

Guy's Hospital is a large teaching hospital. On my first day at work my superiors called me in and warned me about "radical" medical students wanting to interview me. "*Please keep away from politics while you are here*". Cowed, I tried my best. Kept my head down. Noone objected when the large all-white physiotherapy staff over cups of tea launched into quite a vicious racist conversation. The department secretary, Dorothy was a genteel dark woman from south India whom everyone respected. When I asked them if she was included in their racist diatribe they immediately protested "*No not her. Dorothy is different*". I learnt then that racism could be at this level of impersonal attitudes, generalization. Later in South Africa racist thoughts and attitudes often excluded President Mandela. In the new world of miniskirt fashion, the large professional physiotherapy staff was lined up every morning to kneel and have our uniform skirt-lengths measured – skirt hem to floor - to ensure professional decency. We stood in a row hands held out to have our nails checked for cleanliness and length. Also none of the long flowing locks so beloved in TV hospitals. No hippy freedom for us at Guy's Hospital. It seemed I was back in an authoritarian world.

4. Finding a home

Albie registered with Sussex University for a doctorate. Zambian businessman, Theodore Bull through his Zebra Trust provided accommodation for post-graduate students from Africa. We were allocated a one bedroom flat on the third floor of one

of several houses owned by the Trust in lovely Chalk Farm. I loved the many parks and open spaces near us. Primrose Hill, a bare green hill overlooking London Zoo was just a block away and further down was Regent's Park, a neatly laid out formal garden with roses and cherry trees. Albie frequently travelled to Sussex to consult his supervisor and to use the library as he wrote a doctoral thesis about the inequality women, mostly white women, suffered in the law profession in South Africa. The Quakers through the Rowntree Trust funded his doctoral studies and we travelled north to their headquarters in York to thank them. A beautiful place, green and filled with ancient ruins. The place where Adrian Leftwich had finally found sanctuary. I was astonished to learn that Quakers would not under any circumstances condone violence even in struggle against gross injustice and horror. "*Should people in Hitler's genocidal camps not have used violence to escape?*" I asked incredulously. Albie was always buried in books. After his thesis he wrote books.

A few weeks after we moved to Chalk Farm, I found the writer Bloke Modisane living in a gloomy basement flat across the square from us. I visited him for tea quite often. He gave me a copy of his autobiography "*Blame Me on History*". Bloke was one of the 1950s Sophiatown community who saw that vibrant place of black artists, writers, musicians, journalists, ordinary people and gangsters torn down, bulldozed in front of their eyes. A predecessor to District Six. The removal of an offending "black spot", one of the few places where Africans owned freehold homes and people mixed freely. The community was scattered, mostly forcibly moved to Meadowlands, some living in a very alien exile environment outside the country.

Chalk Farm 1966

Bloke was angry and depressed. There was a feeling from Bloke that there was no one to hear his voice, his anger, his experience, his bitter understanding of his own country and its rejection of him as a person who was intelligent, widely read with a love for Mozart and Dylan Thomas. It was more than rejection – he felt he did not exist in South Africa, in history. And exile was too far away from that longing to belong.

Blame me on History tears at your guts, thrusts you into Bloke's pain and the pain of Sophiatown, the pain of South Africa -

> *"I drifted aimlessly into a yard reconstructing the hovels, the shacks, the slum dwellings, from out of the debris and the dust; avoiding the open gutters, walking round the garbage cans, the lavatories, knowing that these were the things I hated most in Sophiatown and because they were no longer mine to complain about I loved them. And there in the rubble was a piece of me."*

> *" The pride of having grown up with Sophiatown shrivelled inside me; I had failed my children as my father and my fore-fathers and the ancestral gods of my fathers had failed me; they had lost a country, a continent, but I had failed to secure a patch of weeds for my children, a Sophiatown which essentially was a slum."*

Bloke grew from childhood to manhood in Sophiatown. He saw his father's grotesquely murdered body, his young sister died of malnutrition, his mother ran an illegal shebeen. His book opens with the line

> *"Something in me died, a piece of me died, with the dying of Sophiatown….."*
> *"In the name of slum clearance they had brought the bull-dozers and gored into her body, and for a brief moment, looking down Good Street, Sophiatown was like one of its own many victims; a man gored by the knives of Sophiatown, lying in the open gutters, a raisin in the smelling drains, dying of multiple stab wounds, gaping while gushing forth blood; the look of shock and bewilderment, of horror and incredulity, on the face of the dying man….*

> *"My Sophiatown was a blitzed area which had suffered the vengeance of political conquest, a living memorial to the vandalism of Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd; my world was falling away…*

> *"Those of us who survived the clutches of malnutrition, the violence of the streets, lived with another kind of ugliness; the dry-breast barrenness of being black in white South Africa. There are times when I wish I had been born in a bush surrounded by trees, wild flowers, vales, dongas and wild life;….."*

Bloke died in the 1980s in West Germany.

Albie and I wanted to start a family almost immediately. I did not get pregnant. We started a long process of seeing a fertility specialist at the Middlesex Hospital. Bernice advised from Oranjemund "*just lie back and enjoy it*". We had a carefree holiday on the coast of then Yugoslavia. I was still not pregnant. After three unsuccessful years the fertility specialist, an elderly man, asked me "*Mrs. Sachs, do you live in a flat or a house?*" Completely flummoxed I said a flat. "*Why?*" "*You should get yourself a kitten*", the specialist ventured. I supposed a house would have meant getting a puppy. "*I want a child, not a damn cat*", I shocked the staid nursing sister at his side. I didn't go back to the specialist and we decided to adopt a child. Alan came to us at the age of three weeks in March 1970. And within six months I was pregnant with Michael.The Agnostics Adoption Society claimed credit for this success! While I was pregnant, Albie handed in his thesis. He applied for many jobs. He came to me quite crestfallen and said a commercial law practice in central London had offered him work but he could not bear the thought of commercial law. Finally he accepted a teaching post at Southampton University. He loved teaching jurisprudence. Southampton was two hours south by train and Albie decided to spend the week there, coming home on Thursday evening and leaving again on Monday morning. I felt more alone than ever. While I was waiting for Michael to arrive, we moved to two rooms on the first floor of a house at 92 South End Green. Smaller than our Chalk Farm place. Michael was born while we were there in May 1971. Our rooms were accessible to

Sachs family 1971

the bottom of Hampstead Heath which was wonderful for a mother with two small children in crowded living quarters. In the same house lived Stephanie Segal[66] and Lisa Appignanesi[67] who became valued friends.

My mother came on her first visit to me soon after Michael's birth. It was the first time I saw her, five years after arriving in London. I wrote to my parents every week for all the time I was in London. Letters about my children with photos, obscuring the storms of the political life I was leading. My parents had a cat, Sokkies, and they were reluctant to leave her by herself. So in their rare visits they seldom came together. My mother had spent a year in London before her marriage but otherwise neither of my parents had left South Africa, except for our brief visit to Lourenco Marques in early 1950s. On one visit to me my father took a package tour through Western Europe and bought some beautiful Venetian glass that I still have. When my mother visited I dropped her at the Albert Hall to listen to Miriam Makeba.She was thrilled. When Alan was two years old we moved again. This time to a three bedroom flat on the ground floor of a Victorian house in Anson Road, Tufnell Park where we put down some roots over almost eighteen years. Two three-storey semi-detached houses, each floor turned into a self-contained flat, formed our housing association. Our backdoor opened on to a large communal garden space. The association collectively had to approve any new people living there and consequently everyone was quite leftwing. Comrades like Aziz Pahad, Yusuf Saloojee and Horst Kleinschmidt lived in flats in the housing association at one time or another. Others were from England, Germany, Argentina.

When I became a mother my political life hardly changed or slowed down. I had no close family in exile and even Albie was working in Southampton and away all week. So I took my first and then both my little baby sons with me wherever I had to go, hitching one on to my hip and sometimes one on each hip as I vacuum cleaned the apartment, or pushing them together in a large pram to go to buy bread. When Albie was at home over weekends I could rush around travelling to do political work and getting into the habit of going to movie matinees by myself. But I also had to cajole him to have family outings to Hampstead Heath where the children played on swings.

5. AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS in London

As soon as I arrived in London I made my political base the ANC offices, then in Rathbone Place in the Goodge Street neighbourhood. Most of the work I was doing in the liberation movement was clandestine and the SACP meetings I attended were secret. But the ANC was visible. It operated at one level as a public democratic

alternative to Apartheid's embassy, South Africa House where we frequently joined in raucous demonstrations. The ANC suite of offices in Rathbone Place overlooked a pedestrian alley with the ubiquitous London pub on the corner and a small café where we could drink Turkish coffee and eat kebabs in pita bread. We would meet in a pub, thick with smoke every Friday evening for long drinking sessions. Exiles far away from home.

Raymond Mazisi Kunene was ANC Chief Representative for the UK and Western Europe when I arrived toward the end of 1966. He was a rock for me in the confusion of those early days. The ANC office and Mazisi (or Raymond as he was called then) became the centre of my new world, my anchor. He was kind, gently amused and amusing, and introduced me to his own and other writings from Africa. His epic poem "King Shaka the Great" kept disappearing off my shelves as comrades passing through from various front line states laid claim to my precious copy - "*nationalizing*" my books, they said. Books were not as readily available in front-line states while I always had the chance to replace it from London bookshops.

Mazisi introduced me to "*Sounds of a Cowhide Drum*", the newly published poems of Oswald Mtshali

"I am the drum on your dormant soul,
cut from the black hide of a sacrificial cow.
I am the spirit of your ancestors."

Mtshali's poem "*The Detribalised*" opened a whole new understanding to me of a clash between tradition and its loss to modernity and the toll this can take.

In July 1967 the long-standing and much-loved President of the ANC, Nkosi Albert Luthuli was killed by a train near his home in Groutville. He had been restricted to this small rural area for many years and none of us believed he was killed accidentally in the terrain that he knew so intimately. OR Tambo became Acting President and over some years declined to allow this to become a permanent posting despite being urged to do so. ANC leaders, and OR Tambo in particular, were acutely aware that many elected leaders were imprisoned on Robben Island and that the ANC in those early years had inadequate contact with organized mass membership and could not hold a properly constituted representative elective conference. I doubt that the ANC has ever had such a colossus as O.R. Tambo with his unwavering integrity, courage and powerful vision. O.R., like Luthuli, was a staunch Christian and never a Communist. He held us together over thirty years under often intolerable conditions. He was trusted and loved in our ranks. He spoke to us, and to the public at large, constantly explaining ANC policy and practice. Guiding us. A leader.

In exile for the first time I could lead something of a normal life as a South African amongst South Africans. As in South Africa, in ANC circles whites were a very small minority. Unlike South Africa, here I was treated as an equal amongst equals – but I learnt a great deal over those years about my behaviour toward my fellow South Africans even as I fully supported the ANC's policies and was willing to die in the struggle for a liberated South Africa. Race attitudes and behaviours were deeply imbibed by white South Africans and we were often oblivious to our own behaviour. There was a tendency to assume that our culture was the only culture and that everyone aspired to think like we did. One of the first ANC cadres I met at the ANC offices was Sobizana or Bizo Mngqikana. Sobizana was a revelation to me. A little older than me, seemingly shy, almost diffident, he conversed quietly, almost mumbling. He stayed with me for a while. Bizo remained important in my life in the London ANC until he left to become the ANC representative in Sweden around 1973. Almost immediately I made a significant discovery for me as a white South African. He knew more than I did. If I took the trouble to listen, he knew far more about politics and his politics were very deep. He had lived that politics all his life. I made a second startling discovery from him. As soon as I met Bizo he thanked me for the Fort Hare registration fee that I had paid while working at Firestone South Africa in East London months before, after my release from prison. It turned out I had assisted Phumlani, Bizo's son. Bizo surprised me further by having been an enthusiastic rugby player when he lived at home in Duncan Village, East London. I had thought rugby was an exclusively white Afrikaner sport. So I learned all was not as it had always seemed to me.

Sobizana together with Thabo Mbeki raised with ANC President OR Tambo, the presence of the many young South Africans in London and suggested we needed to be organized. Since the founding of the ANC in 1912 ANC membership was open only to indigenous Africans. Noone from any minority national group in South Africa could be a member of the ANC. Many young people including children of veterans in the struggle, found themselves in London. Many were from the small minority groups and could not join the ANC. Between Thabo and Sobizana, and with OR's blessing they established the Youth and Students Section, not a constitutional structure of the ANC and initially operating only in the UK. Within the Youth and Students Section we were under the ANC umbrella where we learned ANC policies and thinking, discussed and had strong comradeship.

Thabo Mbeki was a comrade I frequently encountered in my early years of exile. He was central to the youth around the ANC in the UK. I was 25 when I arrived there; he was a year younger than me and well known as Govan Mbeki's son. The Rivonia Trial had come to an end not long before. Thabo's father together with other

leaders had escaped the expected death penalty and been sent to prison for life. A political life sentence under Apartheid meant life; you were there until you died – or won national freedom. Who could not but be moved by this young man, in his early twenties, solemnly leading a huge long march of British people calling for the release of all South African political prisoners that included his own father. Both Thabo's parents were members of the SACP. His mother a Moerane, a musical family. As a ten year old Thabo was sent from the village to the Moeranes in Queenstown. They had a family chamber orchestra and Thabo learned to play the flute. The head of the family, Michael Moerane, was the first African in South Africa to gain a music degree. He was a leading composer. Thabo retained a love of classical music. Thabo never came across as a militant. His political contributions were considered and carefully presented. Like everyone around me, a Marxist-Leninist approach pervaded his thinking and analysis. Some of us knew how to throw in large dollops of demagogic populism to rouse the local masses. But not Thabo. He didn't speak in slogans. His approach was always thoughtful. His speeches carefully reasoned positions anticipating reasoned and lasting support.

One Sunday afternoon in the ANC offices in Rathbone Place, a Youth Section meeting had just finished and I was with Thabo and his girlfriend, Ann Nicholson in an adjoining office. "*I wish whites would just hold back in discussions*", I sighed, "*not launch immediately the floor is open but allow some space for others to contribute.*" "*You are being patronizing*" [to African comrades] Thabo responded. Okay over the decades since then I have often heard myself being patronizing and I excuse myself by rationalizing that I come from an "*Ag shame*" Afrikaans culture that is difficult to shed! Nevertheless, having now taught quite a lot as a physiotherapist about managing disabled children, I am still annoyed when white students jump in, dominating space, their eager contributions not necessarily helpful. We whites have difficulty listening, and hearing. In overcoming our inflated self-confidence.

Sobizana organized a small choir and was our exacting director. In its early existence we were a choir of minorities. I sang soprano with Aziz Pahad's first wife, Gloria a British Communist, singing alto. Billy Nannan was the most glorious tenor and a great Marxist, a gentle, modest man, a fine intellectual. The baritone in our small choir was James Madhlope Phillips, husband of Maud Phillips and a former colleague of Solly Sachs in the late 1940s when the Garment Workers' Union began to lose its exclusive whiteness. Sobizana was an accomplished musician, saxophonist, who held us to high standards. We learned all the liberation songs of the time and going back to the 1950s campaigns. "*Vukani mawethu…*" I sang these songs throughout all the years of my exile, not only wherever we were together as South Africans but also to myself while doing the tasks of a mother, cooking, washing dishes.

The choir grew and we were in quite a lot of demand for meetings in the UK. In the 1970s there was a small influx of new refugees in the UK that shook some of our complacency. Our choir had grown a little and was due to travel to Wales. A new young Indian South African exile, Yusuf Mayet, complained of the presence of whites in the choir – me. At the time John Gaetsewe of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) had just returned from a period in Leipzig in the German Democratic Republic. While sorting out his accommodation he was staying with me and baby Alan in Chalk Farm. I raised with him that perhaps I should forgo travelling to Wales as part of the choir given the complaints about the presence of whites. Comrade John advised firmly *"Don't allow others to dictate the choices you make. You know what is right."* So I travelled to Wales with the choir albeit a bit uncertainly. From John Taolo Gaetsewe I learned about being a human being. He amongst the many admirable liberation fighters I got to know, made me see that formal education had little to do with capability, knowledge, thinking, or goodness.

He grew up in Maruping village near Kuruman in the Northern Cape. Once when in exile and carrying an Algerian friendship passport, he was stopped at a hostile passport control. He was asked where he was born and without thinking volunteered "*Kuruman*". No doubt that sounded Algerian enough. But the Algerian war for independence from colonial France was still in the present and Algerian friendship passports could make life difficult at Western borders. John Gaetsewe was a devoted trade unionist all his life. In the 1940s he became active in the African National Union of Laundry and Dry Cleaning Workers. He didn't move in circles of highly educated people and remained a person of the people. He had deeply held views and was one of the most inspirational and humble men I knew.

Despite the humiliations of growing up under white racist rule he exemplified the close connection between African national liberation and a working class struggle against capitalism. He believed that all workers in South Africa had the potential to unite against capitalist injustice. At a mass rally to inaugurate SACTU's "*a pound a day*" campaign in the 1950s, he said that not only black workers earned starvation wages and pointed to the many white women workers in the tobacco, distributive, sweet, laundry and textile industries who were also underpaid. Including white Afrikaner women in Solly Sachs' Garment Workers' Union. Unsurprisingly at the time white workers were organized in a right-wing all-white enclave, the Trade Union Council of South Africa (TUCSA). John did not hesitate publicly to attack racist white worker organization that ignored the majority of South African workers who were African. He lived at the intersection of African nationalism and class struggle. He was placed under house arrest in 1963 during a period of enormous repression. Even organisations like SACTU that were not banned, had to operate underground as

leaders and individual members were detained, banned, banished, put on trial and faced the death penalty. Some, like Vuyisile Mini, were hanged. John had already served a short time on Robben Island for leaving the country illegally to meet trade unionists in Africa and Europe. Later he left illegally again to set up a SACTU office in London and to establish links with the international trade union movement including the progressive World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

As SACTU General Secretary based in London in the 1970s and after more than thirty years as a trade unionist and member of the ANC, John Gaetsewe was harassed in London by a group of highly educated white Workerists calling themselves the ANC Marxist Tendency. Suffering from the disease of whiteness, they clearly assumed they could teach him about working class struggle and the South African liberation struggle, about subjugation and the years of struggle for liberation. After considerable distraction from them, they were eventually expelled from the ANC. Marxist Tendency Paula Ensor, Rob Petersen, Dave Hemson, and Martin Legassick dissolved back into academia when they eventually returned to democratic South Africa.

When John stayed with me I had just adopted my first-born son, Alan who was three weeks old. John was fascinated by the notion of adoption as a legal process where the biological parents are not part of your life. He taught me about African family structures and a child being part of an extended family, a village. Never without parents, never not known, reared by the village. John adored this little baby who had come into my life. Alan and later Michael were part of the village of the ANC.

6. A Cultural Explosion

At many levels British 'freedom' was a disappointment. Over the years there I learned in practice how capitalism worked, how it deepened inequalities even under a Labour government. How people struggled to make a life. Later under Mrs. Thatcher I learned about neo-liberalism where the state's regulation of the economy was reduced to a minimum and trade unions suppressed. Where market forces were unshackled to forge the trajectory of the economy and society. But in those years of new 1960s hippy culture in Europe there were also new personal freedoms, non-adherence and defiance of stiff middle-class convention. In the 1970s a renewed wave of popular feminism from the US and Europe penetrated even our patriarchal ranks. The world expanded in front of me. Now I saw the rest of the world on TV – struggles in Greece, Cyprus, Aden or North Yemen became visible on screen. Albie introduced me to theatre, the classic plays in formal productions of the West End and progressive experimental productions in outlying small theatres.

His first book "*The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs*" was converted into a play by David Edgar and performed at the Young Vic Theatre. Obsessively I went to every performance. Afterwards I would go to the pub and got to know the actors who played Albie and the security police. A kind of odd Stockholm syndrome, I suppose.

The best music and works of art in the world lay at my feet. I read voraciously. Stendhal, Gogol, Emile Zola, Marquez, John Steinbeck. And also classic English novelists like Charles Dickens, Jane Austen and George Elliot. "*The Ragged Trousered Philanthropist*". Literature of the African continent and diaspora, Franz Fanon, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Walter Rodney, CLR James, Angela Davis, George Jackson and all the Black Power writings from the USA. I watched the movies of Satyajit Ray – the unforgettable image of a poor woman carefully picking up rice, grain by grain, as it fell off a passing cart in rural India. Someone accused me of preferring my movies long, foreign and slow! Some of the best South African musicians, poets, writers and artists were part of our South African exile family. To me Dollar Brand was already a known jazz name. I had heard him play the piano in Cape Town's Woodstock in the early 1960s – at a small, no-alcohol club called The Naaz. As Abdullah Ibrahim he became internationally famous. Dudu Pukwana, Mongezi Feza, Louis Moholo, Chris McGregor, Johnny Dyanti, Julian Bahula – they were all there, all played at ANC functions and dances. The great artist and sculptor, Dumile Feni became a friend. He drew endless pictures of my bare feet – the same feet that had amused Adrian Leftwich on Fish Hoek beach at midnight some years earlier.

There was a time when Abdullah Ibrahim was in the ANC offices then in Penton Street and he asked if anyone had a piano so that he could play for the comrades. I had a second-hand upright piano and suddenly we had a party at my place. My mother and father were on one of their rare visits to me. My mother was thrilled to stand at Abdullah Ibrahim's elbow and watch him play. But my father was horrified to find himself in the company of a rowdy ANC crowd, an alcohol drinking black crowd. My mother told me afterwards that my father had spoken at some length to Francis Meli who had obtained a PhD in South African history at the Leipzig University in the German Democratic Republic. My mother confided that my father commented to her afterwards that he wondered how much Meli had paid to buy his degree. My mother felt hurt and said she could not understand how my father who had "*pulled himself up by his boot straps*" to become the only one in his family to be schooled and going on to an honours history degree at Wits University, could not credit anyone else to do the same. Indeed it has often occurred to me that the experience of white Afrikaner individuals as part of a self-proclaimed national group, poor, despised and humiliated by the English colonial capitalists, should

have given them insight into black South Africans who were mired in poverty and arrogantly excluded from the economic mainstream. Yet Afrikaners seemed incapable of empathy. Lacking in imagination perhaps.

For those first years, from 1966 until the late 70s there was not much movement of people in the exile community in the UK. We formed strong bonds that lasted. We were a family. In London I lived a longed for South African life where minorities were just that and Africans led.

7. Joe Slovo

Joe Slovo more than any one else influenced my political thinking. In those early exile years we worked closely together and in 1967 he became the great love of my life in a relationship that was to last for 20 years. Within the first months, before the relationship had a chance to go anywhere other than very long lunches, Albie called Joe and me together and told us he had received an anonymous hand-written letter informing him that Joe and I were involved in an affair. He had destroyed the letter but gave me the envelope. For years I walked around with it hoping to identify the handwriting. It purported to be sent from a hotel in Gower Street that did not exist. It was obvious the letter was written by the dirty tricks department of General v.d. Bergh's Bureau of State Security (BOSS). Being with Joe remained a cat and mouse affair with the ever-present anxiety of surveillance and our conversations being bugged. Once we were wandering in a wood outside London, apparently utterly alone. We rested in each other's arms against a tree trunk. A camera flash went off from behind the trees! This was not the only time we became aware of surveillance. From the beginning we would meet for two or three hour lunches in the Goodge Street area, in small Cypriot cafés where we would talk for hours. There was a bigger Greek restaurant in Charlotte Street that I frequented with Joe. Once I took a large, athletic African-American there for lunch. I was perturbed when a Greek waiter I knew seemed excessively sullen giving us quite perfunctory service. I mentioned my puzzlement to my friend, Prexy Nesbitt, who immediately insisted the waiter was racist. "*No*", I protested, "*this guy knows me well*". So I asked the waiter if he had a problem. "*How can you be with this black man*", he proved Prexy right. "*You know*", I parried unsympathetically, "*my mother was outraged when Jackie Kennedy married Onassis because she thought Greeks were dirty.*" And the waiter replied miserably "*Yes, I know people think that* ".

Sometimes Joe and I would go to pubs at night or to listen to concerts on the South Bank. We spent weekends away in the countryside and we memorably met in Paris. In Paris we ate in small cafes with gingham tablecloths. I tasted snails for

the first and only time. We walked next to the Seine holding on to each other and explored streets in Le Marais *arrondissement*. Joe bought me a large ring. Joe was fifteen years older than me. His life was the struggle and anything else took second place. He liked company, loved chilling, playing his guitar, a whiskey at his elbow and singing. "*Hey Jude, don't be a fool*…..". He quite liked to think of himself as being a little hedonistic. He always seemed emotionally very accessible but in fact felt embarrassed by emotional displays from people he was not close to. There were times when distressed young comrades wanted to confide in him, a kindly father or uncle figure. Joe would always be there. But he did not always like to be there. Feeling just a little embarrassed.

I made no demands on Joe but would do anything he needed. Once he and his wife Ruth, Albie and I arrived on the doorstep of the Slovo home in Lyme Street. Joe was annoyed with himself when he realised he had left some important keys at an office. I immediately said I'd jump in my car and fetch them and Ruth responded a little drily "*you're such a doormat for Joe*". I fetched the keys. He teased me for a time because I was loyal to him. He would tell me of his own encounters with women when he travelled. He insisted I was unliberated! But when I told him just once that I would be with someone else, he said he sat in front of the TV the whole evening and ate his way through a box of chocolates.

Joe retained a grounded ease with working class people that he had gained from his own very humble beginnings. His family had fled Lithuania from the looming Nazi threat and had reached South Africa when Joe was ten years old speaking only Yiddish. His mother died after two years in South Africa. With his father who was a driver of sorts, he and his older sister struggled in rooms in Doornfontein, Johannesburg. Jews in Lithuania did not have access to schools. Nonetheless he gained standard six when he was thirteen years old before he started working. He worked for Sive Brothers and Karnovsky for the following five years. Joe loved to tell the story of how Mr. Karnovsky called him into his office after Joe started organizing the workers at the firm, saying "*How can a nice Jewish boy like you do this to me*". Joe told me his Yiddish diminutive name was Yoshke and then swore me to secrecy with some embarrassment that I didn't understand.

When the Soviet Union entered the Second World War in 1941, Joe was 16. As South African Communists joined up Joe lied about being under-age and by 18 he was in the war. He spent his war in North Africa and Italy. When he returned at the end of the war he again bent the truth to make use of the opening that was offered to returning soldiers whose education had been interrupted. Despite having left school some years earlier with only a standard six education, he entered Wits

University to study for a law degree. He felt poor and working class in the company of seasoned left intellectuals at Wits. But this did not deter him from falling in love with and marrying Ruth First who was a second generation Communist activist from a middle class home, very vibrant, beautiful and svelte. When I got to know him, he retained his working class sensibilities while he also straddled a world of middle-class intellectuals and the left elite in the UK. In the UK, I believe more through Ruth First's academic standing as a brilliant intellectual, he knew many renowned Marxist intellectuals from all over the western world. Joe always seemed a bit surprised at finding himself in their company. Of course, as a Central Committee member of the SACP, he frequently met with leaders from the Communist world and those in alliance with Communists.

Joe was very strong standing up to relentless and continual criticism directed against him personally. He was often called a Stalinist, particularly by Left intellectuals. I think that meant an intransigent supporter of the Soviet Union, a demagogic believer in rigid democratic centralism and other dogmas of so-called classic Marxism-Leninism. We were activists, struggling to make real change against enormous odds. During the Cold War, during our underground struggle it was difficult to criticize the side you had chosen especially in the face of relentless attack from the other side that had the potential to reverse important gains. However, it was possible to be critical amongst comrades whom you trusted. But you closed ranks outside the company of trusted comrades, and at times you even defended where you yourself might be unsure, critical even. One of the first discussions I had with him soon after my arrival in exile, concerned Joe's dismay and criticism of the trial in the USSR of the writers Daniel and Sinyavsky. Joe was never dogmatic. He recognized the importance of the USSR and its allies in our struggle. Their almost unqualified friendship in a powerful, hostile world.

In London, apart from Yusuf Dadoo and Harold Wolpe he liked talking politics with Joe Mathews. He had great affinity and admiration for Joe Mathews despite Joe M. losing his way somewhat. When Joe M, then a member of the Central Committee, reached exile in Lesotho in the early sixties, he mis-stepped and had great difficulty finding his organizational balance. After years in London he eventually left for the Transkei Bantustan and then joined Buthelezi's IFP in the KwaZulu Bantustan in 1990. An ideologically strange step as Joe M. remained a clear Marxist, steeped in our history. His father, ZK Mathews, an intellectual of note, is credited with having suggested the 1955 Congress of the People that placed the Freedom Charter on the national agenda. It was clear that Joe was deeply influenced by his wife, Ruth First despite her outsider views on the Soviet Union. Her influence on him was evident especially on questions of women's disempowerment and the repression of ideas and corrosion

of media freedom. In both the capitalist and socialist worlds. Joe Slovo never gained formal South African citizenship and said it was luck or fate that his family in fleeing Lithuania happened to catch a boat coming to South Africa; his father had first tried to make a life in Argentina. He failed and then came to South Africa in the 1930s where his family joined him. But Joe said that wherever he happened to have landed, he would have been a revolutionary fighting gross inequality and for the working class and the poor. That was fundamental to his being.

He was a political genius with his feet firmly on the ground of lived revolutionary reality. He was a true Leninist in the pragmatism of his understanding of what was needed to make an actual revolution in the concrete fluctuations and changes that confronted the struggle both at home and internationally. Joe never had any doubt about the primacy in South Africa of the struggle for African national liberation over a class struggle at the time we were active. The objective of the struggle was the national liberation of the African majority in South Africa. But, of course, a progressive African nationalism needed the organized leadership of the working class and was never exclusive and never obviated the dream of non-racialism. He was once invited to a discussion with a group of progressive white South African academics at Oxford University. Amongst these academics Joe found he couldn't make headway in getting them to accept that the class struggle could not gain serious traction until the national question was brought to some sort of resolution. That progressive African liberation was the main content of the struggle. He told me that eventually in exasperation when his arguments did not win anyone over, he said: "*If you were there* [in the struggle, in the trenches] *you would know that the struggle is for the liberation of the African people in South Africa*". Not in a theoretical realm but in practice.

Joe came to writing quite late, around the time that I got to know him when he was 40 years old. Much of his writing was either under the pseudonym Sol Dubula in the *African Communist*, or drafts of documents subsequently adopted by various structures. And later he wrote *No Middle Road* under his own name. And eventually in 1989, *Has Socialism Failed?* And his beautifully written "*Unfinished Autobiography*" cut short by his death. Being white in the struggle for African liberation could, on occasion, become uncomfortable. There was a time in the early seventies when the pressure against white involvement in the struggle became great. Joe unhappily mused one day that it might be better for him to bow out of the struggle given that his own presence, his whiteness, seemed such a dire focus for dissension and attack on the liberation movement from within its ranks. It was a brief moment of self-doubt and introspection and of course, having learnt from John Gaetsewe to do what one knew was right, I argued strongly against such thinking. Joe was a deeply

valuable asset in the revolution. His integrity never in doubt. Joe gave all he had to whatever he was tasked to do for the liberation of South Africa. In the early 1980s someone accused him of being militarist while he was Chief of Staff for uMkhonto we Sizwe. I responded that if Joe was tasked with ensuring gender equality there would already have been an end to patriarchy. Joe had been a member of the CPSA from 1942. He tackled his tasks with intelligence, courage, determination and unflagging energy and belief in eventual victory. Like all of us he too was human.

8. The SACP in London

My experience of the underground SACP in Cape Town had been brief before I was arrested for ARM activities. When I arrived in London, I immediately looked to be reintegrated into the Party. Even in "free" London, the SACP operated as if in illegal underground conditions. I knew no one in liberation movement circles. I spoke to Brian Bunting[68] of whom I had heard and soon I became part of an SACP group. Brian was a prolific writer during his exile years. Of course he wrote for the *African Communist* as well as mountains of articles for *Pravda*, the Soviet newspaper, *TASS*, the Soviet news agency and for the ANC's *Sechaba*. He wrote a wonderful *Biography of Moses Kotane* and *The Rise of the South African Reich*, a well-researched examination of Apartheid and its predecessors. During those exile years when he attended meetings in the USSR, Brian expressed concern to me that every leader routinely, deservedly or not, was always greeted with a prolonged standing ovation. When I asked him later after another visit whether he had tried to remain seated he ruefully confided that it was impossible to take such an independent stand.

UK Party Groups were much larger than the cells at home in South Africa – my London group had 10 or more members and we used our own names. However, we did not discuss meetings over the phone, we were meticulous about punctuality, we changed venues, we parked away from the venue, we knew only the members in our group and did not reveal our own membership to anyone outside the group. [69] One's whole life was pervaded by suspicion. Not only did we live with a daily awareness that we might be followed, our mail opened, phone calls listened to, homes or offices invaded but every new acquaintance, lover or friend held the tension of being a possible enemy plant. And even comrades and friends who were close were silently scrutinized. We were acutely aware of the infiltration of enemy agents into our ranks. Suspicion became normal over decades. We knew a word said out of place could have devastating consequences.

It would be an error to think that we ever had instructions on how to operate in the solidarity organisations or in ANC structures. On wider issues, it was rare that Leninist 'democratic centralism' was invoked[70]. Nonetheless, one was strongly influenced

as a member of a group of people including those much more experienced activists whom we admired. Our discussions were informed by the traditions of our movement developed and honed in changing conditions over decades. At each meeting a comrade would present a previously agreed topic both an international issue and a South African issue. We would take it in turn to present and afterward each one of us was expected to contribute to the discussion. It was a life-changing experience for me. I was 25. I came from a cultural background where women were not considered equal to men. In Afrikaner gatherings women were expected to maintain a lady-like and demure demeanour. In the Party I was treated as an equal amongst equals, and expected to behave as such. In my first exile group were powerful intellectuals and experienced revolutionaries. Rusty and Hilda Bernstein, Alex La Guma, Joe Slovo and also my peers like Aziz Pahad, Eleanor and Ronnie Kasrils, and many other, now largely forgotten Communists of an older generation. The group composition changed particularly in the 1980s bringing in a comrade like Mzala Nxumalo.

I remember a discussion on Bantustans and how we could respond to them as they were emerging. The "independent" Transkei had become the first formal reality under Chief Kaizer Matanzima in 1964. Other Bantustans were due to follow the same route to become vassal states of Apartheid. There were two ways we considered – that we could try discreetly to work with them to guide them so that they could identify with and assist the struggle. The other way was to boycott and isolate them completely. Rusty who didn't usually come across as a radical thinker, proposed tactics such as land invasions and occupations in the Bantustans to take the land back. To support his proposal and demonstrate the capacity for revolutionary action in the rural areas, he referred to the peasant resistance in the 1950s that culminated in the Intaba uprising in Mpondoland in 1960. The meaning of a people's war successfully involving the peasantry in industrially underdeveloped countries as compared to a largely urban insurrection posed a major discussion in our ranks. Could one still talk of a classic peasantry in South Africa? What kind of liberation war should we be working for, understanding that the early sabotage campaign was not enough to overthrow the Apartheid state?

The National Question was always high on the agenda. The 1928 Native Republic was still there despite being mangled in the subsequent decade but now superseded by the 1962 '*Colonialism of a Special Type*' and posing the ongoing tension of African National Liberation with class struggle and non-racialism in South Africa. Everyone in my group held that African national liberation was the major contradiction in the current period of the South African struggle. The African working class was the most important component in this struggle and trade unionism an important ally that could prevent distortions of progressive African nationalism reducing it to

elite capture. African nationalism did not preclude working in alliance with national minority groups in South Africa. The question of a definition of "the vanguard" role in the struggle was debated. Was the SACP the vanguard or did the leading organization of the struggle for liberation, the ANC, fulfill that role?

The Vietnam War was in full swing in the late 1960s and Ho Chi Minh and the famed General Giap were our allies and heroes. Fascist Generals had taken charge of Greece and Cyprus was at war with itself. The renewed upsurge of Black Power was an important development in the USA and European Feminism was just beginning to seep into our consciousness. All these issues were topics for discussion and analysis. As were issues arising from colonial shackles being shed in Africa. I remember a discussion on the massive popular Iranian uprising of 1979 and considering whether this represented revolutionary change. Joe urged caution in characterising it as such. Ronnie remembers that I led a discussion on Palestine, the PLO under Yasser Arafat having been founded in 1969. There was not a single Jew I knew in the liberation movement who was not hostile to Zionist Israel. The liberation of Palestinians from occupation, the return of their land and of those exiled, democracy were the concerns throughout our Movement.

Rusty Bernstein came across as a moderate sort of person, mild but not given to much smiling. Often when he spoke at length he looked down steadily at his hands on his lap as if his discourse was primarily with himself. He spoke quietly, earnestly and when he became agitated his voice acquired a slightly disdainful edge but rose only a little and he kept his hands at ease. But like all the comrades I knew well, gentleness did not denote a gentleness of ideology. Mostly, everyone was hardline ideologically and had steel in their political vision. In the Movement in general, Communists and non-Communists alike spoke and analysed broadly in Marxist-Leninist terms but with a depth of application in the concrete conditions that belied any dogmatic adherence to the theories.

I attended Party organized Marxist-Leninist classes led by Rusty Bernstein. Although not all the comrades in the study classes were known to me in the Party, one assumed that they were either in other Party groups or were working through a probation period with a view to being confirmed as members of the SACP. But it helped that in these classes we were exposed to discussion outside the safety net of the familiar comrades in our own Group. Rusty's teaching style was facilitatory, participatory, respectful and open. Under his guidance we read the classic works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, took turns to present them to the group, discussed the issues and always applied them to the South African situation. I worked from the Progress Publisher books "*Selected Works of Marx and Engels*". Through the Party I was

given the Collected Works of Lenin in 45 volumes. Some volumes went missing over the years as comrades borrowed them. But the bulk of the collection travelled with me and still sits on my shelves now, together with many Soviet published pamphlets on particular issues.

Joe Slovo, Rusty Bernstein and Alex La Guma[71] dominated political thinking and debate in my Party group. Joe would go for the jugular in any argument. Alex was blunt, to the point, almost intransigent. Seeing dialectics at work as positions shifted and learning to understand our political thinking and analyses from some of the greatest minds in exile was my consistent teacher for over ten years from the age of 25 before some comrades started dispersing down south and elsewhere.

9. The Cold War, Stalin and us

The Cold War intruded itself into the loyalties and support for the struggle against Apartheid. We could rely on African countries, socialist countries, many Asian countries, workers, trade unions, ordinary people worldwide to support the liberation movement consistently, just as we knew that those who wholeheartedly supported Apartheid and gave it succour were the capitalist governments of North America, Israel and Western Europe. This binary world reinforced and demanded a reciprocal loyalty. In those days of Cold War there were two sides clearly representing good and evil both within South Africa and internationally. One has to ask just how far we were willing to go in our loyalty. We understood that in the great hostilities and ever-present nuclear threat that prevailed in the world, determined and loyal support was a crucial weapon. It is difficult, impossible in the middle of a war to start questioning the generals.

We knew about what came to be called the Soviet "excesses" under Stalin. Within circles that one trusted it was possible to discuss such issues. But outside, in 'independent' Left circles, for instance, one closed ranks. The Soviet excesses had happened, had been publicly acknowledged by President Khrushchev soon after Stalin's death, and were left there in the past. What continued to be discussed among us were the dangers of a bureaucracy excessively loyal to the State. The Party card that became a necessity to advancement in life. Nevertheless, despite its shortcomings the Soviet Union represented deep social and economic advances that gave hope to underdeveloped societies. As Joe Slovo pointed out later[72]

> *"….after only 70 years of socialist endeavour in what was one of the most backward countries in the capitalist world - there are more graduate engineers than in the US, more graduate research scientists than in Japan and more medical doctors per*

head than in Western Europe. It also produces more steel, fuel and energy than any other country (The World in the 1990s; Economist publication). How many capitalist countries can match the achievements of most of the socialist world in the provision of social security, child care, the ending of cultural backwardness, and so on? There is certainly no country in the world which can beat Cuba's record in the sphere of health care."

There was without doubt a price to pay. But at the same time it seemed that avaricious capitalism exacted a price while providing few benefits for the majority of the people who often clung desperately to the edge of their lives. Loyalty always tried to balance the greater social good against manifest failings. In "*Has Socialism Failed?*", Joe Slovo stresses the lack of democracy as a factor in the collapse of Socialist countries in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. He describes how democracy was managed in what we called 'socialist democracy' (in contrast to the 'bourgeois democracy' that is an expression of the interests of the dominant class under capitalism). He mentions the iniquity of the list system in Soviet elections – a system that we have come to know well in democratic South Africa. And then there was also the controlled, comfortable and unquestioning media in the socialist countries.

In quotes, Joe contrasts Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg:

"Lenin quoted Engels approvingly when he said that 'the proletariat needs the state, not in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries….' In practice, a dictatorship of a party bureaucracy."

"Rosa Luxemburg said, in a polemic with Lenin: 'Freedom only for the supporters of the government, only for the members of one party - however numerous they may be - is not freedom at all. Freedom is always and exclusively freedom for the one who thinks differently ... its effectiveness vanishes when "freedom" becomes a special privilege.' "

My own experience in the underground SACP both in Cape Town and later in exile was a remarkable homage to democracy and accountability in underground conditions. Even within the parameters of danger and threat from both Apartheid and other security forces like the CIA, MI6 and Mossad, in London we received regular reports for discussion from both regional or district and from central structures. Secret ballots for delegates to Congresses and for the Central Committee were held without any interference. For the Central Committee elections, each group member had a blank piece of paper and could vote for any three names – this despite not knowing with any certainty who were Party members nor seeing any nominations or lists to guide one. You wrote down three names, folded the ballot and placed it in a box without any discussion. True unless you were on the Central Committee you did not know the outcome of the elections!

Although both Joe and Rusty were members of the Central Committee and had been for some time, I saw them at every group meeting debating with each other with great vigour and on many issues I didn't know the line the Central Committee settled on. As a young Party member I never felt constrained in arguing against them, questioning what they said or anything I saw in the liberation movement in general. On the contrary, I was expected to express my thoughts and my thoughts would be treated with respect, tested and discussed. *Ad hominem* attacks were unheard of even in heated debates. No one was ever made to feel stupid or disloyal. No one's commitment to the struggle became a tool of debate. Within the Party there was never any suggestion, expressed or implied, that I should adopt a particular approach to any aspect of struggle. But of course I was there because I believed it was the right place to be. Whatever the leaders said was enormously influential and made me think. I came there after a process of becoming politicized within the ranks and felt part of a long history of struggle that I respected and even revered. After the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, when there was almost universal condemnation of the Soviet Union in Britain, I asked Rusty whether he would always take the side of the USSR. "*When I wake up in the morning to such a crisis,*" he explained "*I assume that the Soviet Union is right. However, I feel free to change my position later when I have more information.*" Trust in the leaders was an imperative in clandestine revolutionary conditions.

10. Internal Reconstruction

As soon as I reconnected with the SACP in London in 1966 I was drawn into tasks aimed primarily at what we called 'internal reconstruction'. In London where I was based, I saw the SACP working tirelessly to find ways of demonstrating that the struggle was alive after the destruction that followed the Rivonia arrests. To begin to rebuild those broken structures within the country almost from scratch. It was not easy. Looking back now it seems incredible to me that we had such unshakeable certainty of our eventual victory. "*Freedom in our Lifetime*".

People sometimes refer to the ten years after the Rivonia arrests in 1963 until the wave of wildcat strikes in Durban in 1973 as a decade when nothing was happening in the struggle. Nevertheless we were certain, knowing the levels of repression and injustice at home, knowing the history of enormous resilience of the people, that this could only be a lull. There was massive destruction of both underground and nominally legal networks inside the country. There was a *cordon sanitaire* of colonial and hostile states surrounding South Africa. Where states like Botswana became independent in the wave of recent anti-colonial victories around the Continent, such newly independent countries even as far away as Tanzania were directly infiltrated,

threatened, invaded and bombed by the most powerful military and security apparatus on the Continent – Apartheid South Africa. From where I was functioning it was clear to me that leaders like Joe Slovo, Yusuf Dadoo, Reg September and others picked up the spear presented to them as SACP leaders and started where they found themselves with great energy on the task of reconstruction within the country. Because they were not members of the ANC, they were denied the hospitality African countries. African SACP leaders and activists were in the African countries on the basis of their ANC membership.

The first task that I was given in 1966 was to produce a weekly news briefing for organisational use, internal to the ANC leadership. Happily I was given a range of South African newspapers like the *World, Golden City Post* and others directed at a black readership. I found I had complete autonomy in deciding which news items to include in the weekly briefing and which to exclude. I did not approve of Bantustan leader Gatsha Buthelezi as, in my view, he was a collaborator in Apartheid's balkanization of South Africa despite his refusal to allow his fiefdom KwaZulu to become another "independent" vassal state. I knew that there was ANC contact with him at a high level. I included items where Buthelezi was reported to have made verbal attacks on Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), preaching undue moderation. He was against the boycott of Apartheid South Africa and he came out against non-racialism, Indians specifically – famously in one diatribe in which he attacked Gorah Ebrahim, a PAC leader in Tanzania, as an Indian. The Apartheid government insisted on names and addresses in letters to the Editors. I added to the basic mailing list I held some of the names I found in the newspapers. Those on my mailing list received clandestine copies of the *African Communist*[73] and other material of mobilization. On this list I added Chief Gatsha Buthelezi at Private Bag 1, Ulundi. After a while, I had an instruction to take his name off the mailing list.

Posting material into the country was handled with rules of clandestine secrecy. Clear nail vanish to obliterate our fingerprints, a variety of envelope types. I typed addresses for the mailing on two or three different rented typewriters, untraceable and with different fonts. We bought stamps that allowed a variety of ways of making up the total postage. We posted the envelopes in small amounts in post boxes spread over London and surrounding areas, over several days. But still I couldn't shake off an image of a large Special Branch basket into which fell all our hard work as it arrived in South Africa. A group of us met around my very large oak table in the kitchen of our apartment in Anson Road, Tufnell Park to send material into South Africa. It was a beautiful oak table that could seat 20 people and had thick twisted legs. Someone we met for the first time over dinner with friends, had given it to Albie and me. They were moving into a small place and could no longer accommodate it.

We had an interesting group working around this table that at some point included Aziz Pahad. He was a very slow worker and his nail varnish always seem to peel off very rapidly so he preferred using plastic gloves to protect his fingerprints. Even the gloves somehow got holes in them. But his conversations were always lively and interesting over the rather tedious task. Ray Harmel was a dedicated participant in the group. She reminisced about her personal history filling me with admiration. Ray was born in 1905 in Lithuania, the year of the first Russian revolutionary uprising and a time of widespread and cruel pogroms on Jews who were herded into stetls or ghettoes. Like many South African Jews of her generation, Ray had experienced the persecution and the ghettoes. By the time she was 16, she had joined the illegal Lithuanian Communist Party. She was wanted by the police and I remember a story about her daring escape with Party literature across a wide river. She fled and in 1928 at the age of 23 arrived in Johannesburg with little education and unable to speak English. She joined the CPSA and remained a dedicated member, marrying a District Secretary, Michael Harmel (later on the Central Committee) and leaving with him into exile in London in 1963 where he was sent to edit the *African Communist*. She died there in 1998 aged 92 having spent her life as a loyal footsoldier in struggle. Soon I became part of a formal operational unit chaired by Dr. Yusuf Dadoo who was also chair of the SACP. The group included Joe Slovo, Reg September, Ronnie Kasrils, Aziz Pahad. We met formally every week to carry out tasks of internal reconstruction. Jack Hodgson and Ron Press didn't come to the meetings but they were very much part of the work we did. Many people contributed. Literature that we produced in London and distributed inside South Africa included a comic book about Simon and Jane, two young people who join MK. We produced what we called a 'flimsy' record – soft, 45rpms. It had a cover with garish pink lettering "*New outstanding recording FREE INSIDE…*" It started with Albie and me singing the Apartheid national anthem "*Uit die Blou Van Onse Hemel…*" interrupted with the stutter of AK47 fire and then a dramatic announcement "*This is the ANC, this is the voice of the African National Congress…*".

There were also small booklets that we called "*little Lenins*" with the cover and first pages either blank or replicated from innocuous literature. We used covers from the Automobile Association and a booklet, *Landscape Gardening*, or Springbok Exercise Book. Inside were various political tracts from Karl Marx, Engels and Lenin. "*What is to be Done?*", "*The State and Revolution*". One booklet had the cover "*What Animal is This?*" written by one Mr. Bilke, head of the Pretoria Zoo. Inside was Lenin's "*What is to be Done?*". Rather to our surprise and amusement, Mr. Bilke emerged as a real person. He was outraged and probably frightened and he made a public statement in the South African press denouncing the misuse of his name and distancing himself from the covert content of his little book "*What Animal is This?*" We sent into the

country articles by Dialego who was John Hoffman, a South African professor at Leicester University. His articles were used extensively in our ranks in the later 1970s. There were four articles: 1) *Why revolutionaries need Marxism*, 2) *What is Dialectical Materialism*, 3) *Marxism and the Theory of Knowledge* and 4) *The Materialist Theory of History.* Also sent into the country as a 'little lenin' was Joe Slovo's *"No Middle Road"*. There were leaflets written to mobilise specific groups such as women, youth, church people, Indians and so on. Apart from the *African Communist*, from its 50th anniversary in 1971 the SACP started producing *Inkululeko-Freedom* on extremely lightweight paper specifically for underground distribution.

11. Slowly rebuilding structures inside South Africa

To revive the spirit of struggle and to resurrect underground structures inside the country, individual South Africans were recruited. These individuals were put through political training, mainly the history of the ANC and SACP, trained in clandestine work, in production and distribution of literature, in technical skills that became more complex as we gained a foothold inside the country. In this early period most of the operatives entered the country legally and led lives that appeared normal in Johannesburg and Cape Town. Gradually underground organization became re-established inside the country. In time, accountability shifted to structures in the front-line states. Tasks became increasingly complex, long-term and dangerous. The State response became increasingly vicious. Over time the demands of the struggle inside the country changed and developed and there was direct contact with leaders who entered the country from the front-line states. But in those early days, the tasks of the South Africans were to establish small clandestine cells within South Africa, to recruit new members and to both produce and distribute material. I was involved with cadres who included Ahmed Timol, David and Sue Rabkin, Jeremy Cronin, Anthony Holiday, Tim Jenkin and Steve Lee, Raymond Suttner. All of them were eventually arrested.

Many non-South Africans were also recruited, mainly to make trips into South Africa and out again to distribute literature and over time even to smuggle in armaments and other dangerous tasks. Outstanding amongst the non-South Africans was Alex Moumbaris who had a mixed nationality that included Egyptian, Greek and French, and I think he even had an Australian connection. I had to teach him to drive. He wasn't very good and it took quite a while. As we practised around the streets of London, we talked - he taught me how stock exchanges function. One task I failed to teach him was how to change a tyre because I couldn't loosen the nuts on the teaching car. When he reached the Transkei and had to drive inland, he got a flat tyre on the rented car in the middle of nowhere. Nevertheless he went on to contribute

a great deal to the struggle and was eventually caught Iin 1973 and sentenced to seven years in prison. In 1979 he rather reluctantly participated in a daring and successful escape organized by Tim Jenkin and Steve Lee from Pretoria prison.

My main task with the South African comrades was to convert communications into clandestine secret writing. I didn't meet these comrades except where I was involved in their training. I would find someone I trusted living in or near London with no ANC profile. The person would exchange normal, friendly but prosaic letters with an operative inside the country. At the back of these pages I would write a message from the leadership in secret invisible ink. There were very many ways of doing this and I had training in Moscow. Much of it I no longer remember. Dithizone was probably the most secure substance I used. It is a very stable white powder that I would rub into pages of a book and then use as carbons. The secret letter would emerge when it was held over damp heat, a boiling kettle, and then treated with another chemical. The secret print would come up in bright red letters. Giving the operative going into South Africa a book with prepared carbon pages was obviously easy and safe. There were pitfalls – the book pages to be used as carbons had to be of a particular quality to ensure proper absorption of the dithizone. Pressure in writing had to be enough to ensure legibility once the invisible message was developed but not so great that it left detectable indentations. Chemicals were often a nightmare to procure inside South Africa as a comrade could not easily walk into a pharmacy and buy these without attracting attention. Chemicals could be harmful such as Hydroquinone that was a carcinogenic found in skin lightening products. At one time we heard that the 3year old son of comrades got hold of caustic soda used to develop our letters. I had a large well-sealable bowl with iodine that was both dangerous and volatile. And a glass mortar and pestle for grinding chemicals. We changed the formula from time to time adapting to the situation of the internal comrades.

We did use simpler formulae like lemon juice but these could be unstable becoming detectable unintentionally quite easily. When Chris Hani was based in Lesotho from 1974, we decided that we would use a softer method of communication from London to a safe contact in Maseru. Chris was called "*Phoenix*". I bought two copies of Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez's "*One Hundred Years of Solitude*" for coding our messages. I had loved reading this book as I told Chris. I was a little crushed when he told me after a time that he did not like the book at all. But in any case it was just a means to an end as we counted pages, paragraphs and letters to encode messages rather laboriously. I learned how to open and seal letters clandestinely but although I clearly remember doing this, for the life of me I can't remember what letters I opened up and sealed again.

In London Jack Hodgson and I constructed fibreglass false bottoms to large suitcases in my kitchen, damaging my marble top in the process. Jack had constructed a door across part of the entrance hall of my flat in Tufnell Park creating a small office and ensuring my children were safe from chemicals. He also constructed a false drawer to a built-in desk in my bedroom allowing space for hiding documents and small things. The flat where I lived was built in Victorian times with thick solid inside doors some of which Jack hollowed out at the top to allow for further hiding places. Once there were break-ins on the same day at my home and that of Reg September who also lived in Anson Road. Nothing in my house was stolen but papers were clearly searched and untidily replaced. The hidden spaces that Jack had constructed did not seem to have been breached.

In the operational structure in which I served under Yusuf Dadoo, we were trained to look at the CVs of potential operatives. The CVs were usually repeatedly asked for on two or three separate occasions. We looked for discrepancies, unexplained financial history and so on. Craig Williamson, a former Wits student now at the International University Exchange Fund in Switzerland was amongst the individuals whom we vetted. I was the only one in the operational group to raise doubt over Craig Williamson. His CV raised a red flag with me because he said when he left school he chose to spend his two years' national service then compulsory for all white males, with the South African Police rather than the army where young white men were usually placed. I insisted that no one who wasn't in thrall to Apartheid would think to choose the more despised SAP. Especially not if he were English speaking. But I was a minority of one. Everyone else in the group cleared him. Not long afterwards Dr. Dadoo entrusted me with a very large sum of money in cash to take to Williamson. I met him at a park bench somewhere in Switzerland, giving him my *nom du guerre* for the occasion with the usual codes for mutual recognition. I handed over the money and he then insisted he would meet me at the airport in a few hours when my plane was due to return to London. This was completely irregular in terms of clandestine behaviour and I protested vigorously. Despite my protestations he was there at the airport, and with his wife - which was even more bizarre. Over coffee he kept asking me who I really was. I fobbed him off with increasing alarm until he suddenly had a eureka moment "*I know who you are!*". A while later both Williamson and his wife were exposed as Apartheid spies who had infiltrated anti-Apartheid structures already at Wits University before moving outside the country. It did not surprise me when I found my picture in Paratus, the SADF magazine (or was it Servatus the SAP magazine), together with photos of Aziz and Ronnie naming us as SACP operatives in London.

I received a small stipend for my SACP work that became full-time in 1970. I did not want to be paid for my political work, but Joe Slovo pointed out that if they paid me even a small amount, the SACP could call the shots. We lived with the comrades' daily dangers and fears when they were infiltrated back into South Africa.

12. Underground Operatives

Ahmed Timol was probably the first recruit to start an underground structure. A teacher in Roodepoort he was very responsive to the situation of oppression within the country. He came to London on a passport in 1967 and remained there for as long as two years. He travelled on haj to Mecca meeting Dr. Dadoo on the way. Dr. Dadoo had been friends with Timol's father in the old days. Timol knew Essop and Aziz Pahad well and their fathers knew one another too. He spent time with them in their very open home in London. In 1969 Timol spent 9 months at the Lenin School in Moscow in a small group with Thabo Mbeki and Ann Nicholson who had been in Barberton prison with me.

I did not know him personally but only through the secret correspondence. A British former neighbour of mine in Southend Green, Stephanie Segal helped with the innocent cover correspondence. I used the dithizone method for the secret letters. Timol started identifying possible recruits for an underground cell. He produced and distributed literature including a leaflet for mobilizing Indians specifically. He distributed the first edition of the SACP's *Inkululeko-Freedom* to mark our 50th anniversary in July 1971. There was a time when there was a lull in Timol's communication. This was worrying and could mean that communication from him was intercepted, clearly a dangerous situation but unlikely as the Security Police would more probably allow a smooth flow in communication so that they could monitor it. It could mean he had been detained. Or it could mean that the danger of his situation had overwhelmed him. In the end his temporary silence seemed insignificant.

After eighteen months Timol was detained. After four days of the most appalling physical torture he was dropped to his death from the 10th floor of John Vorster Square in Johannesburg. He was 29 years old. Many people around Timol were detained and were viciously treated. Salim Essop whom Timol had drawn in to his underground work ended up in a coma in hospital. But he recovered, stood trial and spent 5 years on Robben Island. Dr Essop was released from Robben Island in 1977 and headed to England to take up his studies in politics and law at the

University of Leeds. It is shocking to have a cadre or a comrade killed. Timol was the 22nd person to die in detention throughout the country since the death of Looksmart Solwandle Ngudle in 1963. There would be many more. In early 1972 there was an inquest into Timol's death that further stirred outrage both in South Africa and internationally. The story given by the police involved in Timol's arrest had many peculiar aspects. They said Timol was detained fortuitously at a roadblock and in his boot they claimed were many letters with the distinctive red secret writing from dithizone. Keeping secret correspondence flew in the face of his training in underground work and seemed highly unlikely. Some of the secret content they revealed did not seem authentic. They immediately claimed that Stephanie Segal who signed the innocent cover letters, was me. There were 29 police and state officials involved in the Inquest. As with any other inquests during that Apartheid period, the state and security police were exonerated [74]. The state's explanations for their deaths included that detainees had "*slipped on a piece of soap in the shower", "suicide"* usually by *"hanging", "shot while trying to escape"* and many *"jumped (from 5th, 6th or 10th floor) during interrogation".* The Timol inquest found that he had jumped from the 10th floor during interrogation. None of it made sense.

Shortly after Timol worked in the underground, David and Sue Rabkin trod a similar path. David's parents, Joan and Gerald Rabkin had moved from South Africa to London after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 with David who was twelve and his younger sister, Hilary. Sue Morris[75] was British and she and David became sweethearts when they were fourteen. Sue had not been to South Africa when they married and settled in Cape Town in 1972. On the surface they led a normal liberal white life. David worked as a journalist on the Cape Argus. After a short time we put them in touch with another underground operative, Jeremy Cronin[76] and they made good progress working in a clandestine cell. They secretly produced and distributed up to 15 leaflets on behalf of the SACP and ANC. After four years, in July 1976, they were arrested shortly after they had distributed a leaflet about the Soweto uprising. Sue was 8 months pregnant; their first born child, Joby, was three years old. In sentencing Sue to a month imprisonment, the judge said that she should be deported preferably before she gave birth. In the end the wheels of justice turned too slowly and Sue was still being held at Pollsmoor prison when their second child, Franny, was born. David served 8 and a half years with other white male political prisoners in Pretoria. Sue settled with their two children in Maputo working in Special Ops. She did not dare visit him; the children visited David in prison once or twice a year with their grandparents, seeing their father through perspex and under the watchful eyes of prison guards.

In 1969 Raymond Suttner arrived in London from Durban and made contact with Albie and me. He was a gentle young person, serious, highly intelligent and deeply

thoughtful. While he was on that visit he worked as a petrol pump attendant at a garage near us. He wanted to make contact with the underground ANC. After being trained to do underground work he went home in the early 1970s. He was a lecturer at the University of Natal and produced and distributed underground literature surviving for four years before being detained. He was viciously tortured including being given electric torture. The first for a white detainee. He pleaded guilty in a short trial and spent 8 years in prison in Pretoria.

Then there was the Aventura. South Africa had no free border but a very long coastline. A plan was hatched as early as 1967 to use the very long seacoast to infiltrate combatants and weapons.[77] The Aventura was a ship that would sail from Mogadishu with a Greek crew[78] and with MK guerillas and armaments that would be landed on the South African coast. I had several large topographical maps of South Africa and was tasked with finding a short list of suitable places where the Aventura might anchor and unload its precious cargo. I poured over the maps scrutinizing from the north coast of KwaZulu to the wild coast of the Transkei. Joe and Jack Hodgson were my contacts on this project and the Transkei delivered the place of choice, safe to land from the sea and safe from excessive security force scrutiny. The project took several years to come to fruition. Other comrades also scrutinized maps and eventually Alex Moumbaris was sent in to reconnoiter the selected landing places. After much work, much excitement and nervousness, and funding from the Soviet Union, by the early 1970s when the Greek crew got to Mogadishu and discovered where they were heading and who and what their cargo was, they sabotaged the Aventura by putting sugar in the sump (is that possible?). Although an attempt was made to replace the crew with British seamen, the engine was wrecked beyond repair. The Aventura had to be abandoned.[79]

13. Yusuf Dadoo

When I met Yusuf Dadoo in 1966 in London I knew of his huge reputation as a South African national and Communist leader. He joined the CPSA in 1939 and had been Chairperson of the Communist Party since its legal days, since 1941 the year I was born. Like so many other South African Communists, Yusuf combined a gentle relaxed personality with a steely determination, unwavering ideology and strict attention to revolutionary duty.

He sometimes took me to lunch at the India Club in London and I learnt to appreciate the best of Indian cuisine. Indian restaurants were very popular in London in those days. He taught me about the politics of his large ancestral country, India. Over languid meals I learned of Comrade M.N. Roy, of great Communist successes in

Kerala and Uttar Pradesh, and the later checkered history of Communism in India. He explained his concerns about the Bharatiya Janata Hindu nationalist party when it defeated Congress in 1977. He had diabetes but this didn't prevent him from enjoying whiskey. He cooked and memorably made wonderful curry from a sheep's head. He served it with Vietnamese vodka, that I thought tasted like water from a car's radiator. Yusuf's wife Winnie was amongst the many admirably strong women I knew in the London ANC who were outspoken in their thoughts and steadfast in their views.

Indians came to the Natal Colony as indentured labour in 1860[80] poor labourers from south India and largely Hindu. Merchants followed - mainly Muslims, many from Yusuf's hometown Kholvad in Gujerat. They settled in Natal and also in Paul Kruger's republic in the Transvaal where they immediately incurred restrictions particularly in their freedom of movement. Yusuf Dadoo was sent by his family first to India to complete his schooling and then to Edinburgh to do a medical degree that he completed in 1936. It became clear to him and other leaders that the repression of the Indian minority[81] , although different, was an integral part of the subjugation of the majority of South Africans by the small white minority.
In 1953 Yusuf was instrumental with others in secretly reconstituting the CPSA as the underground South African Communist Party (SACP); he was elected Chairperson with Moses Kotane as General Secretary.

14. A month in the USSR

Within a few months of arriving in London, in the northern spring of 1967 I was offered a month-long visit to the Soviet Union as a sort of rest and friendship tour after my imprisonment. I was in a group of perhaps 6 South Africans and I was paired with Ray Alexander-Simons as my roommate. She was already renowned as a Communist and Trade Unionist. Her sister, Dora Alexander, was part of the group of women I had known when I first moved in Party circles in Cape Town seven years earlier. I was stateless and travelled on a United Nations piece of paper, stamped valid for all countries except South Africa. In any case the Soviets always issued separate visas and did not stamp one's passport.

The Soviet Union was a revelation to me. Despite having been a Communist for five years my focus had been South Africa and Africa. The rest of the world out there was somewhat of a mystery. My internationalism was directed primarily toward Algeria and the Congo of Lumumba. I had not given much thought to distant USSR but assumed there would be highly armed, militarist police on every street corner keeping a firm grip on the Workers' State. Instead I found an apparently

relaxed society around me with the community police in sagging, definitely non-militarist uniforms chatting to people around them. The Great War (Second World War) loomed large as an heroic narrative in which 20 million Soviet people died but the USSR triumphed over fascism. Heroism in general was important. I was given and still own my original copy of "*How the Steel Was Tempered*" by Nikolai Ostrovsky which was first serialized in a Soviet magazine in the early 1930s, first published as a book in 1932, made into a Soviet film ten years later after Ostrovsky's passing. Ostrovsky was born in a Ukrainian village of labourer parents in 1904. His parents could not read and a story is told of him as a small child reading aloud novels to his mother including those by Walter Scott and Jules Verne. He sometimes changed the plot, 'reading' his own versions. He wrote his only published book "*How the Steel Was Tempered*" while in his twenties. The Ostrovsky family had moved to a larger town and Nikolai started to work as an unskilled labourer at the age of 12 years. He became disabled with childhood arthritis, being unable to stand by the age of 23. He started to read voraciously but went blind. He then wrote his novel using a stencil he invented. He became so weak that he could no longer use his stencil and he resorted to dictating to his friends – there are 19 different handwritings in the original manuscript. He had lived through the continuous period of war in Russia and the USSR including the First World War, the Bolshevik Revolution and the Civil war that followed in 1921 when he was 17. The book is a fictionalised autobiography and confirms the Marxist belief that human personality is forged in action. Socialism would forge good people free of human greed. He died at the age of 32. His book was known and much loved in our own ranks.

It was during this trip in 1967 that I first saw opera. A performance of Aida on the large stage of the Bolshoi Theatre introduced me and made me a life long lover of opera. Bolshoi audiences were very enthusiastic throwing flowers on to the stage at any moment throughout the performance when the music soared, cheering and giving standing ovations, often interrupting the flow of the opera. One of the first gifts Joe gave me was a record of Aida. However, this could not be taken for granted – the Bolshoi audience was musically knowledgeable and discriminating. On another visit I saw the premier of an opera by Yuri Gregorovich, the Director of the Bolshoi Theatre for 30 years. The opera was about a heroic group of young women combatants in The Great War. A heroic story. The packed audience was quiet throughout and at the end the Bolshoi audience booed for a long time. No flowers. We visited a family in a small flat in Moscow to see how ordinary Soviet families lived. Both daughters were at schools specializing in ballet and sport respectively to develop their potential talents. The mother served us tea from a traditional Russian urn. We toured the Kremlin, we wandered in Red Square and jumped the long queue to view Comrade Lenin's embalmed body. Soviet citizens would join the queue on

their wedding days while still wearing their wedding clothes. We visited the huge Gum department store on the edge of Red Square with its enormous glass domed roof. We were given a stipend of roubles and taken to a small shop stocking special goods where I bought vinyl records featuring great Soviet musicians. We walked with happy Soviet families in Gorki Park. We drove through the birch forests outside Moscow driving south for 10 kilometers to Gorki where Lenin recuperated after an attempted assassination in 1918, and where he returned to spend almost a year as his health declined until his death on January 21, 1924. We visited the then defunct but architecturally glorious Voskresensky Monastery founded in 1656 not far from Moscow.

We all had medicals in Moscow. I was asked routinely whether I was on any medication and admitted to a couple of quite heavy psycho-tropic drugs, Stelazine and Clozapine, if I remember correctly, prescribed by my London general practitioner, Geraldine. So I was taken to see a Soviet psychiatrist. She did not speak English. She wore a floppy white hat and an inelegant loose-fitting wrap-around white coat. Secretly I thought she would look at home in a butchery. Through an interpreter she asked why I was on this medication. I stuttered that I had more or less just got to exile after imprisonment in South Africa and I was finding adjustment difficult. She wrapped me in her arms, patted me on my back and said I should just listen to my wise London doctor. *Garasho, garasho*. Geraldine was indeed wise. She was British and practised in Chalk Farm where Albie and I were living then. By 1971 I was no longer on the psychiatric medication and when I was pregnant with Michael I asked Geraldine for something calming. She refused probably advising me to breathe deeply. I am forever grateful to her as the tranquilizer of choice in the UK at the time was Thalidomide that caused many children to be born without limbs. She later married a comrade lawyer friend of Albie's, Mervyn Bennun, had twins and they settled in South Africa after 1990.

Back in the USSR we took a train to Leningrad and visited Smolny, Russia's first educational establishment for women started by Catherine the Great in 1764. During the October Revolution in 1917, Lenin chose it as the Bolshevik headquarters and his residence until the national government moved to the Kremlin in Moscow some months later. In Smolny we saw Lenin's office and living rooms, and the assembly hall where the victory of the October revolution was proclaimed in 1917. That night as she was plaiting her hair over the top of her head, Comrade Ray wanted to know if I did not think her husband, Jack Simons, looked like Lenin. I was a little taken aback at her girlishness but readily agreed. Well Jack and Lenin were both bald anyway. Our visit to Leningrad was memorable. We had been asked what we wanted to see in the USSR and I insisted I wanted to see the inside of a prison!! We were taken into the Tsarist dungeons of the Peter and Paul Fortress. Dostoyevsky and Gorki, as well

as Leon Trotsky had been imprisoned there, as had Lenin's older brother Alexander who was hanged in 1870 with four comrades for attempting to assassinate the Tsar. Lenin was then 17 years old. We took a hydrofoil – a boat that 'flies' just above the surface of the water – to Petrodvorets, a magnificent palace outside Leningrad with breath-taking fountains and gardens with romantic statues.

Everything in Russia was very old and steeped in history. The Aurora cruiser ship was anchored on the Neva River. It fired a blank shot to give the signal for the storming of the Winter Palace that marked the beginning of the October Revolution of 1917. In the Second World War during the 900-day Nazi siege of Leningrad, the Aurora's guns were removed and used in the city's defence of its perimeter. The Winter Palace was built in the 18th century to house the Tsars. It became part of the now famous museum of art, the Hermitage, when Catherine the Great brought a collection of 255 paintings from Berlin in 1764. The Hermitage is a row of stunning green and white buildings on the banks of the Neva River and houses nearly 3 million paintings and artifacts from all over the world. It is calculated that if one stopped just a few minutes in front of each exhibit, it would take 11 years to see everything. It was a feast. Of course, we had an experienced guide who selected and moved us through the array of paintings by Leonardo de Vinci, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Rubens, Renoir, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Matisse, Gaugin, Picasso and many more. I had never seen anything like it. A few years later when I returned to Moscow for some training, my minder took me to the Tretyakov Gallery of Russian art dating back to the 10th century. My minder, Andrei, was himself a painter – and a boxer - before becoming KGB and his guided tour of this gallery was memorable. There was some record of that particular trip that made its way into the records that were opened after the fall of the USSR and into the Johannesburg Sunday Times after I returned from exile. Fortunately I was still named Stephanie Sachs in those days. I went to the amazing Moscow Circus. Someone took my photo with my minder. He jumped up and confiscated the film – I was a secret visitor. When I got back to London on that visit, my luggage seemed to be missing. After much angst and reporting it, I tracked it down as VIP luggage – a bit embarrassing ! I had sat next to a Soviet man on the plane who had unforgettable skill in peeling an orange, precise and in a completely regular spiral. Memories of a lost land.

We were taken to Riga in the then soviet state of Latvia. It was here that Ray Alexander-Simons was born and joined the anti-Nazi underground as a very young girl. She knew her underground leader only by her *nom du guerre* but our Soviet guides tracked down this woman and there was a warm reunion between her and Ray. Nothing was impossible for the Soviet comrades. In Riga we also went to the Opera House – I cannot remember the performance but there was a moment

when the audience noticed a large delegation of Vietnamese women in guerrilla uniforms sitting upstairs. They wore distinctive floppy wide-brimmed hats that looked a bit like those of West Indian cricketers. Hostility to the US war against the Vietnamese people was then the biggest issue internationally including in the USA. The Soviet audience rose spontaneously and started prolonged clapping and cheering for these young women until everyone was in tears. In Riga we also visited the local government offices and talked to the mayor and other functionaries about the difficulties and lessons learnt in local government. I could not imagine at the time that local government would be such a major arena of disappointment in democratic South Africa.

We were then taken to a resort in Sochi on the Black Sea, for pine needle baths and swims. Safety was a very strict concern and one comrade, Steve Naidoo I think, who was unable to swim, was not allowed on the boat that rowed us out on to the mirror calm Black Sea, each one of us wearing a lifejacket. I cannot remember now why I returned to Moscow by myself on a plane. The plane felt a bit like a London bus in that people stood in the aisles hanging on to straps. People were very talkative and curious and asked me where I was from. Of course, I had learnt a little Russian by then and they looked at me in disbelief when I said "*Yuzhnaya Afrika*". They rubbed my skin and asked a lot of questions but my Russian didn't extend to a possible explanation. So I just smiled a lot and said *garasho, garasho*. There was often a disjuncture between Soviet official politics and the knowledge or attitudes of the population at large. I was horrified once when I watched a comedy film in the Party hotel in Moscow and Africans were portrayed in the most demeaning "Sambo" style with bones through their noses and feathers in their hair. Similarly, despite progressive gender policies, women's magazines portrayed glorious and romantic women as married mothers only, albeit as mothers with jobs in factories and wielding large guns in defence of Socialism.

My lasting memory of the 1967 trip to the Soviet Union was that there was a place on earth where I was admired and treated with respect precisely because of my political commitment, my Communism. In South Africa, where I was confined within my family and white community, this commitment gave me an experience of ostracism, isolation, and secrecy. Even within the white liberal student body at UCT, being further left was pilloried and treated with arrogant contempt. It is true that I felt loved when I was arrested and my patients from the spinal unit at the Conradie Hospital where I was then working, turned up in their wheelchairs at my first Court appearance. The mother of one of my co-accused, Spike de Keller, in pleading for clemency for her son, famously said "*he is only a terrorist, not a communist*". Being a Communist in the "free world" did not bring with it anything except grief.

In the Soviet Union, a Communist was wrapped in a warm embrace of love. The Soviet Union was an unforgettable experience – I was free, I could speak of Communism, the Soviets were deeply respectful and sympathetic. I met Communists from around the world, especially in the Party hotel in Moscow. Many of these Communists came from dire underground conditions. The Iraqi Communist General Secretary at the time with whom I spoke had seen several preceding General Secretaries executed. He introduced me to the 10-year old daughter of General Secretary Aziz his immediate predecessor who had been executed by Saddam Hussein. The USSR was a haven for Communists from across the world.

In the binary world of the Cold War I had the feeling in London that I was sitting in the path of nuclear bombs potentially being lobbed from one side to the other. It is perhaps difficult now to imagine that world without a 'no-man's land', a world divided into friends and enemies. A world in which we were not individuals but part of a great movement for social justice. The atrocities of your own side often went unseen, denied or, as in the case of Stalin's atrocities somehow put to one side as one continued to put one's life at risk in the interest of the greater good. Ah, the Soviet Union.

15. Solidarity : the British Anti-Apartheid Movement

On my return from the USSR, in 1967 I was deployed to become Membership Secretary of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) leaving Guys hospital and the world of physiotherapy. Still stateless for the next 8 years, my permit allowing me to stay in the UK was on the condition that I had work that a citizen could not do. A work permit was issued on the basis that the AAM needed the rare skill of a fluent Afrikaans speaker. Though by then my Afrikaans was pretty rusty and not accustomed to adult concepts. The ANC offices were then just down the road from the AAM offices in Charlotte Street. Around the corner were the offices of Inkululeko publishers of the *African Communist*. The whole area was vibrant and wonderfully cosmopolitan. In Goodge Street delicatessens you could buy biltong and boerewors. And guava juice. I had a small office at the back of AAM's upstairs suite of offices. My typing skills proved useful as I learnt to type stencils, and to run off copy by copy, cranking the handle of the large roneo machine. Heaps of document pages were parked in numerical order on every surface in my office so that I could move around to collate and staple them together. Like my mother, I learnt to manage a cardex system of the members and branches that existed across the United Kingdom.

In 1968 an insignificant looking Indian South African shuffled into my cramped office. He had a message for me from someone in South Africa. It was normal for the times

Membership Secretary in Anti-Apartheid Movement office 1967 – 1970.

when he insisted he could not speak in the office as it was probably bugged. We walked down Charlotte Street and he said his name was Nelson. He had a message from General van den Bergh. *Die Generaal* wanted me to establish contact with him and to give him helpful information from time to time. I was startled at this attempt to recruit me as an Apartheid spy. But it could be useful for the liberation movement. 'Nelson' insisted that I could not have a few hours to think about it. He needed an immediate answer. Privately I did not feel I could continue the conversation without consulting comrades. So instead I enjoyed telling him with relish that I would not dream of working with fascists! When I related this approach to my principals (as they say in the movies) Joe Slovo and Yusuf Dadoo, they immediately wanted me to retrieve the situation. I still had General vd Bergh's postal address in Pretoria. So I wrote to him saying that "Nelson" had caught me by surprise and I had been unsure whether to trust him as a genuine emissary. In writing this letter I went through the usual clandestine requirements – rented a typewriter, made sure there were no finger-prints on the mail, gave no return address, posted it in an obscure postal district and, of course, did not sign it. By return of post I had a reply at my home address in Chalk Farm. Nelson was indeed his emissary and could I give him a "safe address" to write to. "*Safe from whom?*" I replied. It was vd Bergh and his Bureau of State Security that inspected mail. I did not hear from him again. Perhaps by then they had listened to the bugging tapes when I reported to Joe and Yusuf in the AAM offices.

Ethel de Keyser was the Executive Secretary of AAM at the time. With her former husband, well-known British stage and television actor, David de Keyser, Ethel moved with ease amongst a group of black revolutionaries from the Caribbean who included George Lamming (*In the Castle of My Skin*), CLR James (*Black Jacobins*). It was when her brother, Jack Tarshish was imprisoned in Soth Africa that Ethel threw her lot in with the struggle and became Executive Secretary of AAM. Ethel was an elegant woman. She was small and liked to dress in black, also keeping her hair a matt black. She was conscious of her social standing and all the more admirable for her commitment to grass-roots organization in a scruffy suit of offices.

I left AAM after three years in 1970 when my son Alan was born, and extended to full-time my underground work for the SACP, ANC and MK. But even after I left, I continued to speak at public meetings. I always explained the iniquities of the Apartheid system, the development of the armed struggle and the importance of international solidarity.

When I had just arrived in the UK I was sent on a speaking tour organized by the Quakers to educational institutions, schools and universities, throughout Northern Island, a British outpost. Ruth First had been delegated to do the tour but she jumped at the chance to pass it on to me when I arrived in London. I had no idea where Northern Ireland was nor did I know anything about its history. I was very bewildered when my Quaker host introduced everyone to me: "*Meet so-and-so. He's a Catholic". "Meet so-and-so. She's Protestant.*" The first meeting was in a Catholic primary school in Derry. In the fashion of the time I was wearing a mini-skirt albeit long by today's standards. A group of small boys sat near the front of the hall giggling behind their hands. I started to explain how Apartheid worked – I talked about shacks and how people lived in deprivation. Gradually the little boys fell quiet, their cheeks flushed and their eyes solemn. It was only when I was leaving the school that I noticed the simple corrugated iron homes in the vicinity. Not quite an informal settlement, but the little boys identified. Soon afterwards in 1968 a new upsurge began in Northern Island – *the troubles* as the Irish referred to struggle. The name of Bernadette Devlin became prominent as a leader in the civil rights upsurge.

Over the years I spoke in a wide variety of places in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, north and the Republic. The Irish audiences always responded emotionally with deep empathy for the struggle in South Africa. They had no difficulty relating to the taking up of arms by the liberation movement. They understood oppression, poverty and armed resistance. Some meetings were small and some very large. Once in Chesterfield I was one of several speakers on a podium in the middle of a football stadium. It was at a time when large imports of coal from South Africa

With Alan aged 5 months 1970

into Europe were under scrutiny. I attacked the NATO countries for undermining the boycott against all South African goods. I included then fascist Spain in my attack only to find out afterwards that Spain was not a member of NATO. But the audience got the message and gave me a standing ovation. I was a fiery, I think rather demagogic speaker[82]. Sometimes people in England could be confused wanting to see my whiteness as evidence that their kith in South Africa were not beyond the pale. I usually said at these meetings that people should not read too much into a white person speaking for the liberation movement as there were only about 5 whites in the struggle and the rest of the whites were part of the Apartheid system – a slight exaggeration for effect.

Once I flew to Dublin to be a guest on a leading television talk show. Sitting next to me on the plane was an obnoxious young white man talking loudly and wearing an ostentatious fur coat. I kept my eyes firmly on my book, probably something like "*Studies in A Dying Colonialism*" by Franz Fanon. When I arrived in the studio the talk-show host introduced me to the other guest, the same young man. It turned out he was a DJ named Emperor Rosco, famous for doing his thing on Radio Caroline, a pirate radio stationed on a ship off the UK coast. I think I had a more rapt audience than he did when I spoke about the special "conception passes" women had to have to visit their husbands working in the Western Cape. Apartheid's 1955 Eiselen Line kept Africans out of the Western Cape except with special passes. A white functionary would decide whether to issue a three-day pass once a woman persuaded him of the dates of her menstrual period and explained why she would want more than two children. There was a newspaper report that spoke of a woman from the Transkei who had to explain this to the white bureaucrat: "*my two children have died*". In Catholic Ireland this was a particularly dire portrayal of Apartheid South Africa. On the other hand, Emperor Rosco was known to introduce himself with these memorable words: "*I am the Emperor, the geeter with the heater, your leader, your groovy host from the West coast, here to clear up your skin and mess up your mind. It'll make you feel good all over.*" He did redeem himself a little in my eyes by favouring classic Motown, reggae and rock music.

AAM gained enthusiastic and dedicated members throughout the UK setting up branches and winning many very successful campaigns. They forced the cancellation of the 1970s Springbok cricket tour, persuaded students and others not to bank with Barclays Bank until it was forced to sell its South African subsidiary, and helped to make Apartheid South Africa the skunk of the world. It took years, three decades of systematic and determined work to gain the widespread international support for the liberation struggle that became so crucial as an aspect in the ending of white minority rule. Governments in the Socialist world, in Africa, Asia, Latin America and

in Scandinavia supported the struggle against Apartheid. In countries where the governments remained firm friends of Apartheid South Africa, ordinary people were mobilized. AAM brought on board all the southern African liberation movements even those that were at loggerheads with the ANC and its allies. So I got to know PAC individuals like Mathew Nkoana, Nana Mahomo, AB and Lauretta Ngcobo and David Sibeko, as well as Kozonguizi from SWANU, who were all well-known in Anti-Apartheid circles in London. British Christians, Communists, trade unionists, Liberals, black communities, Labour politicians – a really wide sector of the British population were mobilized and found they could support our struggle against Apartheid. When I think back to those early years, I think of a sunny Goodge Street with happy pubs, Italian, Turkish and Greek Cypriot cafes. I wore a black beret, discovered the writings of Stalin, Mao Zedong, Che Guevara and Franz Fanon. We joined in the huge demonstrations and marches of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) and against the US war in Vietnam. Discussion groups with names like *Spirit of Bandung* abounded.

16. Internationalism

The ANC had strong ties with other exile groups fighting for national freedom and justice across the world. London was home to many exiles. We were in alliance with other southern African liberation movements, specifically ZAPU led by Joshua Nkomo and Sam Nujoma's SWAPO, as well as with the liberation forces in the Portuguese colonies, FRELIMO, MPLA and PAIGC. They too had a presence in London and other European capitals. Solidarity was extended to all of them by the generous British people. The thinking and writings of the leaders like Amilcar Cabral, Samora Machel, Agostino Neto, Jason Moyo[83] and our own leaders current and going back decades, were voraciously consumed and part of our daily discourse.

There were many exiles from other parts of the world whose paths crossed ours - the Generals had seized Greece, and Cyprus was at war with itself. Betty and Tony Ambatielos from the Greek Communist Party were instrumental in gaining support for some of our projects. I was also awed to meet the American communist, William Pomeroy and his Philippine wife, Celia who came to London after having their death sentences commuted to 10 years in a Manilla prison. They were part of the peasant Huk rebellion against US occupation. Black Power was a huge and influential development in the USA. When I first reached the big wide world of exile, I was shocked to find out that African Americans, the former slaves, were still suffering profound discrimination in the so-called land of the free. I was amazed to discover that deep race rifts in the USA still affected African Americans in most areas of life and that the franchise was extended to all black Americans only recently even as I

arrived in exile. I read everything coming out of this experience including the work of activist Americans like Eldridge Cleaver, Malcolm X, the Jackson brothers, Bobby Seale, Angela Davis. The Communist, Angela Davis, won our admiration and began a friendship with the South African liberation movement that persists. I went with Ruth First to listen to the fiery militant, Stokely Carmichael in the Round House in Camden Town. Ruth, slightly bored, sighed "*we have heard all this before*". Perhaps that was the point – that the legacy of African American lives deeply affected by history and racism, was not in the past. That we had shared such history and racism in South Africa. While the powerful ideology of American Black Power became more and more militant influencing young black people throughout the world, I admired the ANC for insisting both within our ranks and publicly, on its non-racial vision of the future. On an African nationalism that was progressive and not exclusionary.

When it was founded in 1969, we were immediately in warm solidarity with the Palestine Liberation Organisation under the leadership of Yasser Arafat even as we were slightly alarmed by unfamiliar tactics including the highjacking of commercial aeroplanes famously by woman highjacker, Leila Khaled. We marched amongst thousands in solidarity with the napalmed and abused Vietnamese people and against American Imperialism. Ho Chi Minh was our iconic hero long before Mandela replaced him in our consciousness. Yusuf Dadoo and other leaders travelled to Vietnam and we formed a close relationship with legendary Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap who died last year at the age of 103.

17. ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe membership

From its foundation in 1912, ANC membership was only open to Africans of South Africa. The ANC was founded on the principle of uniting the African people. A pan-Africanism that was part of the Continent. South Africans from minority black groups, Coloured and Indian, as well as Whites, could not be members of the ANC. I need to state the obvious that of course, in today's language we are all Africans. But the vision of a non-racial African identity cannot emerge fully and legitimately until the national question is resolved – that is, until the deeply structured racial profile of the past is resolved. Until South African land and the economy is effectively in the control of the African majority. Until South Africa effectively meets its destiny as part of the African Continent, as an African country. The Freedom Charter's "*South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white*" is a vision that does not become a reality by declaration. Saying insistently "*I am an African*" does not remove the legacy of the past, a legacy of white people who declared themselves European, who structured our country to ensure white superiority and huge privilege, who declared whites as civilized against perceived African barbarity.

We were an odd group in London, in the UK in those early years. Due to the constitutional reality that non-African minorities could not join the ANC and were not directly accountable to the ANC leadership, we could not be deployed and operate in Tanzania and other newly independent African countries that hosted the ANC. Nevertheless, there were many African exiles in the UK, many of them deployed there. We were all thrown together both socially and politically without the ghettoed restrictions imposed by Apartheid. The ANC offices in various countries were our centres of activity even when we were not members.

In exile, by default, Umkhonto we Sizwe combatants in camps in Tanzania became organized under ANC command and MK became referred to as the ANC's armed wing, a formulation first used unthinkingly by Robert Resha[84]. However there were many cadres from the minorities who were not ANC members and who gave their lives and were imprisoned for long periods as MK members. The first MK High Command included Joe Slovo who then was not a member of the ANC. He was also the only one not to be imprisoned for life. He was in Tanzania on a mission for MK when the Rivonia arrests resulted in the MK High Command being arrested. As I learned the story from Joe: given the massive repression that launched the 1960s, Lilliesleaf Farm at Rivonia (which was then on the outskirts of Johannesburg) was bought as a safe place for the SACP central committee to meet. Many of the ANC Johannesburg Executive Committee members were also in the SACP. Nelson Mandela was not in the SACP but when Mandela went underground, he was offered a safe haven at Rivonia where he could also meet with his wife, Nomzamo Winnie Mandela. Mandela was at the forefront of the drive toward the formation of MK. At Rivonia he was drawn into the Central Committee discussions to launch MK. Joe Slovo told me specifically that Nelson Mandela was recruited into the SACP as a constitutional technicality for purposes of these discussions. He put it that Mandela was a member in a special situation, a secret member within a secret organization, an underground member in an underground organization. Joe had known Mandela since their days at Wits University in the 1940s. Joe had drawn close to Mandela during the daily grind of the 1956-61 Treason Trial. He had enjoyed the charisma and depth of the man. When Mandela went on the run, becoming the underground "*Black Pimpernel*" in the early 1960s, Joe was in even closer and more intense contact with him mainly at Rivonia. As Joe himself has written "*My affection and admiration for him grew. There was nothing flabby or condescending about Nelson….His keen intelligence taught him to grasp the class basis of national oppression. But the hurt of a life whose every waking moment was dominated by white arrogance, left scars.*" [85]

Once they became members of Umkhonto we Sizwe everyone worked together under one independent MK command structure. It was in exile that the ANC

assumed exclusive control over MK camps and cadres. Combatants who were not, could not be members of the ANC, fought and died under the command of the ANC in the Wankie and Sipolilo campaigns and in other incursions into enemy territory.

At the Morogoro Conference in 1969 ANC membership was opened for the first time to all South Africans and foreign spouses but only in the External Mission of the ANC. We were issued with pale blue cards reading MEMBER OF THE ANC EXTERNAL MISSION. ANC branches were organized in London as well as meetings of the ANC Women's Section. The NEC and top positions in the leadership of the ANC did not become open to all national groups until 16 years later at the 1985 ANC Conference in Kabwe. Opening membership of the ANC to all exiled South Africans was opposed by many of its leading members, and by many in other Alliance organisations; including many who were also members of the SACP. There were comrades who were part of the black minorities who shared the dismay when the ANC accepted white members. The characterization of a "black oppressed" led some to support Indian and Coloured comrades becoming members of the ANC but were opposed to white members who came from the oppressor national group. In many ways this thinking undermined the reality of the lives of the indigenous African people and their subjugation under the pass laws, under labour laws, under citizenship laws, under education laws that applied only to the African majority. After the Morogoro Conference some of the dissatisfied ANC leaders including former SACP members like Tennyson Makiwane, coalesced around what became known as the Gang of Eight. They dominated our lives in London over a great number of years before the ANC eventually expelled them in 1975.

18. 1969 ANC Strategy and Tactics

From 25 April over a week to 1st May 1969 the ANC called a Consultative Conference in Morogoro, Tanzania. In the weeks leading up to the Conference I spent hours, often into the early hours of the morning in safe venues, typing as Joe freely dictated what became the ANC's The Strategy and Tactics document adopted at the Conference. It was remarkable watching him talk straight from his head constructing such coherent ideas with few notes. Some of the language is now dated. I have no doubt that he consulted on the drafts in between my retyping. But there were no major revisions as he drafted the document. As Joe was not a member of the ANC then, he would have consulted within the leadership of the ANC. There were no computers to allow draft documents to be sent across the continents at the click of a button. Nor cut-and-paste so pages were retyped as a whole; sometimes whole chapters needed to be retyped to make a tidy copy with carbon paper to make a few additional copies.

Joe Slovo was an optimistic person, never, in my experience, losing faith in our ultimate victory. For its time the 1969 Strategy and Tactics expressed well-founded optimism in progress internationally and in Africa -

> *"The struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa is taking place within an international context of transition to the Socialist system, of the breakdown of the colonial system as a result of national liberation and socialist revolutions, and the fight for social and economic progress by the people of the whole world."*

ANC OR TAMBO, Trafalgar Square, London 1969

Freedom Day 26th June 1969. Yusuf Dadoo with ANC supporters .

Barry Feinberg, Zina Zungu, Bizo Mngqikana, Abdul Bham, Sonia Bunting, London 1969

Abdul Bham, Shirley Mashiane London 1969

And the document was absolutely clear, and reflected Joe's own position about the strategic aims of the struggle:

> *"The main content of the present stage of the South African revolution is the national liberation of the largest and most oppressed group—the African people. This strategic aim must govern every aspect of the conduct of our struggle, whether it is the formulation of policy or the creation of structures. Amongst other things, it demands in the first place the maximum mobilization of the African people as a dispossessed and racially oppressed nation. This is the mainspring and it must not be weakened. It involves stimulation and deepening of national confidence, national pride and national assertiveness.*

With prescience and a thorough reading of Karl Marx and Franz Fanon, it warned

> *"……..our nationalism must not be confused with chauvinism or narrow nationalism…….It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain ascendancy so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass.*

> *"The two million strong Coloured Community and three-quarter million Indians suffer varying forms of national humiliation, discrimination and oppression. They are part of the non-White base upon which rests White privilege. As such they constitute an integral part of the social forces ranged against White supremacy. Despite deceptive, and, often, meaningless concessions they share a common fate with their brothers and their own liberation is inextricably bound up with the liberation of the African people."*

Furthermore, it combined these two fundamental issues -

> *"Whatever instruments are created to give expression to the unity of the liberation drive, they must accommodate two fundamental propositions:*

> *"Firstly they must not be ambiguous on the question of the primary role of the most oppressed African mass and, secondly, those belonging to the other oppressed groups and those few White revolutionaries who show themselves ready to make common cause with our aspirations, must be fully integrated on the basis of individual equality.*

> *"Equality of participation in our national front does not mean a mechanical parity between the various national groups. Not only would this practice amount to inequality (again at the expense of the majority), but also it would lend flavour to the slander, which our enemies are ever ready to spread, of a multiracial alliance dominated by minority groups. This has never been so and will never be so."*

And the working class? By working class Joe would have had in mind the industrial working class or proletariat. At the time, teachers, nurses and those with similar status were part of the very small African middle class in South Africa.

> "*Is there a special role for the working class in our national struggle? We have already referred to the special character of the South African social and economic structure. In our country—more than in any other part of the oppressed world—it is inconceivable for liberation to have meaning without a return of the wealth of the land to the people as a whole. It is therefore a fundamental feature of our strategy that victory must embrace more than formal political democracy. To allow the existing economic forces to retain their interests intact is to feed the root of racial supremacy and does not represent even the shadow of liberation.*"

As Joe Slovo, like other minorities, was not yet a member of the ANC even in exile, he attended the 1969 Morogoro Consultative Conference as an observer for the SACP. He came back to London disappointed that the Strategy and Tactics document was adopted unanimously without any discussion by the Conference.

19. Chris Hani

Almost as soon as I arrived in the UK I reconnected with Martin Hani. His *nom du guerre* was Chris Nkosana. I understood that "Chris" was his brother's name. In the four years since I met him in Cape Town, he didn't seem to have changed much. He remained absolutely confident, breathtakingly fearless, open, wonderful and amazing. Chris was clear ideologically, highly intelligent. He did not hesitate to speak his mind. He would talk openly even on public platforms about difficulties confronting the movement. It was as if he was saying that of course there are problems and difficulties, not just those posed by the regime but within our ranks too. But it didn't frighten him. His belief in the future was unshakeable.

He was warm and open. He liked to talk about his young days. He told me how his father, Gilbert Hani, had sent him for initiation in the village of Sabelele near Cofimvaba. His father explained that they must never separate themselves from the people. One must identify with the people and be seen to be part of them. Chris told me in graphic detail about the circumcision ritual and his fearfulness as his turn came up for the chop. Sometimes when he was in London he would take me around with him to his various appointments. We would walk through the streets of London – to Chatham House or other establishment places where I never ventured but where he had ANC or SACP business. I would wait for him outside on the pavement under the trees. Chris and I talked about being Communists and agreed that in the first place it was our hatred of poverty that brought us to Communism.

Ideology came later. We both loved the Soviet Union who had given us warmth and support as individuals in our struggle for liberation.

He also liked to talk about the Wankie Campaign of 1967 when he was part of the Luthuli Detachment that fought its way through then Rhodesia together with combatants from ZIPRA, the ZAPU armed wing under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo and Jason Moyo. At that time British and Portuguese colonies still bordered Apartheid South Africa and the Luthuli detachment planned to battle their way through Ian Smith's Rhodesia into South Africa. Some of our guerrillas were killed. A group of guerrillas including Chris were eventually caught and imprisoned in Botswana and he recalled with humiliation that he was held naked in a cell for nearly two years.

Chris was a warm, loving and very sociable man. At an ANC dance with the live music of Dudu Pukwana and other South African musicians, I asked him to dance. He teased me for a while saying he didn't know how to dance – and then swept me along in the most elegant ballroom dancing. I suppose males at boarding schools in the 1950s were taught the waltz as part of their "civilizing" education.

20. East Berlin Youth Festival

I was delighted to be selected to join a delegation of 160 or so ANC youth to the 1973 International Youth and Student Festival. It was to be in the Cold War divided Berlin with its infamous Check Point Charlie in the German Democratic Republic [GDR]. The Communist part of Germany. Following the Morogoro Consultative Conference, I was now a member of the ANC External Mission. In the GDR I would be amongst friends enjoying a festival with young people from all over the world, representing communist and progressive organisations. Quite a large contingent of us took a train from London to Berlin, crossing West Germany where our train was held up and all our documents scrutinized. West Germany was garish and loud with advertising boards and glass fronted high-rise buildings. Its police and soldiers were smarter and more military than any I had encountered. Our delegation travelled with a range of documents even expired South African passports, many with travel documents for stateless persons, some issued by the United Nations. Others with passports from friendly countries. Those travelling on Algerian documents were regarded with enormous suspicion by the West Germans. While our documents were being minutely examined we did what ANC people often do in adversity – we decanted on to the station platform singing freedom songs and dancing, waiting for the West Germans to do what they did. After a long time, they let us all go on with our journey to our friends in the Communist east.

Over the days of the Youth Festival I was close to Chris Hani. Together at the opening ceremony we did the sort of shuffle-trot that was popular in our ranks before the Zimbabweans introduced the more vigorous toyi-toyi. For two hours through the streets of Berlin together with thousands from other delegations who were more demure. Onlookers loved the South African delegation, loved our energy and cheered us loudly as we passed. Here in Communist Germany we were with Communists and progressives from every corner of the world and everyone was on our side. A lot of one's political choices, even while adhering to scientific socialism, were emotional. In the 1970s the West European Communist Parties moved to condemn Stalin and also threw out the baby of scientific socialism. They became reformist and indistinguishable from the social democratic parties. So-called Euro-Communism. Meg Pahad, Essop's wife, was in Berlin with the British Communist Party delegation. In a small, relaxed group over lunch she railed against Stalin. Chris protested in strong defence of Stalin and I ventured that it did not seem right to judge anyone's Communism against a yardstick measuring their support for Stalin. Chris who was 31 years old at the time, smiled and said "*but I just love the Soviet Union*". A love that made criticism hurtful.

I renewed my friendship with Jackie Molefe. She was one of the first women combatants in MK camps, at Kongwa, Tanzania. Umkhonto we Sizwe was one of the few, if not the only liberation army that did not organize women combatants in a separate unit. MK women trained with the men, marched with the men and quite often became commanders over male combatants. In Berlin Jackie introduced me to Miriam Makeba who asked her who I was, a young white woman in our South African delegation. As a schoolgirl I had heard Makeba sing in King Kong in Port Elizabeth and had her autograph. I knew her history as a militant in the international arena. She was a warm woman, unpretentious with her feet firmly on the ground. In Berlin she had dreads with beads threaded over the bottom one-third. It was then a new fashion and she looked absolutely beautiful. Most of the delegation was from the camps and I was one of only 3 white comrades in the delegation of 160. Most of the MK comrades spoke an array of languages – German, Arabic, Swahili, Russian, French, English, Spanish, Portuguese, as well as most South African languages. I spoke English and Afrikaans but young Germans would always assume I was an interpreter and address themselves to me. The German youth delegates wore royal blue shirts and were a bright, happy group as they mingled with other youth from all corners of the world. The East Berlin we saw was a wonderful city with bowling alleys, opera houses, theatres, songs and an exciting internationalism. I saw Yasser Arafat speak and met many Vietnamese youth.

Shantie Naidoo was part of the ANC delegation. She had just been released from a very long and harrowing solitary confinement in Johannesburg. She refused

steadfastly to become a State witness against Winnie Mandela who was brutally harassed once her husband was sentenced to life imprisonment. The radio in East Berlin wanted to interview Shantie who was still feeling acutely the effects of her treatment by BOSS. She asked me to accompany her to the studio to support her. With her in the interview was an equally brutalized young Vietnamese woman who had been kept by the US in her country in a tiger cage preventing her from ever standing up for nine years.

Joe Nhlanhla was the head of our delegation. Joe was a very intelligent man but quite ponderous in expressing himself verbally, and moving ponderously too. He stood in a mercifully small meeting with a small but smart ANC flag made in the GDR. The small flag had been elegantly produced – it had gold edging and was made of fine double sided cloth. The problem was the ANC colours on the two sides did not correspond. So every time comrade Joe was looking at the back of the flag, turning it so that the black was on top. He would explain that the black represented the people subjugated in South Africa, the green the land, and the gold at the bottom of the flag, the mineral wealth beneath the soil. He would then look over the top to the front of the small flag he was holding, to the side facing the audience and find that it was upside down with the black people buried under the land and the mineral wealth on top – perhaps auguring a future we would later get to know. So he would turn it with the black on top; then he would look again from the back and find it upside down; puzzled he would stop and again correct it. I stood nearby and I laughed so much as I watched. But he was an intelligent man. After the Festival, Joe Nhlanhla became ANC representative in Egypt and I had an amicable, comradely correspondence with him for several years. He wrote beautiful, articulate letters. Typed them, in fact. Not only comrade women were typists.

21. Four months in Dar es Salaam

In 1976 Albie took up a UK summer lectureship at the University of Dar es Salaam. We flew out on Egypt Air with Michael and Alan who were 5 and 6 years old. This was not only a cheaper option but allowed us a stop in Cairo for a week. We stayed in an ANC house that was rather run-down. Plaster from the ceiling flaked on to us as we slept on the floor. The Cairo we saw was also rather run-down. Taking a taxi was hazardous, not only due to the haphazard driving but also because tyres were seldom replaced and punctures frequent. I loved the vibrancy and noise of the city and, of course, the wonderful sights like the Giza pyramids, riding camels, the Muhamed Ali mosque, the amazing museums including a Tutankamen exhibition. Alan was taken on an exciting tour of the city on the back of a scooter driven by Dawood, an ANC medical student in Cairo. Egypt Air was supposed to touch down

for fuel in Entebbe in Uganda before flying on to Dar es Salaam. But we were diverted and discovered only later that the Israeli air force had attacked Entebbe airport that day rescuing some Israelis who were being held hostage. It is always wonderful to land at an airport in Africa and be enveloped in hot, humid air. Tanzania was hot - summer all year long.

We stayed at the Bahari Beach Hotel, beautiful thatched-roof bungalows right on the sea a bit further up the coast from Dar es Salaam. It was Eid when we arrived and the beach was full of African women dressed in black but with their hijabs having an existence of their own, joyously flying in the wind in what seemed like a very African version of Islamic culture. I spent hot days with Michael and Alan on the beach and in the hotel pool until all three of us were deeply tanned and both my children had taught themselves to swim. Alan was diving with style off a low diving board and swimming across the pool with great proficiency. Michael taught himself to swim by simply disappearing under the water, paddling furiously for some distance and then coming up on the other side of the pool for air. The beach was full of shells and kelp. I went back to London with a suitcase full of cowry shells with the snails still intact inside. There I boiled and cleaned them and eight still stand on my bedroom widow sill today. Cowry shells were particularly meaningful as they were used in earlier centuries as currency in the buying and selling of people in slavery on the east coast of Africa. A cowry shell was also used by my *ouma* [grandmother] pushing it inside the sock when she was darning. On the warm calm piece of Indian Ocean that lay in front of the hotel, dows with fishermen went by and we crossed to an island nearby to clamber amongst rocks. Eating at the hotel while hearing the sea lapping nearby was full of pawpaws, fish. It was an idyllic stay. Julius Nyerere was president and *ujamaa* villages were still being developed. On the way into Dar es Salaam we drove passed Nyerere's home that seemed modest from the outside without visible security and with the outside walls painted brightly in Mukonde style wild animals and birds.

We went inland to the Mkumi National Park. Our car ran out of petrol down a minor road. We hadn't seen another car for two hours and it was decades before cell phones. Albie isn't very good at finding solutions in an emergency situation. There was a very large herd of buffalo quietly grazing near us. It was the middle of the day, hot and my irritability was rising. After a while I took a breadknife for protection against lions and other predators, bade the children farewell and strode down the dust road in search of assistance. Miraculously a car appeared when I had hardly gone 50 metres and we were rescued! I didn't know at the time that Mkumi doesn't have any predator animals. This story became a bit of a legend in my mind.[86]

Albie's father died in 1976 while we were in Tanzania. Solly Sachs lived in a large house in London. He occupied only one room letting the rest of the house. Now and again he invited us over for dinner with notable British labour people. He always offered soup "*with vegetables or clear*" and a ready cooked chicken. He spoke with a loud accent and peered over the top of thick-lensed glasses. My children grew up with almost no contact with their extended family. Only Albie's brother was their Uncle Johnny. Albie's mother came to visit from South Africa a few times and she did try hard to form a loving relationship with them. My family came even more rarely. I saw little Steffi again when she was twelve years old.

From Dar es Salaam I took a lift with my two children to Nairobi, capital of Kenya. It was a stark contrast to Dar es Salaam that had an authenticity and felt as if it belonged to the Tanzanians. Nairobi was a bustling, hustling city full of tourists and those eking a living from selling to tourists. The individually fashioned Mukonde carvings sold in Tanzania often from stalls on the side of the road, also in rural areas were a far cry from those in Nairobi. On Nairobi stalls there were lampshades constructed from cut-off elephant feet and hundreds of identical elephant carvings displayed. The circular Holiday Inn dominated the city skyline and was visible from everywhere including from the game parks outside Nairobi. I lasted just a few days and then took a bus back to Dar es Salaam. It was a two-day journey in a crowded rickety bus and I took the precaution to book three seats for us. But we had hardly set off when both children were on my lap as sheep and chickens fought for space next to us. We stopped in Moshi and I saw the most unforgettable sight of my life. Michael, Alan and I were sitting in a coffee shop near the bus terminal waiting for the next lap of the journey. It was sunny but there was heavy cloud too. Unexpectedly the clouds suddenly parted revealing the snow covered peak of Kilimanjaro Mountain touched by sunrays streaming down on the peak. Breath-taking. I had not even realized the mountain was there. A young Tanzanian artist befriended us and walked with us to his father's home in the high density area where he had a studio.

Duma Nokwe came to stay at the Bahari Beach Hotel on his way back from medical treatment in Moscow. I spent hours sitting in the hotel lounge talking with him and drinking konyagi, a clear alcoholic Tanzanian drink. I was worried as comrade Duma had not been well and I surreptitiously spoke to the waiter asking him to water down Duma's drinks. All went well until we packed up for the night and Duma turned to the waiter asking "*why have you been serving me watered-down konyagi*". Eish! I suppose I was being patronizing again. Michael ran a very high temperature with a sore throat and comrade Duma tried to convince me it might be cerebral malaria that is very dangerous for a five year old child. It was a Sunday but fortunately there was a doctor, Gill Yudkin, whom I knew as a neighbour in London. She was

there on contract working at the large Muhimbili hospital. I contacted her and she arranged for me to rush Michael to a private medical practice. The doctor examined Michael and diagnosed tonsillitis and not malaria but felt he needed an injection. Both Michael and I were alarmed at the big needle. With Michael's eyes large and watchful, the doctor reassured us that he would not give the injection after all and found an excuse for me to go down to the car. From downstairs I heard the loudest screaming from Michael as the doctor suddenly plunged a needle into him. I was furious but Michael's temperature went down and he was soon back in the warm water of the hotel pool.

We also took a bus into Dar es Salaam from time to time. Sometimes the bus broke down and passengers would get out without a word and start pushing it. An ANC leadership lekgotla was due at a venue out of town and a leading comrade I had known for some years was attending. Before the meeting started he arranged to meet me at the downtown ANC house and from there took me to a seedy hotel where he assured me there was a meeting I should attend. So I accompanied the leader to the hotel and we had a drink in the bar. All the Tanzanians in the bar got up and left making me feel like a prostitute. My comrade leader then took me to a room upstairs where he said the meeting was in progress but as soon as he opened the door I could see there was no one there and it was clear the meeting was a ruse. He tried to pull me into the room and I resisted bracing myself with my feet and hands against the doorframe. For two hours we stood like that while I tried to reason with him and he continued to try to pull me into the room. It was difficult. He was a leader and for that I respected him. I felt I could not show the anger and contempt that I felt for his actions. Eventually he let me go saying he was sorry he had done this to Albie. The last bus to the Bahari had left. I saw a group of Ethiopians I recognized from the hotel and ran across the street to ask if they could give me a lift. They weren't returning that night. My leader who was still with me, scolded me for asking strange men for assistance. I don't remember how I got back to the Bahari. I have always felt that it was my right to go where I wanted to go and to behave as if I were a comrade amongst comrades. Perhaps I was lucky that this incident was the only time I landed in difficulty. I told Albie what had happened. I also told Joe who was extremely angry and when he was at the lekgotla with the same leader, he couldn't bring himself to speak to him. But life goes on and a couple of years later when he was passing through London he stayed with me perfectly amicably and without further incident.

TV arrived in South Africa in May 1976. There were many foreign crews inside South Africa and everywhere we went in exile we could watch what was happening everywhere inside South Africa. During our four months in Dar es Salaam, South African youth exploded in Soweto on 16th June 1976. There was TV in the hotel

and we watched the courageous uprising of young people across South Africa in the face of bloody State brutality. Young people flooded across the borders into ANC camps and when I returned to London a wave of new exiles had arrived there too. We heard the news that David and Sue Rabkin as well as Jeremy Cronin were arrested in Cape Town.

Toward the end of our time in Tanzania, Albie told me he wanted to go to Mozambique that had thrown off the Portuguese colonial yoke a year earlier in 1975. Alan, Michael and I would travel with him as far as Lusaka before flying back to London while Albie went on to Maputo.

The four of us took the Tanzam, or Tazara, Chinese built single-track railway down to its southern terminal at Kapiri Mposhi in central Zambia. On the way down the coaches were gender segregated so I was in one compartment with women and the children and Albie was elsewhere. In my carriage a small Zambian child fixed his solemn eyes on me for a long time. Eventually he reached across and rubbed my arm saying something that made all the women burst out laughing – "*does it rub off?*", they translated. Curiously, on the trip back to Dar es Salaam when Albie was not with us, there was no gender segregation and we were in an overnight compartment with men and women and children all mixed up. In Lusaka we stayed for a few days with Ray and Jack Simons who had a piece of land where they grew vegetables and fruit. Ray made lemonade with her self-grown lemons and offered my children some. But they had lived in Dar es Salaam for four months where the only available drink was tea with dried milk. They wanted Coca-Cola that they saw in the Simons' fridge. Jack told them that when Coke was made in capitalist USA there were accidents due to unsafe capitalist working conditions and workers' fingers got cut off and landed in the Coke cans. My children were unimpressed and still wanted the Coca Cola.

On the other hand when my children were not much older, the three of us sat in Maputo airport once for a couple of days when the only plane owned by the Mozambique airlines broke down. When a Portuguese plane was eventually sent out we had to stop over in Luanda late at night where we had no currency to buy even coffee. All we had to eat throughout the journey was a large tin of peri-peri cashew nuts I had bought in Maputo. After hours on stand-by in Lisbon we at last found space on British Airways to London. On the home stretch to London each passenger got a free small bottle of wine – I got three mini-bottles as Michael and Alan were too young to drink. There was talcum powder in the toilets. My children were extremely shocked when I returned to my seat sighing with exhaustion "*Thank god for capitalism*".

I was sad to leave Tanzania and always sang with particular feeling the one-fits-all song "*Oh Tanzanians*". (or Angolans, or Mozambicans, or Soviets, or Cubans or anyone really) *"Oh lovely people, we are far away from home, we will leave you, we will love you for the things you've done for us"*. Indeed. We brought the wrath of the Apartheid war machine to their countries and they protected and helped us. Since Freedom it particularly hurts when South Africans turn on those African migrants from the many countries that were there for us, home away from home.

Albie and I had struggled to keep our marriage going despite the misery of exile. Within eighteen months of our Dar es Salaam sojourn, he left to live in Mozambique. It did not seem worth continuing the marriage that made us both unhappy. Our marriage ended in divorce in 1980 after 14 years. During twelve years in the UK Albie tried to make a life for himself but he drifted rather miserably, enjoying theatre and music, writing, speaking but with little involvement in those painful years of struggle to rebuild a presence at home for the liberation organisations that had been crushed. When in 1978 Albie decided to go to teach law at the Eduardo Mondlane University in the vibrant atmosphere of constructing a new country, he again found his revolutionary elan in free Mozambique and from there he contributed his intellectual talents to the negotiated settlement and the new united democratic South Africa that we had all fought for.

22. Letters from Joe

Late in 1976 Joe was deployed 'down South' and threw himself into the work in Mozambique, Zambia, Angola. For a brief period we wrote to each other until he once again travelled frequently stopping over in London. I have letters touching on the situation as he saw it unfolding. I had seen Joe in Tanzania and knew that his deployment down South was imminent. After the June uprising in Soweto and elsewhere, and just before Albie and I returned from our Dar es Salaam sojourn, in September 1976 Joe wrote:

> "*Dear Steph, The Gods have ordained that I leave London toward end of next week. So – unhappily – will miss one another. It's a bother packing up with the prospect of not seeing family and friends for a while – but it's in a good cause and there should really be no regrets. The time is now and personal consideration apart, I'm looking forward to my new environment which for the moment will be Luanda. I've started learning Portuguese and my guess is that at the beginning of my stay I should have a fair bit of time to polish my grasp. Our world has really changed since we last spoke. The events have a meaning which – as time goes on – is becoming more and more significant. One thing is clear, we have not wasted our time in the back-breaking drudgery of the*

last 10 years. The little we managed to do has a significance beyond the mechanical detail of this or that project. Taken as a whole, the movement has enhanced its leadership status. In saying this I'm not joining in the rather meaningless question about who leads which action. [a reference to the Soweto uprising]. *In every revolutionary crisis popular action (spontaneous or semi-spontaneous) is always in advance of the organized traditional levels - this is the mark of most situations of revolutionary upsurge. The real question is whether a movement can canalize the new energies and I believe that we have the capacity (in the long run) to do so. So, although it's not over yet, I remain optimistic that possibilities for major advance have ripened in a way which is completely new.*

"Understandably morale over here is pretty good. The last branch meeting at which I led a discussion on the new situation, had an attendance of over 100. Thanks for your two letters and I'm sorry it's taken so long to reply – even in this short and scribbly form. I waited to hear more definite news about my movements……My book has been received well from all friends and although so far not many reviews, the two I enclose are very ego-boosting.

"Thanks for your help, once again. I hope Albie got my message and apologies (through Eric) [Mtshali] *about my failure to fix up accommodation in Maputo. Regards to*
Albie and kids. You must be brown as a berry……"

On January 16, 1977 he asked me to type a document from a tape. He is a bit apologetic because I had previously pointed out to him that a lot of time would be saved if he simply learnt to type his documents directly himself rather than involving two of us in the process. He himself had done a typing course a long time before. I was beginning to become aware of the gender division of work, and inequity, that was common even amongst good Communists. But I would do anything Joe asked. And I was honoured to be included even in a lowly role. Now I can't remember what document this was. "*It's got the ingredients of something good",* he writes *"but (a la Dos Santos) it needs a solid edit or rewrite."*

On February 1st he writes

"My dear Steph, As usual your responses are precise, quick and uncomplaining…."

He calls the books I selected for the MK camps from Colletts bookshop where we had an account, "*an excellent selection. Send more when the opportunity is there.*" He thanks me for suitcases –"*most are what we need but a few just a little too unsturdy. Doc* [Yusuf Dadoo] *will give a clearer picture of our preferences. Radio – we got a SU* [Soviet

Union] *consignment so for the moment don't worry about the third one. Interview – please retype soon and give it to M.P*". [Naicker, editor of the ANC journal Sechaba]. Later he returns to the overarching situation

> "*…the period ahead is perhaps the most challenging in my life and the most worthwhile. There is no guarantee of making it (objective difficulties and persistent defects of past methods) but we'll have a bloody good try. ….You, keep your spirits up. This is an order ! It's a real privilege to be given the chance to do what we are trying to do and the efforts of the few of you there are more telling than the routine allows you to feel…..*"

He writes from Luanda after I sent him a Cleo Laine recording

> "*Cleo is very evocative. I saved it up for a solo listening over the remains of a scotch. Privacy is at a premium especially at the moment. The place is swarming with masses of leaders – it almost seems that they outnumber the masses. My play on words is not really serious. By and large the masses are doing well too and with all our inevitable ups and downs, things are all the same developing better than I can remember for decades. But the going remains tough and challenging. Emotive excitement which may make us forget that the struggle is a protracted one, is perhaps one of our dangerous enemies. It can influence not only our approach to what needs to be done to lay solid foundations (which is becoming possible for the first time in ages) but also prevents a stubborn dedication to lasting the course. …At the purely personal level I have to shut my mind to the lure of London and all that goes with it. But on balance I feel that this is the most useful period of my political life, if not the most productive – less productive because, as you know, conditions don't make it easy to sit down to record thoughts on so many things that should be written. I must, however, try. I have the constant urge and stimulus to write… Material is short. I'm toying with the idea of doing a "thought" piece on the academic school of neo Marxism (Legassick et al) who have now established their style sufficiently to fit into a pattern which lends itself to useful treatment – not so much as a polemic against them but more as an exercise to clarify our own thinking more precisely. I discussed this with Aziz and I hope he carries out his promise soon to send me all their material. I also need Lenin "The Agrarian programme of Social Democracy in the First Revolution". I don't think it's long – so a Photostat will do…Thanks for Debray. I notice that he is critical of some of his previous views. But in typical Debray style, he refuses to concede that anyone except Debray discovered where he went wrong. I've always said that it takes a Great Man to know where a Great Man went wrong!!*
>
> *"I still wander the earth with an average of a fortnight in any one place. Tiring but unavoidable. But my forthcoming trip (to Cuba – and mums the word at the moment) is a real bonus. And since I know you, don't think it is just the cigars or even the women who roll them !! I'm sorry to hear about Jack* [Hodgson]. *He's a good guy. I know his occasional feeling of peeve about me……Despite all, I felt his warmth when I was*

there……In politics, as in life, (or rather vice versa) the future has always got more in it than the drab present. I am sounding corny and predictable. Never mind, we'll have a chance to talk all this out one day. When ? Who knows ? Life too is protracted. What's more it's great ! If I had time I'd rewrite this whole paragraph. All the best to those who deserve it…..Keep well and happy Steph…."

Soon I began to see Joe regularly again as he moved through London quite frequently obviating the need for letters. The Jack he refers to is Jack Hodgson. In an earlier life Jack was an underground miner. Now he had miner's pthisis that left him extremely short of breath. A time came when he could not walk from one room to another in their small flat without gasping for breath for minutes on end. As his situation deteriorated he asked me whether I thought a Communist had a right to end it, to end such uselessness. I still felt that our Communism was essentially about life and we could not deliberately take it, not even our own.

Joe was a voracious worker and expressed disappointment when he became Chairperson of the SACP rather than General Secretary in central committee elections in early 1984. He felt Chairperson was not close enough to the coalface. But at the SACP meeting in Bulgaria two years later, his wish became realized and in 1986 he was elected General Secretary and Dan Tloome became National Chairperson.

23. Angola

In 1977 I couriered a large suitcase to Angola. I understood the false compartment in the suitcase contained SACTU leaflets for distribution in South Africa. It took me two hours to get through the Luanda airport passport control. There was a group of young women sitting on the floor also waiting patiently. I smiled when I realized they were ANC, speaking Zulu and being very critical of the Angolan "*bourgeoisie*" in the airport. The ANC put me up overnight in a small downtown Luanda hotel but before I could fly out again Luanda was engulfed in an attempted coup against the MPLA government of Agostino Neto. Everything was closed down including the airports and alone in my hotel room I could hear unending gunfire. From the time that Angola was freed from Portuguese colonialism in 1975, factionalism within the MPLA became an increasing problem fanned by both the CIA and Apartheid South Africa. The Nitistas, followers of Nito Alves together with his political ally, Chief of Staff José Van-Dunem, began planning a *coup d'état* against President Agostino Neto.

I was in Luanda when ten armoured cars carrying the 8th Brigade of FAPLA broke into São Paulo prison at 4 a.m. on May 27, 1977 killing the prison warden and freeing

more than 150 supporters. The brigade took control of the radio station in Luanda at 7 a.m. and announced their coup. They asked citizens to show their support for the coup by demonstrating in front of the presidential palace. Cuban troops retook the palace at President Agostino Neto's request and marched to the radio station. After an hour of fighting the Cubans succeeded. They proceeded to the barracks of the 8th Brigade which they recaptured by 1:30 p.m. The Nitistas kidnapped seven government and military leaders shooting and killing six of them. Subsequently the MPLA government arrested tens of thousands of suspected Nitistas and tried them in secret courts. Those who were found guilty including Van-Dunem, Jacobo "Immortal Monster" Caetano, the head of the 8th Brigade, and political commissar Eduardo Evaristo, were then shot and buried in secret graves.

In my hotel room I didn't know what was going on. Noone came for me and I listened for what seemed like hours to the noise of heavy gunfire. Eventually Max Sisulu arrived and we drove through numerous roadblocks to one of the ANC houses. As always with ANC comrades in foreign countries, Max seemed unperturbed by the turn of events, unruffled at roadblocks and expecting to be allowed through without papers. The national broadcaster that had been taken over by the coupists, was near the ANC house. This attempted coup closed the airport in Luanda but had received no international coverage in the media. I had to phone Dr. Dadoo early the following morning to explain that I was stuck in Luanda as the airport was closed. I needed to phone him because I was scheduled to have an elaborately organized initial contact with an SADF general at the Camden Town tube station, involving signals using folded up copies of The Times and carnations. This was just an initial contact to take the general to others but I was clearly not going to be able to make it. When I managed to get through to Yusuf quite early in the morning, I had the feeling that he was skeptical about my claim of an attempted coup that in the end kept me away for three weeks. I'm sure it was not difficult to organize a replacement to make contact with the general.

The three weeks that I was stuck in Luanda were memorable for me. As the coup was being crushed I walked the quiet, nervous streets in the evenings with a young comrade known as Obadi. He came from Orlando in Soweto where his mother worked hard to give him a good education. He studied law at Turfloop, dropped out as a result of student unrest and turned his capable hands to many things from teaching to installing TV sets in white houses. He became involved in ANC activity with some of his friends and left the country six months before the 1976 uprising. On our walks in the quiet and dark streets of Luanda in the grip of the attempted coup, Obadi talked to me about whites. He said he had hated white people with a passion. His mother washed the clothes of white people and he felt a burning

humiliation when the madams gave his mother old clothes for her family. But his mother used to admonish him "*Ag my child, they are trying to be nice*". Later when he fled the country and found the ANC, he was placed in a small group to be debriefed and introduced to the ANC by Moses Mabhida who later became General Secretary of the SACP. Over three weeks Comrade Mabhida allowed them freely to express their hatred for white people. Mabhida occasionally intervened by pointing out various realities such as that Joe Slovo was white[87]; or stressing ANC policy that we were fighting a system and not white people per se. Gradually Obadi said they understood – so that now he could confide all this to a white comrade.

In this period Joe Slovo said to me that he did not trust new recruits pouring out of South Africa if they did not start off hating whites. Those young people who came out of the repression apparently understanding the ANC's ideology that it was a white system and not white people that needed to be crushed, were probably spies he thought. When Obadi and I wandered around Luanda the shelves in food shops were empty. In the ANC house in Luanda we ate cans of GDR bully beef day in and day out. Pallo Jordan won best chef credit for his curried bully beef. Thomas Nkobi and Mzwai Piliso played endless chess or cards. One day Mzwai looked up at me with his languid, hooded eyes and said "*You know, comrade Stephanie, these Angolan mosquitoes are very, very huge. But clever too – they fold their wings tightly against their bodies",* he demonstrated, *"and then they wriggle through the holes of the mosquito nets to launch a vicious attack on your sleeping body."* On my flight back via Rome, an English guy sitting next to me unexpectedly asked what I had been doing in Angola. The best I could come up with was that I was on holiday. I don't think he swallowed that – I was young, white and Angola was engulfed in war. He himself said he had been to the oil fields of Cabinda where insurrection ruled. Clearly, he too had not been on holiday.

New developments including the overthrow of Portuguese colonialism and the opening up of Mozambique and Angola in 1975 had allowed for dramatic changes in our tactics and a transfer of many activities out of London to the forward areas. During my enforced stay in Luanda I had raised with Max Sisulu the possibility of getting full MK combat training and leaving London for deployment in the forward areas. I went as far as to discuss the possibility with Albie that Michael and Alan could go to him in Maputo. I worried that they would have to learn Portuguese. As soon as I got back to London I tried to put this on the agenda of my operational structure. Yusuf as chair refused to put it on the agenda. Week after week I raised it and he refused to discuss the matter, or to explain himself. I found myself up against a brick wall. Dr. Dadoo dismissed my pleas with intransigent silence. I was very angry and stopped attending Party meetings for almost 3 months. That was the deadline

– after 3 months' absence without explanation you were considered to have left the Party. I just made it. Outside the meeting Ronnie apologized for not supporting me saying that he himself wanted to be deployed down south and did not want to create difficulties for his own mission. Eventually I went back to Party meetings and remained in London.

Soon the operational structure in London stopped functioning with key people like Joe and Ronnie being deployed "down south". There were still tasks that came my way, often through Aziz who led the regional Political Military structure. So I found myself forging signatures on GDR produced false passports and IDs as well as other somewhat ad hoc tasks. The tight sense of the ANC family in London of the first decade of my exile, changed. People were moving about, still often in London but no longer stuck there. Moving easily between countries worldwide and including the front-line states. Just before this social fragmentation, in 1978 there was a summer camp for ANC children in Cornwall. Ronnie Kasrils led the children in an exercise where they were left in the bundu and had to find their way back to a central point. They rode horses. It was a wonderful camp. One of our leaders from London, MB Yengwa from Natal who had already suffered a stroke, was there with us. In many ways it marked the beginning of change.

24. "Through the Eye of a Needle"

I had not heard from Rick Turner since his note of encouragement to me when I was charged in 1964. After studying at the Sorbonne in France he returned to South Africa at the cusp of the 1968 French and German moment of revolutionary turmoil that was rapidly crushed. In the ever-increasing mayhem of South African repression he became a revered academic at the then University of Natal. In 1969 black students throughout the country became organized into the South African Student Organization (SASO), an exclusively black student organization that stressed the need for black South Africans to become conscious of their blackness becoming self-reliant in order to change South Africa fundamentally. Black Consciousness as advocated by Steve Biko broke away from the domination of the white universities and NUSAS. Rick knew Steve Biko when Biko was at the medical school in Durban. As white student activists found themselves outside, Rick filled a vacuum. He was an influential lecturer who inspired a generation of white English speaking activists at universities dominated by NUSAS. He did not seem to move very far away from *Being and Nothingness*. In London I saw a manuscript version of his book "*Through the Eye of a Needle*" that speaks primarily to white Christian liberals in visualizing a utopian South Africa. The underlying assumption of 'Existentialism" seemed to me to be individualistic, elitist even, non-materialist. Expecting a person to look deeply

inside himself and change the culture he was brought up with. To emerge with a different set of beliefs. In March 1973 Rick was restricted by a house arrest order. Even from here he led the way for the white English-speaking students and academics to take up the lot of African workers. Many of them became well known while they stood next to African trade union leadership as African unions gained momentum throughout the 1980s. Nevertheless the 1973 wildcat strikes that broke a ten-year hiatus in visible South African resistance happened without white guidance.

The steel tentacles of state repression reached out viciously as workers rose and the Black Consciousness wave of inspiration rallied black people across South Africa raising morale and militancy. There was excitement around me in exile as we watched these developments from afar. Biko always had white friends and confidants. When he was restricted to his hometown, King Williamstown he was close to Rev. David Russell, the same David Russell whose name I had given during my ARM interrogations. David Russell was to become a militant Anglican Church Bishop of Grahamstown. Biko was young but shone as an inspirational, visionary and charismatic leader in the building of the Black Consciousness movement. "*The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed.*" In August 1977 Steve Biko defied his restriction orders driving to Cape Town to begin efforts to try to meet with formations of liberation organisations inside and outside the country. He was arrested on his return at a roadblock near Grahamstown.

He was stripped naked and manacled for 20 days. Then he was moved to the notorious Sanlam Building, headquarters of the Special Branch in Port Elizabeth. Interrogations intensified and he was told to remain standing. He refused. A group of security police, Captain Daniel Siebert, Harold Snyman, Gideon Nieuwoudt, Rubin Marx, and Johan Beneke beat up the young detainee. They punched him, beat him with a hosepipe, ran him into a wall headfirst. Biko collapsed suffering brain haemorrhage. Unconscious and still naked he was kept shackled to a grille, arms and legs spread-eagled. A day later after two doctors declared him fit, he was put in the back of a police van naked, frothing at the mouth, unable to speak. He was transported in the back of the van for one thousand one hundred kilometres to Pretoria. Alone in his cell, he died some time on the night of 12 September 1977. He was 30 years old. There was a massive and sustained expression of outrage both at home and internationally.Within just three months on January 8th 1978 just after midnight Rick Turner was shot dead through a window of his home in Durban. He died in the arms of his 13year old daughter Jann while little Kim looked on. Peter Jones who was arrested with Steve Biko at the same roadblock, was released from detention after 533 days solitary confinement in February 1979.

Ongoing armed MK actions drew further heavy revenge from the State. In June 1977 a unit of ten combatants had brought arms, ammunition, explosives and ANC literature into the country. Soon Solomon Mahlangu, Mondy Motloung and Lucky Mahlangu were cornered by police in Goch Street, Johannesburg. Lucky escaped and the other two were arrested after a battle in which two civilians were killed. Mondy Motloung was severely brain damaged during arrest and unable to stand trial. Solomon Mahlangu was put on trial for two years and on 6th April 1979 the young MK combatant was hanged in the mass gallows in Pretoria Central Prison.

> *"'My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them. They must continue the fight."*

25. Lesotho – seeing South African cattle grazing

In 1980 when Albie had already been settled in Mozambique for a two of his 10 years there and just as our divorce became final, I took Michael who was 9 and Alan who was 10 to Maputo for their first holiday with Albie. On future visits they would travel alone once a year during the English summer school holidays in June. They had a series of amazing holidays with Albie – spear fishing off the Maputo coast, to the Ngorongoro crater, to opera in Milan, down the Grand Canyon in the USA and so on. Amongst comrades in Maputo, Michael and Alan learnt to do a mean miners' gumboot dance, they knew the liberation songs and they attended public ANC meetings and marches.

On our first visit direct flights between Maputo and Maseru, capitol of Lesotho had just started obviating the necessity of landing in Johannesburg. After leaving the children with Albie in Maputo, I took the plane to Maseru for a visit with my parents. I had asked my father whether they wanted to meet me in Zimbabwe that had just gained its independence, or in Lesotho. He seemed horrified by the suggestion of any African governed country. But Lesotho was within driving distance from their home at the Wilderness. On the tiny 10-seater plane with me was the rather large David Sibeko from the PAC. Flying in this small plane low over South African soil it was heart stopping to see farmlands and cattle of my homeland for the first time in 14 years. Once in Lesotho we drove around in my father's Mini Minor car. Sometimes young people walking along roads outside Maseru made hostile gestures at our South African number plates. Much South African economic activity was visible in Maseru.

Somewhere in the mountains we stopped on the edge of a village to ask someone for directions to ancient San paintings in a cave. The man offered to accompany us

as a guide. It was a long way and then quite a lot of walking and crossing a river. He carried my mother across the river. On the walk back to the car I started singing "*Morena boloka setjaba sa heso*….". He immediately fell in with a lovely harmonizing tenor. Under an African sky, walking along a mountain track. My mother was astonished and I'm sure pondered on this for many years. She didn't know this was the Sesotho part of "*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*", ANC anthem. At the end of the day we dropped off this generous man where we had found him on the edge of his village. I thought he was probably an ANC supporter or perhaps even a member. My father gave him one shilling as a tip. He graciously thanked my father and I could not look at him in embarrassment. I felt relieved that my father hadn't added, as he was wont to do "*don't spend it on alcohol*".

My parents and I stayed with the South African Marxist historian, Jeff Guy and his Finnish wife. Jeff was teaching at Roma university and his doctoral thesis had just been published as "*The Destruction of the Zulu Kingdom - The Civil War, 1879-1884*". Over the years my admiration for him as a historian of 19th century Zululand and colonial Natal increased with every book.

I took clandestine stuff to Chris Hani who was then based there. His father had been in Lesotho in exile for more than 10 years. In a small place like Maseru and as his father's son, he had to revert to his own surname and became Chris Hani. As always, Chris was defiant about his safety and drove around in a conspicuous bright yellow Volkswagen, also a preferred car of the Security Police in South Africa. On the day I left from Maseru airport, my parents came with me before undertaking their car trip back to the Wilderness. Chris was at the airport to see off a group of MK recruits who had fled South Africa and were on their way out. They gathered before embarking singing "*Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika*". I joined in quite naturally, raising my clenched fist as was ANC practice. My parents were alarmed and my mother told me later that my father had suggested to her that I was just showing off. I had documents in my hand luggage that I was taking back from Chris to the Party in Maputo. The Lesotho immigration started searching this hand luggage but recoiled in distaste when, on the spur of the moment, I commented with feigned embarrassment that I would not have put my dirty underwear in my bag if I had thought that they would search it. Chris himself had already left for Lusaka when the SADF swarmed into Lesotho in 1982 and killed 30 ANC people as well as 12 local people.

26. 1980s : Assassinations and Death

The Apartheid monster became more desperate in the 1980s throughout South Africa and reaching across the Continent and into Europe in its bid to quell the strengthening of the struggle for freedom. Assassination was not the only onslaught

against members of the liberation movement. SADF aeroplanes dropped bombs where they surmised there were camps. Food and drinks were poisoned. There was massive infiltration into our ranks. ANC offices were struck including in London where the ANC office then in Penton Street was bombed in 1982, and the Swedish office four years later.

Taking safety measures was just one of the ways in which life was under continual strain. The constant threat of infiltration, the constant silent questioning of comrades, the constant suspicion, the years of keeping secrets and the worry of endangering comrades inside the country, were normal in those years. In the 1980s when bombings and assassinations mounted, I taught my young children never to open or handle any mail or parcels that were delivered to our home, and I examined my car (which was parked in the street as is common in London) each time before using it.

In January 1981 a unit of the SA Defence Force invaded independent Mozambique in a raid on the ANC safe house in Matola just outside Maputo. Sixteen ANC cadres were killed. Amongst them were three SACTU members including William Khanyile. Obadi – his real name, Motso Mokgabudi - with whom I had walked on the streets of Luanda three years before, lost his life in this raid. By then he was highly regarded and coopted on to the SACP central committee. His Apartheid killers lined up Obadi and his comrades outside and machine-gunned them down. Obadi staggered away with his abdomen ripped open. He died in hospital a week later. His mother and sister came to the Maputo funeral, proud to discover how respected he was. He once said that if he died he would like it to be known that he was a Communist.

On 31 July 1981 while he was ANC representative in Zimbabwe, Joe Gqabi was gunned down outside his home in Harare. He was shot nineteen times in the driveway of his house. A nineteen year old MK combatant Geraldine Fraser found him there. Joe Gcabi was born in Aliwal North, near my birthplace Steynsburg. He joined the ANC in the middle of the 1950s and had worked with Ruth First on New Age. He joined Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961 and was imprisoned to 10 years on Robben Island before his exile where he was a leading cadre in SACTU.

In 1977 Ruth left London to take up an appointment as professor and research director of the Centre for African Studies at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo, Mozambique. Almost exactly a year after Joe Gqabi was felled in Harare, Ruth opened a letter purportedly from the UN. On 17th August 1982 shockingly she was blown to pieces in her office. Ruth was widely known and her death raised a

howl of horror everywhere coming amid the Apartheid state's increasingly violent attempts to curb the rising revolutionary fervour both at home and within our exile ranks. I felt numb, unable to know how one deals with such a horror. Joe was in Maputo amid the devastation of his wife's death. How would Joe deal with a body that he had known intimately and loved over 40 years, now shattered into pieces. I wished I were there. He passed through London a while later. We went to a quiet garden pub in Highgate and I saw this powerful man crumble and weep.

In the next year, in September 1983 the great Communist leader, Yusuf Dadoo died. He had cancer and suffered excruciating pain. He had never missed a meeting of the Central Committee in decades under enormously complicated conditions. Now as he lay dying, he could not attend a scheduled CC meeting. He sent a message and his apologies with Joe Slovo days before he died. When the 1979 Green Book[88] emphasized the likely protracted struggle that was facing us, Yusuf Dadoo and I had laughed at an image of ourselves, old and on crutches hobbling across the Botswana border into a free South Africa. He died too soon and was denied the culmination of his life's dedication. In his last days in the Whittington hospital he accepted the pain that came with terminal cancer with unbelievable fortitude and grace. In an effort to render the pain manageable, he told me with some amusement that the doctors injected alcohol into his pituitary gland. Yusuf died in the Whittington Hospital in north London in 1983. He was buried in Highgate cemetery just across the path from Karl Marx's imposing grave.. On comrade Dadoo's gravestone is written "*Dr Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo 1909-1983, Chairman of the South African Communist Party. He dedicated his life to the cause of national liberation, socialism and world peace.*" He was a great human being whom I was privileged to know.

In June 1984 a letter bomb reached deep into Angola and killed Jenny Schoon and her 6 year old daughter, Katryn in Lubango. Her two year old son, Fritz found their mutilated bodies. Later the little boy said to his father "*The enemy did not kill Jenny, they just broke her.*" Jenny was married to Marius Schoon and I remembered him from twenty years earlier when I was volunteering at D&A and he was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment. We had discussed support for his family. Like me, he was an Afrikaner. He was said to have dealt well with prison and helped to raise morale amongst white male political prisoners in Pretoria prison. While I was in Barberton prison his first wife, Diana, joined us for six months. She was just a young girl who was sent there for painting a slogan on a wall in Johannesburg. Unlike her husband she could not cope with her imprisonment and reminded me of my time in Roeland Street, hysterical, constantly screaming. Barberton prison authorities fed her huge doses of tranquilizer until she eventually collapsed into a deep sleep. The matron said they gave her three times the doses they usually gave to subdue black prisoners.

When she was released she killed herself and Marius was not allowed to attend her funeral from his cell in Pretoria.

The SACP ensured that its members everywhere were informed of unfolding events in the struggle. Around 1984 the then General Secretary, Comrade Moses Mabhida came to my London SACP group to report to us about the rebellion within MK camps in Angola. He gave us considerable detail. But when I asked what had happened to the rebellious combatants, he lowered his eyes and said it was better that we did not know. Later Chris Hani, in the very open way that was characteristic of him, told us of torture and execution that are today in the public domain. We shrank in shock. Comrades who were considered rebellious or traitors by the ANC intelligence unit, Mbokodo, were subjected to untold suffering with no redress. Dreadfully at this time in London I met a comrade who told me that he was held for 8 years in ANC prisons. I could imagine the conditions there. He was released with no charges being brought. He remains loyal to the liberation struggle. My heart still aches.

In 1983 David Rabkin was released from 8 and half years in prison and left the country. I met him in London at an ANC New Year Eve party. He had a scintillating intellect and a great love for jazz. Before he had joined the underground in South Africa David had been awarded a doctorate in African literature by Leeds University. In prison he wrote beautiful short stories. On his release he was based in Maputo where Sue and his children were living. Like others, he did not hesitate to go straight back into the struggle. Within two years of his release he went for combat training in Angola. In circumstances of increasing infiltration into our ranks by Apartheid agents, it seems the equipment used for his training was booby-trapped. Security protocols were not tightly adhered to. David was blown up on 22nd November 1985. An internal MK inquiry saw a fellow combatant sent to Quattro, the ANC's camp that held suspected Apartheid agents. David Rabkin was buried in Angola. An Umkhonto we Sizwe armed guard stood vigil and his coffin was draped in the flags of the ANC and SACP. Both Joe Slovo and Chris Hani spoke at the funeral. The MK camp was renamed after him.[89]

On his release from 8 years in prison, Raymond Suttner continued to live in Durban confronting danger to become active in the United Democratic Front while still being an underground cadre. A State of Emergency was declared in March 1985 and he was detained again. The State of Emergency was lifted and Raymond was released. On his way back from a trip to the US I saw him on a brief stopover in London[90]. He told me that he was extremely fearful about his planned return to South Africa. Nevertheless he did have the courage. On the day that he got back to Jan Smuts airport in June 1986 a new State of Emergency was declared and again

he was detained. I could not believe it. A second State of Emergency in such a short time. And the courage of Raymond to return despite his fears. This time Raymond was detained without trial for 27 months, 18 months in solitary confinement as there were no other white male detainees. He was released in September 1988 and placed under house arrest. After a year of house arrest Raymond defied the restrictions and went to Harare to take part in discussions leading to the Harare Declaration. He stayed there until the unbanning of the liberation organisations in 1990 when there was indemnity for those under restriction orders.[91]

On one of his trips through London in 1987, Joe dropped by one sunny day. Unusually he suggested we go for a walk in my neighbourhood. We walked around the block, we passed Tufnell Park School to the next street. The street was empty of people and in a niche in a wall with leaves of ivy making a soft surface Joe took me in his arms and held me. "*Whatever happens I never want you to forget how much you have meant to me*". "*How important you have been to me*", he insisted. I felt warm but slightly uncomfortable at this odd behaviour. "*Whatever happens…..*" chilling words in the days of death and mayhem. This could only refer to possible assassination that was always there around him. Brought too close by Ruth's death five years before. He said once that the only way to avoid assassination was to lock yourself into a secure room. And what was the point of that – doing nothing, just sitting safely in a room. Was he planning to go home, to go underground in South Africa? I didn't ask. But soon on a further visit he sat across my kitchen table and explained he was getting married to Helena. He had told me he would never have survived the horror of Ruth's murder, the horror of her torn and maimed body if it were not for Helena. He said I should come to the celebration of their wedding at the home of his comrade and friend, Harold Wolpe. But I didn't hear about the wedding again. I didn't see Joe again.

On 29 March 1988, Dulcie September was shot in the head five times from behind with a 22 calibre silenced rifle as she was opening the ANC office in Paris. I knew her when she joined the ANC in 1976 and became a leader in the Women's Section. After some years she was deployed as the ANC representative in Paris, France. Dulcie was a dignified teacher from Athlone. She had a political background in the Cape Town Unity Movement stretching back to the 1960s as part of the discussion group of Neville Alexander. She spent five years in prison, part of the so-called *poqos* in Kroonstad. After a further five years under banning orders she made her way to London in 1973.

Within a week of Dulcie's assassination the regime turned its bloody attention to Albie too. Albie had been living and teaching in Maputo, Mozambique for ten years when on 7th April 1988 he wanted to spend Women's Day on the beach. He left his flat in Julius Nyerere Avenue in shorts and carrying a towel. His car was parked in the street. He leaned forward, stretching out his right hand holding the car key

to open the driver's door. A hidden SADF operative detonated a bomb under his car creating a 15 foot crater. Albie should not have survived. But he did – lying prostrate in the street, people in a frightened circle away from him. After a while, eerily, he lifted his head, bewildered, laboriously raising himself onto his shattered right arm. Some brave people rushed in to drag him away in case there was another bomb. Many hands urgently pulling at him. He thought he was being abducted. He lost consciousness and woke up in the Maputo hospital surrounded by Frelimo comrades who told him his right arm had to be amputated. " *It was wonderful to be alive,"* he remembers. His right arm was amputated, his left eye permanently blinded, his face, body and legs punctured by shrapnel.

My young sons were flown to his side by the ANC the next day. A week later Albie was flown by the British government amid a lot of security and with a pseudonym to the London Hospital for further medical treatment. Albie's brother, Johnny was an immunologist at the London Hospital. Although we were divorced I visited Albie almost every day. I brought our sons, now 17 and 18, to him almost every day. At his request I stayed with him when the medics forced a pipe between his ribs into his collapsed lung. We became close again and he was to amaze me with his fortitude and insistence in a BBC interview that revenge was not how he responded to this vicious attack from the regime on his person. Democracy would be his revenge.

That same year John Gaetsewe died of natural causes in Botswana and was buried in Francistown.

As revolution and counter-revolution mounted in a deadly combat, growing international support also gathered firmly behind the forces struggling to eradicate brutal race rule in South Africa. The United Nations had declared Apartheid a crime against humanity ten years earlier. In 1984 when the great friend of Apartheid South Africa, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher invited Apartheid President PW Botha to Britain, she had to abandon her plans to wine and dine him in the official Downing Street residence in London. She had to take him to her country residence while 50,000 people protested in London.

A year later 150,000 people marched to Trafalgar Square to hear Oliver Tambo and Jesse Jackson speak. By 1986 250,000 people gathered at Clapham Common to demand sanctions against Mrs. Thatcher's continued support for Apartheid at the huge AAM/Artists Against Apartheid Freedom Festival. In 1988 Wembley Stadium was filled to capacity and overflowing at a star-studded concert to celebrate Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday and demand his release from prison. Millions of people around the world were tuned in to the concert. Some time in the mid-1980s when

popular and organized uprising in South Africa was on the boil, Police Commissioner General Johan Coetzee, came to the UK. Somehow people in the AAM got wind of this and a small group of us turned up at his hotel in Chelsea. I walked up to the hotel reception and sweetly asked for his room number. Rather to our surprise the unsuspecting receptionist gave us the room number. We went up in the lift and in my very rusty Afrikaans I spoke to his security detail and gained entry into his suite of rooms on the pretext of being a fan of sorts. Once inside I started questioning him. It wasn't long before he realized what was going on and as more demonstrators turned up and started remonstrating with him, I slipped into the bedroom and found a diary next to his bed. I slipped it down my pants and left the hotel. There was no momentous information in it – he was supposed to have secret discussions with the police in Northern Ireland. He had a few appointments in Europe.

The ANC's slogan to the mayhem that was exploding around us was "*Don't mourn, pick up the spear and mobilise*". I shared the strong culture of accepting all the mayhem as part of our struggle where personal tragedy was not held above the tragedy of Apartheid South Africa and the need to overthrow it. But our children were young. My sons were in Maputo with Ruth First days before she was assassinated in 1982, they knew David Rabkin, Joe Gqabi, Dulcie September and so many other comrades who were killed in the course of their childhood. They saw their father the day after he had barely survived a bomb attack.

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Sometimes our consultation of 50 minutes went by and we did not speak a word. Numbness. My eyes on a patch of dust under your chair. I ran to the wall, my hands over my ears, silently screaming trying to push my head through the wall. Once, unscheduled, desperate I came to your consulting room late in the afternoon. Curled up on the steps that led down from the pavement. My eyes shut tight, my arms over my head. Until you came with gentle hands on my shoulders moving me indoors. You always charged me very little because you said I was in the struggle against Apartheid. Mostly I sobbed bitter tears. I shivered with memories when you stood there, a large white male, politely opening the door to let me go. Every morning at 7.30 before work.

27. The Children go to School

Michael and Alan were perhaps 9 and 10 years old when they came to me in a small and determined delegation and declared that they were British and not South African. I said that's okay but that all I asked was that they should not be racist. They were at Tufnell Park Primary School just a block away from our home. Racial insults between the small children were not rare in the multi-racial school. Alan and

Michael seemed to benefit from the open, non-authoritarian, inclusive system of education that was introduced in UK government schools in the 1970s. London opened my children to a wide range of experiences that they would not have had in white South Africa.

In 1986 when he was 15 Michael was censured by Acland Burghley high school for smoking a cigarette with a group of friends on the pavement outside the school gate. This was common practice amongst the scholars. It had been overlooked by the school for a long time but suddenly they decided to clamp down. Michael was suspended. He decided that was the last of his schooling and stayed at home. I felt powerless to coerce him back to school. But he was willing to consider all sorts of alternatives like Further Education and Training (FET) colleges - and rejected all after a visit. I even asked my father whether he would fund a boarding school in Lesotho. Michael stayed at home for two years, learning to play the guitar and doing gardening work in the neighbourhood. By the 1980s I had started working as a community paediatric physiotherapist doing home visits in the district of Islington where we also lived in Tufnell Park. I could pop in at home quite easily if there was a problem. I dropped in one day to find the two of them playing pool at the pool table that took up all the floor space in the lounge. There was a stranger with them, a young man older than them. He was my nephew, Stephen, who after completing a degree at Rhodes University found that compulsory conscription into the army was still pursuing him. He fled the country and there he was in my home. He remained with us for a while and then found his feet among other white conscription resisters in London.

When Albie was bombed I was phoned by the ANC office at the Bobath Centre for children with cerebral palsy where I had just started working. The people at the Centre were concerned that I should not drive home – "*No, I'll be fine*". It was school holidays and I found Alan at home. Michael was out doing landscape gardening with an older friend. It was before cell phones and I drove around looking for him, worried that they might listen to the radio and hear on BBC News. When they returned to London after seeing Albie in Maputo, Alan and Michael decided, with Albie's support if not instigation, to undertake their first trip to South Africa. I was distraught with worry. But they had a good time and were treated with great generosity by friends, including Tim and Ilse Wilson in Johannesburg and by my parents who were still living in the Wilderness and who could not believe how much adolescents could eat. They climbed Table Mountain, took a tour in a rubber dingy to the Orange River Mouth, visited the Kango Caves in Oudthoorn and the Pilanesberg Game Reserve near Johannesburg.

Then Michael announced that he would go to the ANC's Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO) in Morogoro, Tanzania. Thankful that he wanted to resume his education after sitting at home for two years, I saw him off with a suitcase full of malaria prophylaxis pills. SOMAFCO was built on a dilapidated sisal farm donated by the Tanzanian government in 1979. There was a Reception Centre – later called the Ruth First Centre – where new arrivals stayed for some weeks. It was right next to a swamp of water where mosquitoes bred. Michael's first postcard informed me that he had given the malaria pills to the doctors at the small hospital on the ANC facility in Mazimbu. The comrades had told him it is better to build up a natural resistance to malaria. I was not convinced but did not feel in a position to argue. The next postcard I received told me that he and some friends had decided no longer to jog in the foothills of the surrounding mountains after they encountered two lions roaming around. I thought I must be the only mother in London whose boarding school son wrote about encountering lions in his free time. Michael stayed at SOMAFCO from January 1989 until repatriation in 1991. He did well there. He made very good friends and adapted to rather spartan living conditions. Where he lost out on not having a teacher for English literature, he gained by having a wonderful teacher like Freddie Ramaphosa for history in which he gained an A. He also got 'A's in the London O levels which was as far as SOMAFCO went, for maths, biology and English but a miserable E for teacherless English literature. And securing his identity amongst the lasting friendships he made. I visited there in 1989 – it was beautiful. Low buildings set in a horseshoe of mountains that protected it from predatory South African Defence Force attacks.

28. ANC women meet in Moscow, in Harare

Women were never high on my agenda. Through my exile years it seemed that men were busy making the revolution and women had to be found space, so they were organized into the Women's Section. Though I took part in Women's Section meetings, it was more an obligation than a commitment. I did learn to understand the importance of the struggle for empowering women and for gender equity. I did learn that women everywhere were the majority and were the most oppressed and poorest. We talked of the triple oppression of South African women – oppressed as Africans, oppressed as workers, oppressed as women. And I understood when Samora Machel said we should fight for the liberation of women now during the struggle not wait until afterwards – he said something about it being easier to fight a crocodile on the bank of the river rather than in the middle of the river. Or perhaps the other way round – is it easier to fight a crocodile on the bank? Perhaps it is never easy to fight a crocodile. Patriarchy seems undiminished even now. Joe told me once that after a few years of training women as combatants he asked what actions

they should be prepared for and a leading comrade replied "*we need a lot of typists at headquarters.*" I was relieved I had had the foresight to study shorthand/typing at the East London tech. after my release from prison. I was not a liberated woman.

In the dying years of the Soviet Union there was a meeting for South African women in Moscow. ANC women from the underground structures inside South Africa were with us there keeping a low profile. Avoiding cameras. Gorbachev had introduced perestroika and democratization of the Soviet Union. I wandered around with comrade Eleanor Khanyile whose husband, William, had been killed in the Matola raid. We wanted to pay homage to the Soviet Union and Lenin. When I tried to photograph her with a statue of comrade Ilyich, Eleanor was asked politely by a Soviet guard not to stand on the base of the large monument. A most moving moment for me was seeing President Gorbachev himself speaking from the stage and next to this large world figure was the diminutive Comrade Gertrude Shope, our women's leader standing there and making a speech in her ANC Women's uniform of green blouse and black skirt. I felt very proud.

Adelaide Tambo was also part of our delegation. I knew her quite well and visited the Tambo home in north London. It was an open home that welcomed any comrade who wanted to visit. There was a time when the home caught fire and Adelaide escaped out of a window upstairs breaking her leg. When she was discharged from hospital after some months, I became a sort of runner for her. Sometimes I took her to Physiotherapy at the local Whittington hospital and ran errands for her getting to know quite well also her last-born child, Dudu just a little girl then. Dudu grew up and came home with her grown-up name Tselane, a powerful woman, actress and humanitarian like her mother. The Tambo children had a hard time, as did other exile children. They had the opportunity to be sent to boarding school for an excellent English education. But it must have been lonely and quite distant from the struggle that took their parents away for most of their childhood. Even so they grew up to have such grace and lack of pretention despite disconcertingly posh English accents. They adored their parents and like their parents, the children had an ability always warmly to remember people even those they rarely encountered.

In the middle of the mayhem unleashed by the Apartheid state there were secret talks between the ANC and delegates broadly representing the regime. These had come to some fruition with a series of public meetings between ANC delegations and various groups from within South Africa, many with links to Apartheid structures. In 1989 women too had a meeting. I was in the ANC delegation to meet women from inside the country. This was part of the '*toenadering*' [rapprochement] that had been going on publicly since the meeting in Dakar, Senegal between the ANC and

white Afrikaner intellectuals. The women met in Harare. There weren't many of us from London. I flew down to Harare with Frene Ginwala and we sat ears touching, heads close together as she told me the story of her eventful life. The meeting was in the Holiday Inn and was opened by Sally Mugabe, the much loved Ghanaian first wife of President Robert Mugabe. She passed away not long afterwards making way for his much younger and alarming second wife, Grace. The internal South African group was quite broad and included not only government or Apartheid women but also others who did not see themselves as part of the problem, women who identified as part of the anti-Apartheid struggle. Anti-Apartheid singer, Jennifer Ferguson was there and I sat on the floor alone with her very late one night while she sang her beautiful songs. Some of the more progressive white women from inside the country did not think revolutionary women should be well dressed. They were offended particularly by Baleka Kgotsisile's sparkling white African chic outfit. Baleka was married to the poet Willie Keoperetse Kgotsisile then. When their marriage ended she became Baleka Mbete who still dresses with some aplomb as democratic Speaker with ambitions to be President.

But there were serious moments. While the Nationalist Party women expressed deep concern about Communism and Communists whom their sons were fighting to save South Africa from, they were quietly put right by MK commander and ANC leader, Thenjiwe Mtintso "*Who are your sons shooting from their armoured vehicles inside the townships?* " She paused. *"They are shooting our sons and our daughters."* The face of an older white woman to whom the question was addressed, stilled in shock. Then tears welled up and fell from her eyes. She understood. Your sons are shooting our sons and daughters. Again they expressed disquiet about Communists. Aging Ray Alexander had been to the toilet and just at that moment she pushed open the double doors at the back of the hall to re-enter. Thenjiwe dramatically pointed to her "*There is a Communist*". The whole hall turned around and stared at comrade Ray who stood rooted on the spot, legs apart, unsure what was going on. Looking very harmless and bewildered to find all eyes on her. Not presenting a picture of a dangerous Communist from whom South Africa should be saved.

It was the first time I attended political meetings that started with Christian prayers. In the Harare breakaway groups the Nationalist Party women asked us to hold hands in a circle and then prayed. Politics and religion were always separated in the ANC that I knew then. God was never part of our political activities. In exile our meetings began with the singing of "*Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika*", our fists clenched in the air. No praying. This has changed. Now in a free South Africa, despite the Constitutional separation of church and state, we pray – Christian, Moslem, Jew, Hindu, Ancestors.

Before meetings we pray. Previously Communists had aligned a materialist view of history with atheism. That too would change. God and the church have become accommodated within a communist ideology.

In Harare I met a 25 years old ANC woman, Jackie or Kgomotso who had recently married, Vernon Nkadimeng, (MK combatant Rogers Mevi). Alone with me she told me her story. "*We were just married. Very happy. We were going out and I was taking too long to get ready. Rogers went downstairs to wait in the car. I was relaxed and combing my hair. I heard a loud bang. I went on combing, combing. I knew in my heart what had happened. Knew my husband was dead.*" He was killed in May, 1985 by an SADF car bomb in Botswana. Kgomotso was asked to tell her story in a plenary session – it was clearly extremely painful for her. Forgiveness? How is it possible. Meetings always seem to be about queuing for food. In a queue in the Holiday Inn courtyard waiting for food some Afrikaans government women asked me "*Who is that beautiful woman we saw you with?*" They carefully avoided saying "black" or "African" woman. After a while I realized they were referring to Jackie Molefe and I said "*Oh, you mean my sister, Jackie*". "*No, no, no*" they protested vehemently "*she can't be your sister*".

I had known Jackie since the early 1970s and after the Harare indaba I spent a lovely day in a park with her and her two little girls Boipuso and Lesedi whose father was Joe Modise. Jackie was certainly beautiful and also courageous and loyal. Jackie had joined MK at 17, one of the earliest woman combatants. She trained in the Soviet Union in signals and was the communications operator during the Wankie Campaign of 1967. Jackie returned to her surname Sedibe after liberation when she became a major general in the SANDF.

29. We're going home

At the end of 1987 Govan Mbeki, Rivonia trialist, was released from a life sentence heightening a sense of pending change in South Africa. Soon other political prisoners serving life sentences were released unconditionally. There were meetings and work preparing for negotiations and for a future free South Africa. The Harare Declaration laid the parameters for negotiations. South Africa's "fifth province" South West Africa won its independence and democratic elections brought the liberation movement, SWAPO, into government. In June 1989 exiles started returning and I took my nephew Stephen to to Heathrow airport to return to Windhoek. I watched him a little sadly go toward the boarding gate. Then he suddenly turned and rushed back to me. "*It won't be long now and you, too, will go home*". It remained a dream.

Then the unthinkable happened. Not long after our Harare Women's meeting, in February 1990 the ANC and SACP were unbanned. We were going home. On 2nd February 1990 FW de Klerk who had been president of Apartheid South Africa for a mere three months, made his famous speech in parliament unbanning the liberation organisations. There was overwhelming elation everywhere. I found myself in a small council flat in Anson Road and drank Chivas whiskey for the first time with a group of ecstatic ANC doctors. De Klerk had always been a "*verkrampte*" [shriveled] right-winger in the regime. Yet he saw the writing on the wall. The time for white minority rule was over after 350 years. Nonetheless when it came de Klerk did not anticipate the total defeat of white Afrikaner political power. Change ran away from de Klerk and his henchmen.

Soon Nelson Mandela too was released. Exiled leaders got immunity from arrest and went home to prepare for negotiations. Efforts to reach a position where negotiations were possible had been ongoing for many years. Rumours of talks between the ANC and various Apartheid cohorts reached ordinary members of the ANC as early as 1984-5 and left many of us extremely perturbed and disapproving. The further rumour that Nelson Mandela was talking with the regime while in prison was met with dismay. For all our lives we had been ready for the total defeat of Apartheid, for the revolutionary overthrow of white domination – the end of poverty and the return of the land to the dispossessed. For economic redress. Talking politely to 'the enemy' was difficult to swallow. Driving secret talks in exile was Thabo Mbeki with a small coterie of comrades close to him. Aziz Pahad, Jacob Zuma and Tony Trew, my co-accused in the ARM trial. The membership at large was doubtful. From 1988 a parallel grouping led by Mac Maharaj was organizing the Vula underground operation that infiltrated leading exiled cadres into the country and set up a network of underground operatives. Unsettling stories had reached us of persistent, unresolved and heated debates between Slovo and Mbeki in the SACP Central Committee.

As late as April 1989 a protracted people's war for the insurrectionary seizure of power was still envisaged. "*The Path to Power*", the new SACP programme adopted at the 7th Congress in Cuba warned against premature negotiations:

> "*We should be on our guard against the clear objective of our ruling class and their imperialist allies who see negotiations as a way of pre-empting a revolutionary transformation. The imperialists seek their own kind of transformation which goes beyond the reform limits of the present regime but which will, at the same time frustrate the basic objectives of the struggling masses. And they hope to achieve this*

by pushing the liberation movement into negotiations before it is strong enough to back its basic demands with sufficient power on the ground.

"Whatever prospects may arise in the future for a negotiated transition, they must not be allowed to infect the purpose and content of our present strategic approaches. ***We are not engaged in a struggle whose objective is merely to generate sufficient pressure to bring the other side to the negotiating table.****" [bold emphasis in the original]*

In a serendipity of history, the negotiations were coming to fruition at a time when the major support for armed struggle and the revolutionary overthrow of the regime, the Soviet Union and its socialist allies, collapsed with the Berlin Wall. In the months before 1990 there had been increasingly large cracks on our side of the Iron Curtain with advocacy of regional dispute resolution rather than globally reinforcing the great schisms of the Cold War. As we say, the international balance of power shifted radically against us just as the viability of the domestic political forces ranged against us was recognized as untenable by capitalist powers in the West. Belatedly in 1989 the USA joined the anti-Apartheid party when the US Congress passed a disinvestment law; by 1991 the USSR was no more.

In the first months of 1990 the ANC branches in London and elsewhere continued to meet. We were asked to discuss "*Are We Ready to Govern ?*". I was astonished that the question could even be posed! Somehow I always believed that once the lid of apartheid/colonial repression was lifted, everybody could be a nuclear scientist. There would be a blossoming of long repressed capacity. Despite a thorough-going familiarity with Franz Fanon we continued to believe in a South African exceptionalism in which those who had carried the baton of struggle over centuries of colonial subjugation – perhaps longer than anywhere else – would not succumb to the fleshpots of power.

The fall of our socialist allies and the unnegotiated end to the Cold War meant a resounding victory for capitalist power globally and a new dominant single power in the shape of the USA. There can be no doubt that this left ANC negotiators in a weakened position and had a fundamental impact in weakening the political power being newly exercised by the ANC in democratic South Africa. The economy and land ownership have been largely left unchanged. Large swathes of the society remain under white control. Any possibility of progress to a socialist South Africa rapidly receded.

* * * * *

What is the loss felt so acutely in exile? Is there something about the soil you left behind? The smells, the diversity, the languages and accents? I'm not sure what the loss was that I felt in exile. I loved South Africa but not the segregated unjust South Africa I knew. It was not the exclusive white culture and community that I could miss. That culture I was committed to destroy. I would return to another country, that I knew.

It was in exile with other exiles where I began to experience the South Africa I was fighting for. In exile we were South Africans together. In exile I lived the politics that meant so much to me. What I liked about London were the possibilities of finding the social milieu that suited you. You simply did not have to encounter the racists, the imperialists, the arrogants. You could find a corner with only those people you related to best. The ANC and the SACP in the UK lived in the world populated by one another and by British trade unionists, Communists and anti-apartheid activists as well as exiles from other struggles in Africa and throughout the world. The good people.

I felt miserable at the narrow horizons of Britain. You could drive for just 300 kilometers north from London to reach the border with Scotland. Journeys in South Africa are measured in a thousand kilometers. I had learnt the poem "On Westminster Bridge" by William Wordsworth as part of high school set work. One day after a march against the US war in Vietnam as I was standing on Westminster Bridge looking into a pale sky rising above a solemn Thames River I saw for the first time that there was beauty in this grey country with oppressively small horizons. Later I learned a sort of stranger's love for the hills and mountains of the Lake District where I found a beautiful lake Windermere in sharp contrast to the ugliness of the Windermere I worked in at home. I adapted to my enforced life in Europe,"oo'ed" and "ah'ed " at its snow, emerald green hills and occasional sun. There was something about the inevitable adaptation one made to the host country, especially in exile outside Africa I think. Host people one knew there even intimately, never really knew us. Didn't know us as we were in South Africa, together.

The sense of loss that comes with exile gnaws at you, the emptiness becoming bigger and bigger as the years glide past.

I didn't feel the loss of my family. That loss was already established when my parents divorced and as I committed myself to the struggle in my late adolescence. My teenage years were separated from my two sisters and my father; I had long ago allowed what I thought was an unbridgeable ravine between my father and myself. In exile I felt a responsibility toward my mother to be present as her daughter. She and I alone had eked out a new life in my adolescent years. I wrote to my parents every week. I wrote to my mother really. I wrote on airmail letters about my children and managed to create an alternative world that was light and happy while excluding entirely the frequent dark storms of my political world. She kept all my letters and returned them to me as her life ended. I destroyed them. While I cannot define the loss of exile I can still feel the enormous sense of personal integration and wholeness that I experienced on my return after 24 years. I landed in Johannesburg on 11th September 1990, exactly 24 years after arriving in the UK. I came back to Johannesburg, a city that I had never visited before, to a country in turmoil. But I felt at home.

My two sons, Alan and Michael, were born in London in 1970 and 1971 respectively and grew up there until they 'returned' to South Africa when they were about 20 years old. In many ways this experience of growing up in a place

outside the toxic racism of South Africa, was good. The children of exiles often had a difficult time. Family life was within the exigencies of the struggle. We moved almost entirely in ANC circles. Their experience within the ANC was rich and filled with humanity. Both my children have grown up with values that make me very proud.

Footnotes Part 4

[63] South African Non-racial Olympics Committee
[64] In Cape Town Albie would have had to get permission from the Special Branch in terms of his banning orders that made a gathering of more than two people illegal for him.
[65] There were echoes in Albie's second marriage forty years later in 2006. It was a much grander affair in the Johannesburg Constitutional Court where he was a judge. The late Deputy Chief Justice, Judge Pius Langa got special dispensation to be a marriage officer for the day and married Albie and his new bride, Vanessa September. My sons and I attended as family. At the end of the ceremony Albie (like his father before him) took the willing guests on a tour of the Court.

[66] Later Kader Asmal's sister-in-law.
[67] A well-known feminist writer later President of English PEN, chairperson of the Freud Museum in London, Visiting Professor of Literature and Medical Humanities at King's College.
[68] Now largely forgotten, Brian Bunting was born in 1920 and grew up not far from where I now live in Kensington, Johannesburg. His parents Sidney and Rebecca were founding members when the Communist Party was launched in 1921. Brian matriculated from Jeppe Boys High when he was 15 and became a journalist. Like many white Communists, he fought in North Africa during the Second World War. He served on the Party's central committee from 1946 until his death in 2008. In his last years I always saw him at augmented CC meetings even as his health deteriorated. I visited him at home in Cape Town where he lived near my son, Alan.
[69] A draft constitution in 1984 that we were given for comment, made the revealing of your membership punishable by execution. I don't know if this clause made it into the final SACP constitution.
[70] It is ironic how often Democratic Centralism is invoked in free South Africa.
[71] Alex La Guma was born in District Six. Much later he became the ANC representative in Cuba where he remained until he died in 1985. He loved Cuba explaining to me that Havana reminded him of District Six with its vibrancy and the shades of colour of its population. His beautifully written novels, drawn from his life under increasingly humiliating race rule, were published and read outside South Africa and banned in the country.

[72] in his seminal pamphlet "*Has Socialism Failed ?*"

[73] The SACP had started producing the *African Communist* in 1959.
[74] After 45 years, a new inquest into Timol's death has recently started in the Johannesburg High Court.
[75] I knew Sue's late father who was a paediatrician while I was working at the Bobath Centre for children with cerebral palsy in the late 1980s.
[76] Jeremy Cronin has been Deputy General Secretary of the legal SACP for a considerable number of years in democratic South Africa. He became a Deputy Minister in the Jacob Zuma administration.
[77] At no time was the *Aventura* project seen as some sort of Castroist *Granma*. We did not envisage it to be a spark that would light the prairie fire of revolution. It was another project in the difficult mission to regrow the struggle inside the country. There was constant pressure from combatants in the MK camps to return home.

[78] Greece was under the dictatorship of Colonels at the time and we had excellent relations with leading Greek Communist exiles in London including Betty and Tony Ambatielos.
[79] Years later when Joe commanded MK, he again initiated an imaginative and seemingly impossible mission, to blow up the oil refinery at Sasolburg. That time the mission was successful.

[80] The first Indians in South Africa were brought to the Cape as slaves in the 17th century.
[81] Indians in South Africa have never been more than 2 and half per cent of the population.
[82] Quite recently, just before he died, I bumped into the writer Lewis Nkosi for the first time since those exile years. It was at a crowded book launch at Ike's bookshop across the road from my flat in Greyville, Durban. I had already downed a couple of glasses of wine and said to a guy squashed up next to me "*You look just like Lewis Nkosi*". Then I wouldn't believe him when he said that indeed he was Lewis Nkosi. He was compelled to show me a file with his name on it from a briefcase he was carrying. He said he remembered me as a "*passionate speaker against Apartheid*" in those almost forgotten days.

[83] ZAPU leader Cde Jason Ziyaphapha Moyo was killed by a parcel bomb explosion at the ANC offices in Lusaka on January 22, 1977. His remains were reburied at the National Heroes Acre in 1981.
[84] Robert Resha was based in London. He was a heroic figure from early Sophiatown. In the 1956 Treason Trial he was quoted as having instructed ANC cadres to be disciplined and when the ANC told them to be peaceful they had to be peaceful; when the ANC gave them different instructions, they should "Kill, kill, kill.
[85] "*Unfinished Autobiography*"
[86] Today Albie's version of this story is completely different.
[87] When Joe later came home he said that people, particularly Africans, were often surprised to find he was white.
See my *Background Notes to the Story No. 5 'The Way Forward : The Green Book"* pp 261 - 262
[89] After 1994 the oldest independent newspaper in South Africa Grocott's Mail in Grahamstown established The David Rabkin Newsroom. Grocott's formed a close liaison with Rhodes University School of Journalism that was headed by Guy Berger who had spent three years with David in Pretoria prison. David was honoured at Rhodes University with the establishment of The David Rabkin Project for Experiential Journalism.
[90] Today Raymond does not remember this stopover.
[91] In democratic South Africa Raymond was elected on to the ANC NEC and the SACP Central Committee. He has become a highly respected and independent public intellectual writing and broadcasting widely as the difficult path of freedom unfolds.

Sachs Family Left to Right : Michael, Uncle Johnny, Alan, me and Albie
at opening of Constitutional Court 1996

FIVE
HOME AGAIN

1. Euphoria

Early in 1990 in London I was overwhelmed with impatience. My lines of contact in the SACP were disrupted and I had no one to ask for permission to go home. No one to advise on the sensitive material I had hidden all over my home. I decided to go home. I burnt the sensitive material. I sold my car. For two or more weeks before I left, I rode a bicycle through the autumn streets of London. I sat down with Alan at our large oak table in the kitchen. Alan had been born in London just 20 years earlier. I told him that I was going home and I offered to ensure that he would be taken care of if he wanted to stay in London, the only home he knew. In Anson Road, Tufnell Park where he had grown up. He preferred to come home with me. I was very relieved. Today he has forgotten this conversation. Other returnees were not so lucky. Many families were torn apart a second time when their now grown

children decided to continue with the lives they had built sometimes over quarter of a century or more in exile. Exile from exile. Many who did come back felt like strangers.

I bought two one-way tickets to Johannesburg. I resigned from my job at the Bobath Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy where I had worked since 1988. I rented out my flat with everything as it stood. Later I had to rescue my 45 volumes of the *Collected Works of Lenin* from tenants who had moved on taking Lenin away in cardboard boxes. I wrote to Tim Wilson asking him to help me with a physiotherapy job - "*somewhere in an Afrikaans rural area*", I said. Tim is a friend from my UCT days. Son of anthropologist Monica Hunter, married to Ilse Fischer from my first SACP cell. He was Director of the Alexandra Health Centre, a much admired non-governmental clinic in one of the oldest African townships in Johannesburg. Tim assured me drily "*Everyone is flooding into the urban areas. Soon the countryside will be bare.*" He offered me a job at Alex Clinic to organize a community based physiotherapy service particularly for children.

In September 1990 I packed our bags and set off to Heathrow Airport with Alan and our one-way tickets back to South Africa. There was some problem with vaccinations and every piece of my luggage was unpacked and thoroughly searched. Somehow I found myself on one side of the Immigration barrier and Alan on the other side. I was exhausted and panic-stricken but in no mood for obstacles. Finally we were both on the plane, in the air seeing the sun rise over the Sahara desert. "*We are marching to Pretoria*….." Somewhere in the back of my dreams, I had always imagined coming home in a triumphant march of millions to Pretoria, overjoyed and free. Flags waving. *Siyaya ePitoli*. At Johannesburg's Jan Smuts airport Alan and I were held up for two hours and questioned by Immigration. Well, they didn't really question us but rather gazed at us non-plussed. After many phone calls to Pretoria, Immigration eventually stamped my British passport for one week and Alan's for one month. This didn't matter to me – my life had not been one of compliance with passport stamps. I was here to stay. Tim had been waiting patiently for us. I had never been in Johannesburg but I was elated so set foot on South African soil, or concrete. Alan and I stayed with Tim and Ilse for the first weeks.

Alan soon went off to Cape Town. I had decided that it was time, at the age of just 20 that he spread his wings into some independence from his over- bearing mother. In retrospect it was an unforgivable error of judgment on my part. I expected Alan, at what was a very young age, to find his own way in a really bizarre foreign country, a foreign culture, a strange city in a time of turmoil and change. Albie who based himself in Cape Town had his own preoccupations and I had wrongly assumed my

older sister, Bernice, retired in nearby Gordon's Bay with her husband, would be family support for Alan. As I had supported her son when he arrived in London on the run from compulsory service in the SADF. I was wrong. Alan started at the still largely white Cape Town Technical College and was horrified by the unapologetic overt white racism he encountered. He is a talented artist but found it difficult to find his feet. Nevertheless he survived reasonably unscathed producing a series of gorgeous murals around Cape Town and in Albie's home. In due course, Albie and his family became a pillar of support for Alan. I cannot remember much of those early days. I flew over the Outeniqua Mountains to the Wilderness where my parents had built a retirement home. I was glad that the pristine Wilderness beach on the warm Indian Ocean was already de-segregated in practice. I allowed the waves of emotion to wash over me. Ominously, overlooking the Wilderness beach stood *Die Anker*, home of Apartheid's former president, PW Botha. It stood aloft on a small hill across the lake from my parents' modest but beautiful home with its lush and carefully nurtured garden.

2. Hillbrow-Berea

I found myself a flat on the edge of Hillbrow in Johannesburg. On the 9th floor of Miramar in Olivia Street. Hillbrow is a vibrant flatland looking down over the central business district of Johannesburg. It was a strange time. Hillbrow was a white area under Apartheid, some of it rather bohemian. By now it had developed into a so-called 'grey area' where Apartheid segregation had been quietly eroded over a few years. After de Klerk's 1990 speech there was extremely rapid change there as those whites who could afford it fled in panic to northern suburbs. Their places were filled by returning exiles, black South Africans previously barred from there, comrades released from Robben Island and increasingly, migrants from outlying areas and from other African countries. Criminals, old and new arrived too. A small hotel backing on to my block across the service lane was exposed in the media as still a haunt of Apartheid's hit squads, the CCB[92], also running more routine criminal syndicates. At the end of Olivia Street was another block where trade union meetings used to be monitored and bugged by the same CCB a few years earlier. Increasingly over the six years that I lived there, there would be gunshots and screams during the night. Political violence was mounting. Gun trading, drug and prostitution syndicates were moving in. My ninth floor flat had one door into a passageway, the only access. I thought if they, Apartheid's Security Police, came for me there would be no escape. I would shoot them. I got a licenced gun and went with a young guy from Alexandra for some shooting practice in an old disused gold mine dump in Springs. The great base player, Victor Masondo, lived in my block. I became chairperson of the Body Corporate and had to mediate between him and his downstairs neighbour, a Swazi

national, Mr. Xaba who complained that Victor's base playing disturbed him! My sympathies lay with Victor Masondo and I thought Mr. Xaba should feel honoured. But Mr. Xaba was not going to be appeased. I was a failure as a negotiator.

Many returning South Africans had been deculturated in exile in now dangerous ways. I knew a health worker from Soweto who had been educated in Cuba. Home after many years, she had great difficulty relating to South African men for whom ordinary social interaction always seemed sexually charged. Having lunch together had sexual connotations she had long since unlearned. In South Africa it was wiser to run than to help. I was driving out of the underground car park of Miramar into the back service-alley when a woman came running toward me, her arms wildly raised, screaming. She was being chased by a man who was hurling bricks, stones and threats at her. I opened my car door and she jumped in. The man continued hurling bricks and stones at my car. My car was out of petrol and I had to pull into the garage across the street. I kept a fearful eye on the watching man and his gun bulging pocket. A broad-shouldered MK combatant who had toyi toyied with me in a massive and exuberant crowd through the streets of London while we awaited news of Nelson Mandela's release on 11th February 1990, came home to one of the townships outside Cape Town. In broad daylight he saw a man he didn't know assault a woman he didn't know. He rushed to her assistance and was stabbed to death by the man. We exiles had to relearn South Africa.

3. Waiting

Michael who was 19 years old, was still in Tanzania at SOMAFCO awaiting repatriation. In November 1990 when I had moved to Miramar flats, he wrote to me *"It was good to get a letter from you. Until I received it I had no idea what was going on there and "returning" seemed like an ominous prospect…..People are still very tense here, still badly informed. Alpheus and the Chief Rep. seem to be moving in and out of S.A. but they don't brief us – perhaps they're too busy. It's still quite an intimidating thought to know I'll be starting my life again in another country. The magnitude of it all has only really hit me recently. But it is not as intimidating as it was when I came here and I'm sure now, as then, most of my fears will prove ill-founded".*

He was preparing for UK O levels that were as far as SOMAFCO schooling went. Michael was predicting "*A or B in English, History and Biology and a C or D in maths*". In the event, he obtained straight As for everything including maths. But he got an E for English Literature where they did not have a teacher and he tells me he found uninteresting. To this day he does not read much fictional literature. He would rather read a fat biography of Maynard Keynes than a novel.

Later Michael comments:

> *"I'm glad to see the ANC launching some "mass actions" but 20,000 in Jo'burg doesn't seem like a very big march. I don't know if you were there but maybe you can explain why it was so small." !* I was there and I thought it was a very large crowd!

On 26th December his letter spoke of general despondency in Mazimbu. One student had committed suicide. A Christmas lunch of rice, tomatoes and water didn't help the mood. On 20th January 1991 he spoke of the very poor reception given to a leadership group of TT Nkobi, Alfred Nzo and Joe Modise[93] when they eventually came to address an angry audience at Mazimbu. A month later he had finished writing exams, he had been "deployed" and moved out of the school dormitories and into accommodation in a house.

> *"About 200 comrades left for scholarships in Nigeria…. As for work, I'm assisting in the RPC* [Regional Political Committee] *office and when (if ?) repatriation starts, the RPC has put me in the communication sub-committee of the East African Repatriation Committee….I spent the last week or two sorting out a file and listing all the comrades who have passed away since 1979* [when SOMAFCO opened] *and giving their dates of birth, death, location of grave etc. Quite a job, wading through mountains of medical reports and old telexes. The latest addition to my now almost complete list died yesterday. A student I knew quite well, of AIDS…."*

A month or so later, in April 1991, my doorbell rang at Miramar. Without warning Michael had arrived from Tanzania. In my excitement I couldn't wait for the lift. I ran all the way down nine floors of stairs to a joyful reunion, although edged with anxiety for the future. Like Alan, Michael was quite unprepared for the crass racism he encountered. After staying with me for a short time to find his feet, he rented a two-roomed flat across the street in Hillbrow. Bohlale, the sister of a friend moved into the second bedroom and shared the rent. Within days the white owner of the block called Michael into his office downstairs on the ground floor. His very large son threatened Michael with a shotgun. Bohlale had to go immediately. Their flats were for white tenants only. When I heard, I flew over there yelling at the white man. "*Have you looked out of the window recently. Do you see any white people out there?*" Large as he was, Michael climbed on to my lap and wept. There was something welcome about trimming down drastically all the property from exile. Albie had abandoned all his books with me. I didn't buy a car and for a few weeks I took combi taxis to work in Alexandra every day. Taxi drivers still have a bad reputation for reckless

maneuvering through Johannesburg traffic. "*The driving's not so bad"* I commented one day to a fellow passenger. *"Oh, it's because you are here"*, she laughed. White passengers were unusual then. In any case I soon found I needed a car after all to keep up with my hectic life. I bought a very old blue Honda Ballade.

The ANC was at the centre of the unfolding drama of South Africa. I don't know whether the ANC's membership that was opened to all in the external mission in 1969, was formally extended to membership inside the country. But we didn't ask and we all flooded excitedly into its structures. In 1990 I was elected chair of the Hillbrow-Berea ANC branch. When Michael arrived from SOMAFCO six months later, he was elected Secretary of the Branch. Hillbrow-Berea branch was an exciting cauldron of activists from exile, Robben Island, United Democratic Front and mass democratic movement. We merged and worked together, learning from our varied struggle experiences. Over the years now a dichotomy has been drawn – there were inziles and exiles. The hard disciplined years of exile became negatively viewed over the years – as if there were two separate ANCs. Hillbrow-Berea also harboured those who opposed us. I went with comrades to a block of flats where we were told our enemies had a gun cache – we didn't find it. At another time I went to see Chris Hani at Shell House, then ANC headquarters, for advice. One of the elected Branch committee members was reported to be a former security policeman responsible for the torture and death of a comrade in the old Transkei where Chris had operated underground over many years. Chris advised we leave him in place – keep your enemy closer.

Meetings of the SACP were unrecognizable from the SACP I had known for so long. The careful recruitment in underground conditions just seemed to fall away. Now it seemed that anyone who wanted to – and everyone wanted to - could join and become a Communist without any preparation. Politically it sounded like a tower of Babel. No one seemed to know the words of *the Internationale! "Arise ye prisoners of starvation, arise ye toilers of the earth…"* The ideology seemed, for the first time, dogmatic and undigested as new members flocked enthusiastically into its ranks talking a talk they barely understood. Long-brewing differences over the path to power came to an abrupt climax. Those who rejected the notion of the SACP as a mass organization, the same group who had steered the initial secret talks with the enemy, Thabo Mbeki, Aziz Pahad, Jacob Zuma left the Party. Leaving behind those who had had doubts about negotiations including Joe Slovo and Chris Hani, to carry the red flag forward to the masses.

I was happy to be in the middle of Johannesburg and not in a rural area where I would perhaps be living in a small unreconstructed white dorp with fearful whites

nervously keeping their guns at hand. Organizing the fight back while stacking up on baked beans and instant coffee. Digging underground shelters. The fight back was sophisticated and murderous. We called it a Third Force that fomented violence in the townships and lobbed bombs about. It was not new. During the turbulent 1980s when PW Botha's iron fist rule spoke of a "*total strategy against the total onslaught of Communism*", the ANC called on the people to make the country ungovernable. State repression at times through black surrogates, and popular uprising mounted in violent opposition throughout South Africa. All this rearguard action mounted after 1990. While FW de Klerk and his henchmen were talking with the ANC, sitting round a table that even included their *bête noir*, Communist Joe Slovo, they were continuing to foment a barely covert war. An undeclared civil war was ripping apart the province of Natal, the East Rand and the Vaal triangle. Bombs were exploding including in downtown Johannesburg. While the white Apartheid state appeared to sit back and negotiate, it pointed gleefully to what it called '*Black on Black violence*'. Washing its hands.

4. Negotiating the Future

I always realized the South Africa I left twenty-four years earlier in 1966, the South Africa of my childhood would have ceased to exist by the time I could return. And I wouldn't have wanted it still to be in place. I had given my adulthood to help ensure it would no longer exist. A South African settlement had to be negotiated in a world where the fall of the Socialist countries made way to capitalist greed more relentlessly rampant and ruthless than ever in the history of humankind. It was now a unipolar world in which the USA was unchallenged. As the possibilities to negotiate the South Africa we struggled for became circumscribed by the new stranglehold of global capitalism, the possibilities for individual enrichment were eagerly embraced by some of yesterday's revolutionaries who began to weave networks of patronage to under-write political power.

The economy was still held in the hands of a minority of the population on the basis of their whiteness. There were institutions, some centuries old that safeguarded the deeply unequal society. Many whites were bitterly determined not to cede power and continued to carry the baggage of belief that skin colour determined capacity, superiority. They had a large heavily armed contingent of Apartheid's police and army under the SADF leadership that were determined not to cede power. They had six nuclear bombs. The socialist world that was our new country's putative support politically and economically disappeared. Apartheid left an economy in tatters, with racially imbedded gross structural inequality. There was never any doubt that within a short time the ANC would be in government. Many of Apartheid's old guard held

close to their chests armaments and vital information about databases and codes. They had plenty of time too, years as democracy loomed, to shred and destroy files and documents exposing the excesses of Apartheid and networks of spies and secret collaborators. The new democratic government needed to tread carefully not to unleash civil war. Given that the victory of democracy came through negotiations and not through an insurrectionary seizure of state power, the old security systems propping up the state including the secret service were not replaced in the classic revolutionary style by putting the generals against a wall and shooting them. White arrogance continues to stride across the country, trampling on the people.

I had no idea how complex and difficult it would be to govern. Despite all the talent and skill in our ranks, despite years of formulating progressive policies in many areas fundamental to our new democracy – the economy, education, health and so on, governing required specific knowledge of particular systems. Democracy demanded that separate race-based Apartheid systems be brought together and fundamentally transformed to serve one nation. Through the Bantustan system and race based policies, there were fragmented departments of education, health and other social infrastructure each with its own policies and bureaucracy. As many as 14 education departments delivering hugely unequal education based on race had to be brought together into one national department. Democratic governing required getting around the dangerous obstruction posed by the white minority bureaucracy who held the knowledge of key systems in their tightly closed fists.

South African democracy lay before us. We loved and trusted the ANC after eighty years of struggle expressly as an organization of African national liberation.

5. Alexandra

I was full of elation and exuberance in those transition years. And yet also fragile. One loses something too in returning. The tight bonds with people in exile who suddenly are scattered back into the far reaches of Apartheid's ghettoes. Those tight bonds feel scattered too. Back into the compartmentalization that Apartheid bequeathed to us. Working in Alexandra, in the community brought me face to face with the worst of poverty in my wealthy country. It was appalling. There were other new experiences. I was white again with the justified assumptions from those around me that went with it. People tended to speak to me patronizingly presuming my ignorance and assuming that my ANC loyalty was newfound. I bumped into a returned exile, Shaeeda Naidoo in Rockey Street, Yeoville, freshly back. She crystallized our shared experience "*And now again I am Coloured*". Socially ghettoized again.

My exile family was scattered often back into the ghettoes around South Africa. I found out almost by accident that the fine tenor from Sobizana's choir in the late 1960s, Billy Nannan had died. While we were still in exile Billy had a stroke following bypass heart surgery. He was left unable to speak for a long time before he died. It was a great loss to South Africa's body of intellectuals. I felt acutely this "exile from exile", being once again torn from a family, the ANC exile family I knew for quarter of a century. And then unexpectedly I would bump into an unknown person from exile and the connections would leap out. I walked into a pharmacy in Hillbrow in those days and somehow started speaking to a man sweeping the floor. Once we knew we were both returned from exile, my whiteness did not matter, only the comradeship, the shared experiences of exile and return. The unspoken assumptions. The pain and the exuberance.

I was surprised by the pervasive Christianity, deeply felt by black South Africans. But I learned. Sister Zodwa's 17year old son was on his way to see her in Alex Clinic Casualty. As he made his way through the shacks neighbouring the Health Centre, a dangerous IFP area called Beirut, he was set upon and killed. I went to the funeral in Alexandra. In a small church the young preacher said "*It is painful when we tell a mother that at least she is fortunate to still have a daughter*". Then I understood something of the depth of loss in black lives. Over generations there was no escape. No hope even. Just God to hold on to.

Once home I found some of the ANC culture inside the country puzzling. In particular it was difficult to understand or accept the way in which white inzile comrades dominated spaces and structures. Alexandra Health Centre had quite a large management team, all white, mostly ANC members and a smattering of European - Portuguese and Dutch - health personnel. I was approached to be on a management team dealing with outreach into the community. Although my work took me into people's crowded homes, I could not understand how I, a white newcomer to Alexandra, not fluent in even some of the languages of the community, could be considered for this management role. I consulted several African senior sisters and a senior African administrator none of whom had been approached, and they agreed with me that it was not a rational move. I turned down the offer. On another occasion I heard the same senior administrator, Yvonne, talking with a group of nursing sisters about what they perceived as the arrogance of one of the white ANC doctors. I ventured timidly that it wasn't always easy to know how to behave and she reassured me sweetly "*Oh we make allowances for people like you Stephanie*". I felt relieved.

Talking to Imtiaz Cajee at the Ahmed Timol Inquest in 2017

At the Alexandra Health Centre I met Timol's nephew, Imtiaz Cajee who was developing a new computer system there. Imtiaz was 5 years old when his beloved uncle was killed. He has worked with passion to establish the truth of Timol's death and to keep his memory alive. Timol's mother gave evidence at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission more than 25 years after her son's death. No one came forward to admit guilt and ask for amnesty. Imtiaz published a book "*Timol – A Quest for Justice*" in which he named the perpetrators who remained recalcitrant in their refusal to admit responsibility[94]. They have died now but after all this time, a new inquest into Timol's death has opened in 2017.

My father was proved right when he chose physiotherapy as my tertiary study. But he was wrong as it did not provide adequately for me and my children when I divorced my husband! Alongside all the politics, I loved my job providing a physiotherapy service in Alexandra to children and their families. I taught young people from different rural areas on a two-year community rehabilitation course. I had been persuaded to teach the internationally accredited Neuro-Developmental Therapy (NDT) or Bobath post-graduate course. The NDT training was for physiotherapists, occupational and speech therapists in the evaluation and treatment of children with cerebral palsy. The professions were still overwhelmingly white and the 8-week

long courses were generally held at white special schools. I had become a tutor in this field in my last years in London at the Bobath Centre, the home of this approach to managing children and adults with brain damage. A condition I made in agreeing to teach in South Africa was that I would not give courses exclusively, or even mostly, to white private practitioners. It required work but my courses always had at least 50% black therapists participating. Black physiotherapists accounted for only 5% of the profession throughout South Africa. I brought black therapists from other African countries. I tailored the international curriculum to make it relevant to much of African conditions and in particular conditions of deprivation and poverty. I based my courses at Alexandra and other areas, like Phoenix in Durban, that were not white or middle class, at poorly resourced centres. I travelled with the course to Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, as well as to Jordan in the Middle East.

At the Alexandra Health Centre I again encountered Dr. Pascal Ngakane whom I had known in exile. He was a soft-spoken, gentle man who was alert to everything going on around him and felt injustice keenly. He had been the ANC Provincial leader in Natal and spent 3 years on Robben Island. In London he was then married to Nkosi Albert Luthuli's daughter, Albertinah. He did not seem to fit into the Gang of Eight who formed a faction against the opening up of the ANC's membership in 1969. But in 1975 Pascal was expelled from the ANC as part of the group. He left London quietly and practiced as a doctor in Lesotho until liberation. He told me how in 1982 he had been at a party one evening in Maseru. Later that night when they had all gone home, the SADF raided Lesotho. On the ground, faces blackened they came in and killed 42 people of whom 30 were ANC, the others Lesotho nationals, and retreated. The next day, to his horror, Pascal found himself doing post mortems on some of the friends with whom he had partied the evening before.

Soon after I arrived at Alexandra Health Centre in 1990, Pascal and I were delegates to a Health Conference at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). We took some time off to go into Cape Town and took the cable car up to the top of Table Mountain. It was my first time back in Cape Town after 24 years of exile. Taking the cable car was the first time Pascal could do this. Much of the beauty of South Africa had been legally reserved for whites and out of reach for most South Africans because they were black.

Pascal and I stood at the top of Table Mountain on a clear spring day. For the first time since he left there years before, he gazed across to Robben Island and remembered. I again saw the view with great wealth and the ugliness of poverty, juxtaposed. We went back to the UWC residence and Pascal decided we should go in search of something to drink. We had no transport and there was nothing on

campus so we walked into the nearby Belhar township. Neither of us knew Belhar. It has a reputation as a wild place with armed criminal gangs infesting the streets. We walked along those streets asking passersby for the nearest shebeen - reckless to say the least. And we were sober. We found a shebeen and returned to the campus to drink our bottle of brandy. Then we wandered into the more interesting meeting adjacent to our health conference and listened to Joe Slovo speak. Later, after his time in Alex, Pascal became the first black Chief Medical Officer of the Johannesburg General Hospital, now Charlotte Maxeke hospital. All such 'firsts' reminded us how white South Africa had been. How excluded the majority, the 90% black South Africans.

Pascal reclaimed his family land and settled in rural Madikwe in North West where he ran a medical practice and his second wife Pontsho grew vegetables. I found them there at the end of a maze of unnamed crisscrossing dust roads north of Groot Marico. I persisted until I found their place. Unlike Pascal's older brother, Lionel Ngakane who drove for two hours from Johannesburg but turned round and went back to Johannesburg complaining of the confusion of unnamed dusty roads. Lionel was a filmmaker, actor and a city person and he was appalled after years in the capitals of Europe as he saw a rural wasteland creep up on him. He said he wanted to be able to walk out of the place where he slept and straight into a coffee shop where he could have a drink. These days the nearest town, Groot Marico does not even have a bank. As he got older and his health declined, Pascal stopped his practice as a doctor. He wrote a book about the Basotho Queen, Manthatisi. He had diabetes and his eyesight was failing. He refused to leave his piece of land.

After 6 years in Alexandra in those early years, I recently returned on 23 December 2013, the day of Mandela's funeral, with Susan, a physiotherapist who had worked with me in London and is now resident in Germany. She was with her young son, Kai a volunteer from Germany to a crèche on the Cape flats. We first stopped at Sandton City that heartland of wealth on the African continent where we took our photos with crowds of other people at the foot of the massive Mandela statue. Then we drove straight over the freeway to Alexandra barely a kilometer away. I could not believe that Alex looked even worse than when I left it in 1996. Second Avenue brought me to despairing tears. Street names have been changed to acknowledge the many political activists who called Alexandra home. But the rubbish filled streets and overcrowding made me feel our struggle had been futile. Eradicating poverty, people living lives of dignity were fundamental to the freedom we struggled for. There was not much dignity in democratic Alexandra.

6. Lion of the Midlands

Some time in late 1991 my son Michael and I stayed for a few days with Harry Gwala in Mbali township on the violent edge of Pietermaritzburg. Comrade Harry was very small in stature but a towering leader, a hardline Communist who spent 10 years of a life sentence on Robben Island. Harry lived in a small township style house. The kind that was built and rented to Africans by Apartheid. Harry's home was continually bustling with many energetic and militant youth. They took Michael and me on a drive crisscrossing the township pointing out various burnt-out and bullet marked buildings where battles had been fought very recently. An uneasy calm now hung over Mbali. Michael slept on the living room floor. Every night, furniture was moved against the walls and the floor was tightly packed by sleeping youngsters who were squeezed together like sardines in a can. I shared a bed with Harry's firstborn daughter who spent the night desperately battling for breath. She had severe asthma and died of an asthma attack not long afterwards. Harry slept in his own bedroom on a double bed. The headboard had a bookshelf with the collected works of Stalin in pride of place. In the various 'wars' that raged in various hotspots in Natal notably in the nearby Richmond, a semi-rural area, Harry took a militant hard line against any local negotiations.

I had met Comrade Harry Gwala when he was sent to London for medical investigations on his premature release from Robben Island in 1988. After more than 10 years as a prisoner he started suffering a creeping paralysis affecting, unusually, mainly his upper body and leaving his arms and neck completely paralysed. He was released from his life sentence and brought to London where extensive medical investigations could not establish the cause. As soon as he was released from Robben Island the paralysis was checked but his upper body remained permanently paralysed. I couldn't do much as a physiotherapist. Both his shoulders hung limply and dislocated. I helped him a little in the London council house where he was accommodated, primarily to gain confidence walking downstairs without the safety of his arms or head movements for balance. Comrade Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini of ANC's health desk sent him for acupuncture. He managed remarkably well and with determined fortitude. As so often in the life we led, it seemed clear what had happened despite the absence of hard proof. Harry had been subjected to slow poisoning by authorities on Robben Island where he was identified as an influential and extremely uncompromising and admired Communist. When I used to visit him in London I was privileged to have long political discussions with him. Comrade Harry was erudite and militant in how he saw the future unfolding. He had a fierce distrust of Prince Gatsha Buthelezi and was pleased that Mzala Nxumalo's "*Chief with a Double Agenda*" had recently been published.

In 1994 I went to a party for Veterans hosted by Nelson Mandela at the official presidential house in Pretoria. I was sitting near a group of white veterans from long ago. They were from Johannesburg and I didn't really know them. Nor they me. There was a steady stream of comment from them about proceedings. At one point Joe Slovo spoke from the podium and these comrades exclaimed loudly that sitting near us Harry Gwala was clearly hostile to Joe as he did not join in the enthusiastic clapping at the end of Joe's speech. I leaned forward to point out to them that Harry's arms were paralysed preventing any clapping. They looked at me in total disbelief. At that moment a young man brought comrade Harry a glass of orange juice that he put to Harry's lips. Harry's head dropped right back without control and it was obvious he could not bring his head forward and up again. The young comrade helped to lift his head back up. The comrades at my table were very quiet. Harry died in 1995. He had a large funeral in Pietermaritzburg. I remember him with respect. Such bright stars in our immediate past are hardly talked about now, and then only in small circles sometimes just to further a particular factional agenda.

7. Seeking family

After my return from exile, in 1990 I started looking up all the biological extended family I could still find. I also looked for all the prisons I had known a quarter of a century earlier. For years Kroonstad's *Vooruitsig* was too intimidating to get close to with large barbwire rolls around and over it. It was later when I was invited to speak at a Woman's Day meeting in Kroonstad that I drove past it. Remembering also Charlotte Maxeke who was imprisoned there early in the twentieth century. For a long time I couldn't find Worcester prison. Then amongst my son Alan's friends I met a young woman who came from Worcester. I mentioned my frustration that I couldn't locate the prison where I had been held. "*I live at the prison. My father works there*". She explained where it was. Next time I found it with the view to the unchanged glorious mountains.

My dentist cousin, Gertjie Bezuidenhout still practised in Barberton. On the downhill of a steep back road into Barberton my Honda broke down irretrievably and I coasted into town. I met Gertjie at his practice that still had separate entrances for white and black patients. Gertjie became a dentist with the assistance of the Broederbond who funded him through Pretoria University and then set him up in practice in Barberton because there was no Afrikaans dentist around there. Then he married Millicent, a divorcee. Slamming shut the door to Broederbond membership. Neither divorce nor the English were okay in the Broederbond. Gertjie and Millicent lived in a modest home with crocheted doylies on every surface in a particular kitsch Afrikaans style. It was the first time in many years that I was conversing in Afrikaans.

I hadn't met Millicent before. She was welcoming, vivacious, prattling on proudly about how she insisted that the "*kaffertjie*" who tended their garden had to have a warm shower in the house every time before he started work. I didn't question her motivation but remembered the Worcester Matron's "*they are dirty*". At some point I found Gertjie alone in his study. He was quite a taciturn person. He was reading a magazine that sported a front cover picture of Angolan Jonas Savimbi, leader of the Apartheid supported UNITA. Now in an about-turn in South Africa, the article was some sort of expose of Savimbi's iniquities. "*Hulle het darem vir ons gelieg",* Gertjie ventured ["they really lied to us"]. I took *"hulle"* to mean the Nationalist rulers. I kept very quiet, astonished at such an admission. *"Maar ons wou ook maar seker gehad het dat hulle vir ons moes lieg"* he added after a pause, compounding my astonishment. ["but I suppose we wanted them to lie to us"]. Many whites even now have not shown such insight.

A short while later I saw him again when I joined a weekend family get-together. Cousin Rina had married James Howell, one-time dentist to Hendrik Verwoerd. Later James was Chancellor of Pretoria University and a life-long, loyal and now senior Broederbonder. It was James, the family elder who arranged for us to meet at Jakkalsbessie, a private if not secret lodge in the Kruger National Park used by the Nationalist Party for *bosberade* [remotely located discussions]. Jaco, the youngest of the three Bezuidenhout siblings, was my age. He did not join us at Jakkalsbessie. He was an artist and lived most of his adult life in the Netherlands, distancing himself from Afrikaner homophobia. Jakkalsbessie was very jolly, with just the nine of us, and camp attendants taking care of our every need. James and Rina, Gertjie and Millicent, my parents, Bernice and Jack. It was far too soon for me. I felt very uncomfortable as the male cousins drank copious amounts of brandy. Rina and Millicent moved about quietly demonstrating the subservience with which a good Afrikaans wife should ply her husband. In such company I always felt more at ease with the men. On game drives the animals were obliging, plentiful and close. In the evening James took me for a stroll and confessed that I was the first ANC person he had met. I laughed, quite unsure what to make of this. Unsure what he expected of me. It hurt me that they had refused to speak to my father and mother for almost thirty years after my arrest. And now my parents were being obsequious, pleased that the family wounds were healed without much ado.

It was unsettling to find my way into family. My children had grown up with only the ANC as family. I had romantic notions of our finding a sense of belonging within my biological family. It was not to be. Perhaps I fragmented from my family when I was 11 and my father divorced my mother with whom I then lived alone for 10 years. Perhaps it was exile. Perhaps it was my politics. Perhaps it was me. We celebrated

my father's 90th birthday in 1996 at Bernice's home in Gordon's Bay. All six their grandchildren were there. Michael gave him a block-framed ballot from the first democratic elections. My father infuriated me when he launched into an anti-Communist and anti-Ghana tirade at Michael.

I found and visited my English cousin, Theo Gladwin and his wife. They lived in a lower middle class estate in Rosettenville, south Johannesburg. Theo was the second born of my uncle Fred and his wife Ella's four children. Theo resembled uncle Fred and I recalled my uncle from the days we visited the Gladwins in Greenfields, East London when I was a little girl. Fred loved me and called me his Lana Turner after a blond Hollywood star of the time. Uncle Fred drank too much and eventually left East London after he shot an African who walked over his small farm. The African survived. The Gladwins had moved to Johannesburg where Fred became a clippie on the buses. His firstborn child, daughter Marie, a model threw herself off a building in Hillbrow after a failed relationship with a jazz musician. Theo became a fitter and turner. Tertia was briefly in prison for perjury when she lied in court to defend her Nazi Boerenasie boyfriend who had stolen a car. She had also passed away. Lucy, the lastborn was working at the OK Bazaars in central Johannesburg and had made it clear to her brother that she had no interest in meeting me.

But there was another relative of the Gladwins whom I never met and whose name I've forgotten. He was excited at my sudden appearance in their lives. He was very enthusiastic and wanted to meet me and for Lucy to meet me too. I felt harassed on the phone, stalked even. I was still quite fragile from the whole dislocation of exile and return and I reacted by running a mile emotionally. The final straw was when he tracked me down to Alex Clinic on a Saturday night where I was helping out in Casualty after a massacre in the township. I watched as blood flowed from the forearms of people - their defensive arms raised and hacked off by pangas. I watched as brain tissue and life drained from people whose heads had been hacked open.

I visited my parents every couple of months at "*Vonke*" the old-age home where they stayed in Somerset West. I was slowly trying to find my way into being a daughter. I had grown up with specific stories, a mythology of the Boer War. Stories such as that my grandmother had 14 children in Kitchener's camps and some died from ground glass in their food or from measles. That the Kemp farmhouse was burnt to the ground in the British scorched earth policy and after they were defeated in the War, oupa and ouma and their children were sent home, given 2 acres of land and a tent and told to get on with life. Vivid stories. Clear memories that I retold often over the years. Now back in the country, I began to think about these stories and for the first time I

questioned their authenticity for our family. I asked Bernice who has a strong sense of Afrikaner identity, if she knew the stories. And she did. Even though we both knew my father had only four siblings, we had never before questioned these tales. When I asked my father he said he had no idea how the stories came into our family. Such stories were very prevalent amongst Afrikaners still bitter about the Boer War.

8. The ANC gathers – 1991 Conference

In December 1991 as Chairperson of the ANC Hillbrow-Berea Branch I was a delegate to the ANC National Congress at the University of Durban Westville. It was the first ANC Congress on home soil for thirty years. The bus taking us to Durban resounded with excitement all the way. Then it fell silent as we entered the Midlands area where a low-key civil war was in progress. It was getting dark and the nervousness in our bus was palpable. When we got to Durban the driver lost his way and we arrived, mistakingly, at the gates of the Westville prison. Late, we finally found the venue.

On the first day, before proceedings started, I went to greet Joe Slovo where he had taken his seat on the stage. He looked ill, yellow with puffy eyes. Since coming home I had seen him now and again at gatherings but not reconnected with him. Just before the conference, in July 1991 at the 70th anniversary of the founding of the SACP I went with Tim and Ilse to a celebration in the Johannesburg Town Hall. I was wearing a distinctive dress I had bought in Tanzania in 1976. The next day I flew to Zambia to teach for a couple of weeks. On the plane I smiled when I saw in the Weekly Mail a photograph saying "*Joe Slovo pressing flesh*" with my distinctive dress unmistakably in Joe's arms again.

At the Conference, proceedings were bogged down for most of the first day by debate over a resolution for a 30% quota for women in every ANC structure. The women delegates, led by Winnie Mandela, would not be silenced. Opposing delegates objected to the idea of a quota. Debate went on and on. I sent a note to the very popular Chris Hani saying that if he were to intervene on the side of the women, it would settle the debate in our favour. He apologized saying he could not intervene and I was a little shocked. Late in the night the women won – perhaps the high point since our return from exile when women stood together determined to win empowerment and a step towards gender equality.

Thabo Mbeki was scheduled to speak to call for the lifting of international sanctions. The debate on 30% women quota took us well into the night and Thabo eventually rose to his feet in the early hours of the morning. Few people amongst the approximately 3000 delegates supported the lifting of sanctions at this early

stage of national negotiations. Thabo spoke for almost an hour with reason as he does, without raising his voice, without any appeal to populism. He was listened to attentively by the tired delegates who filled the hall. At the end of his speech attitudes had swung round and there was unanimous support for the lifting of sanctions. It was very impressive. The long lines of delegates waiting to vote for the ANC's new top six and NEC were overwhelmingly moving, a harbinger of democratic elections to come.

9. The Peaceful Miracle Continues

There were Boere bombs in downtown Johannesburg streets, there were massacres in townships, people were being thrown off moving trains to Soweto, there were drive-by shootings on the streets and on the highways from other cars. There were township wars between our self-defence units or street committees and hostel dwellers who were often Zulu migrant workers from Natal (now KwaZulu Natal). The fight for democracy went on.

In 1992 I went to the mass funeral following the merciless Boipatong massacre that brought negotiations to a halt. It is still difficult to think of the atrocity of that massacre, the vulnerability of mothers and children as strange hostel dwellers, their faces covered, broke down doors and hacked sleeping families to death. Forty-five people were killed. There were other massacres, as brutal and now forgotten. Over decades and more, Africans all over South Africa, not intending to be in the ranks of the liberation struggle, nevertheless paid with their lives for our freedom. At the Boipatong commemoration the stadium was so tightly packed that when Chris Hani arrived to speak, he had to be passed overhead like a parcel, lying horizontally and being moved along on hands lifted from the crowd. Archbishop Tutu addressed us and as often the reality was so much greater than the TV images. The Arch was electric. We toyitoyed through packed Sharpeville streets and remembered where it had all started.

Michael was employed by the ANC in a variety of capacities over that time. A little while before the Elections, he was working at the regional ANC office downtown in Johannesburg duplicating documents one Sunday. He phoned me. "*I'm okay, Mom*" he said quietly but didn't explain. I switched on the TV to see a chaotic scene in a street near the ANC building following a massive bomb blast that killed nine people including Susan Keane, an ANC election candidate. On another Sunday with Michael again at the duplicating machine barely a month before the 1994 elections, there was a fullscale attack when about 20,000 IFP marchers protected by Apartheid police marched on Shell House, ANC headquarters. ANC security guards opened fire from the top of the building killing nineteen people in the streets below.

In the midst of all the mayhem, the energy of the ANC was exhilarating. To be free to sing *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica*. Siyanqoba. We were winning. I walked the streets of Hillbrow that were abuzz with freedom. In broad daylight I spray-painted "*phantsi de Klerk*" [down with de Klerk] on a wall in Pretoria Street. Sometimes I walked through the vibrant streets at 2am on my way home from meetings - years later when I commented on this seeming miracle I was told by a comrade that they used to be on the streets, knew me as a comrade and looked out for me. We attended meetings and workshops throughout the region with impunity bowing neither to the SADF roaming the streets on nyalas, nor to the ominous windows of the hostels, nor the trains, nor the highways. I felt exuberant. Freedom was here. But the details of freedom were still being forged at CODESA.

I visited Home Affairs in downtown Johannesburg to get my South African citizenship back after a quarter of a century. Standing in the queue there I could feel anger boiling up inside me that here I was pleading to some young white girl to give back my birthright of 11 or more generations. And that of my children forced to be born in London. I have a letter they sent asking why my and Michael's surnames were different. I mean did these people crawl out from under a rock somewhere. Finding divorce and other certificates. A few months later, unexpectedly, I received a letter informing me that my citizenship had been restored retrospectively to 1966 and both my children were South African by birth. My initial reaction was sheer joy. Then as I was negotiating early morning traffic up Louis Botha Avenue to Alexandra, I felt hot anger rising in my throat. I was very very angry. Who were these people who thought they could steal my birthright and now graciously choose to hand it back. On my first drive from Johannesburg to Cape Town, as I drove along the arrow straight freeway through the Free State, I saw the horizon disappearing into the shimmering clear blue, and once again and unexpectedly I felt anger boiling up inside me that I had been deprived of this beauty for so long by those intent on wrecking my country.

10. Chris Hani

I had spoken to Chris from time to time on our return from exile. But it did seem that many comrades became less accessible as they disappeared into Shell House and other ivory towers exercising leadership. In our branch, the Hillbrow-Berea ANC branch, every Saturday we had a table with pamphlets and paraphernalia for sale on the pavement outside Shoprite in Hillbrow's Pretoria Street. I was driving on my way to the table down Louis Botha Avenue on Easter Saturday in 1993. A solemn voice on the radio broke into the music. Chris Hani had been assassinated. Shot in the driveway of his modest home in Dawn Park still largely a white suburb on the east of

Johannesburg. I pulled up near the branch table and rushed into my son Michael's arms – there was no need to say anything. We knew we were both, like every person around us, devastated and shocked. It was almost impossible to believe that Chris Hani was no more. Snuffed out. That unbelievably, after repeated threats over the years, the white rightwing had finally got to him when we were so close. He had been there from my first days in the struggle, an icon of the best of freedom. It was tragic for our country that this fate had caught up with him when he was needed and when victory was so near. Nelson Mandela appeared on television presidentially calling on the outraged nation to stand steady. Still in shock, still devastated, later in the day Michael and I drove to the Hani home where people gathered. There was a shocked silence as we mourned with the crowds in and around the house.

Michael and I both went to the FNB stadium for the memorial rally for Chris. The stadium was packed. Peter Mokaba's Youth toyi toyied so hard that the stadium literally shook. There were few whites in the stadium. Separated from Michael, the only whites I saw were on the podium. An African woman came up to me and embraced me with tears thanking me for being there. I sat down and after a while a line of young black guys left the seats adjacent to me making it obvious that they were angry at my white presence. I remembered John Gaetsewe "*don't let other people dictate your choices. You know what is right*". The date for the first democratic elections was set for a year later, on 27th April 1994. In anticipation of those democratic elections Chris had announced that he would remain full-time as General Secretary of the SACP giving up the possibility of high office in the new ANC government. And now he was dead. His blood displayed all over our TV sets. A blanket over his prostrate body lying in his drive-way. Among endless atrocities of the white right resisting the march to democracy, this was the worst. When tears were still on our faces, not even two weeks after Chris, O.R. Tambo died having been unwell for a while. The ANC could never be the same.

But soon, a year after Chris's funeral, just before the first democratic Elections I returned with the Hillbrow-Berea branch members to the FNB stadium this time for a packed rally called *Siyanqoba*. We Are Winning. The mood was triumphant, ecstatic. We were winning. Everyone was at the stadium that was bursting with happy democrats – including the taxi drivers, forcing us to toyi toyi all the way back up the hill to Hillbrow at the end of a very long, exhausting day.

And after all the killing the first democratic elections were there. The long patient, quietly excited queue outside our polling station at the Rand Clinic. Marshalling the queue and trying to stop babies from being passed to and fro amongst voters allowing our always-enterprising people to jump to the front. Checking that the

ballot boxes were properly sealed. Going to Hillbrow Police Station to accompany the precious votes in a convoy of armoured vehicles to NASREC for the counting. At bustling NASREC I saw Sheila Badenhorst, now Camerer. She had been in her second year studying law when I arrived at UCT in 1960. She became Rag Queen in that year. Now decades later I recognized her and went over to greet her where she was at the Apartheid Nationalist Party stand. "*Do you want to join the National Party?*" she asked brightly. I turned on my heel just as she realized who I was "*Stephanie, Stephanie*" she called, eager to correct her mistake but I didn't return to her. It had been difficult enough to make the first overture. In liberated South Africa she was an FW de Klerk acolyte. In my ANC t-shirt I stood in front of a young white policeman and said "*Now you are ours*". He smiled sweetly. The counting. Looking at every ballot to make sure it was legitimate and placed in the right pile. Singqobile. The ANC government had just started when early in 1995 Joe passed away from cancer that had plagued him over some years. He was a shadow.

11. Journeys around South Africa : forty years later

From the beginning of my return I drove all over South Africa almost never taking aeroplanes. Quite frequently I drove by myself from Johannesburg through the middle of South Africa down the N1 to Cape Town to see my parents in Somerset West and Alan in Cape Town. Later when I moved, I drove from Durban down the east coast to Cape Town. I took two or three days every time using different routes and detours to cover as much of the country as I could. Everywhere I saw people walking for unbelievably long distances in the absence of public transport. And everywhere I gave people lifts.

"*Last week I walked for four hours to the clinic with my baby because she was sick. The clinic was closed. I walked home. My baby is still sick*". Somewhere near Grabow.

"*Dankie, miesies, die Here Jesus sal mevrou seën*". I feigned an ignorance of Afrikaans. Early on a Sunday morning near Piet Retief.

On my way to Barberton I picked up a man outside eMalahleni. He told me how he had attempted not long before to hang himself when he lost his job on the nearby coal mines. His sister found him and cut him down. He now returned to the mine to collect some outstanding pay. It was in 1991 and in the middle of this heart-breaking conversation, a bakkie with big white guys in it attempted to run us off the road, hooting and gesticulating – I assume because they saw something deeply offensive in a white woman driving and locked in conversation with a black man in the seat beside

her. There were times when I had great difficulty understanding the depth of white anger sweeping South Africa. White incomprehension persists about the hurt and harm whites were responsible for over generations but fail to acknowledge. On social media whites blatantly express crass racism. Others indulge in overt support for Apartheid, blaming de Klerk, those who voted 'yes' in deKlerk's white referendum on democratization, Helen Suzman, Jews that Apartheid has been lost. Africans remain barbarians according to this narrative.

On a meandering trip from Johannesburg to Cape Town in 1992 Alan and I picked up Michael in Kokstad where he created some excitement by arriving from Johannesburg via Durban in a public combi taxi. Still not a common form of public transport used by white people in 1992. In Kokstad we stayed with Ingie and her husband, Kippie Bryden. She had been a good friend when we had both studied Physiotherapy 30 years earlier. She was third generation in Kokstad and her husband seventh generation. I could not quite get my head around the fact that in all the years, decades that I had been rootless Ingie had remained in this one place. I was envious. They were now the biggest landowners in the area owning seven farms. They were a little nervous about the future. Chris Hani had been to Kokstad and spoke of "*one farm, one owner*". When the Brydens told me, I misunderstood and expressed delight at the prospect of having 3 farms, one each for me and my two sons. I suggested they start a training programme for people in dairy farming. Theirs seemed modern and successful and I thought sharing skills would be a good start and an expression of progressive intent. Kippie briefly made newspaper headlines a while later when he gave one of his farms back to the community. On another trip, I gave a lift to a man, a worker with Clover who knew of the Brydens and stretched his hand out scanning across the horizon. "*They own all that land*", he commented bitterly.

Later that year a white farmer delivering milk around there was murdered. Ingie contacted me to find out whether the murder was the work of MK or ANC self defence units. It was not our style of action but I got hold of Joe Modise, MK commander who to his credit took the trouble to investigate and came back to me saying no, it was not us. The area was a stronghold of the PAC and APLA. It might have been just a murder but at the time everything was heavy with politics. The PAC refused to be part of the negotiations at CODESA[95] and attacked various white soft targets especially in Cape Town where the St. James Church in Kenilworth and the Heidelberg Tavern near Alan's room were attacked. Amy Biehl, a young white US student was set upon and killed when she took some friends home to Langa outside Cape Town.

On the other hand there were occasions when love was shown to me unexpectedly. When I was attending the burial of a comrade's brother in Durban, an African woman walked over to me from a neighbouring funeral. She put her arms around me and wanted me to know that she was happy to see me with people. I understood her to mean black people – the Zulu word *abantu* is usually a reference to African people. When I attended SACP house meetings in townships people would often come out and stand at their front doors just to stare, sometimes to greet. Curious. Later in 2004 when I was not yet fully awake from the anaesthetic after hip replacement surgery at the Compton Hospital in Pinetown, Durban, the African nursing sister took my hand and started talking to me with great love. I was non-plussed but someone explained that she was responding to the name above my bed in ICU of my top-ranked African orthopaedic surgeon, MJ Grootboom. It seemed that whites being just ordinary human beings was still a rare experience 10 years into our democracy.

I went back to Bonza Bay and I was dismayed to find that development had obliterated the pristine tranquility of this idyllic memory of my childhood. As I drove around there were towns like Musina situated on our northern national border that had lost their whiteness and looked as if they had become part of Africa. Many place names had been corrected like Messina to Musina, Umtata to Mthatha. Others had obliterated offensive names like Verwoerdburg replacing it with Centurion. In cities, street names changed. None of the metropolitan cities changed their names. Durban still celebrates one of the most barbaric British generals of the nineteenth century.

However, over vast swathes of our country in small towns and on farms, little changed. Even two decades later. In the smaller towns whites still occupy the centre of town and black police, armed with guns and without supervising whites in higher ranks, are the only visible sign of the new South Africa. "*Die outa sal jou kar was*" [the old black man will wash your car] signaled that in many places the white minority retained control and paternalistic arrogance. White farmers still own large tracts of land where black farmworkers eke out an insecure and unsafe existence. Those who dare take a shortcut walking across a white farm, still run the risk of being beaten or shot to death. In many towns the new government RDP houses spread out in soft pastel colours usually retaining the old spatial arrangements with the poor pushed outside the towns. In Steynsburg, as in most other small places, black people are still relegated to locations far out of town. Walking, walking. Far from jobs. In rural areas where densely over-populated Bantustan administrations were dismantled, extreme poverty persists. Rural slums. District Six in the middle of Cape Town is an empty patch forty years after being bulldozed down. A small church remains visible on the empty green hill.

And yet as I got to know people, many who grew up in these areas, I found that somehow despite the horrific repression, people had made lives for themselves during those dark years. Families found ways of surviving with strong bonds within communities. Some nurtured children who grew up proudly, admirably despite the injustice, the white obstacles. Where it was possible people gained tertiary education despite the demeaning schooling for African children under Apartheid's Bantu Education. People continue to have a deep love of their poverty-stricken rural homes, pride even. Memories of the culture and closeness of life in Apartheid's ghettoes remain warm and nostalgic even as the Apartheid guns fell quiet. Under the extremes of minority race rule, a warm humanity survived.

12. Forgiveness

Immediately on his release in 1990, Nelson Mandela and the whole leadership called for forgiveness and reconciliation. It was too soon. Nevertheless, it was the image of Mandela as leader having spent 27 unimaginable years of his life in prison calling for forgiveness and reconciliation that helped me. I came back after 24 years in exile with a burden of hatred not only directed at the functionaries of the regime but against white people in general. They had continued with their lives, prospered, even those many who insist they had not supported Apartheid, those who had stood aside and didn't venture from behind their white walls to get to know their fellow-South Africans. They lived at the expense of the majority of South Africans because they were white. They did little or nothing about the injustice and terror. Some said they didn't know. Some continue to believe they are superior. Mandela made reconciliation his legacy. His forgiveness did not come easily. He believed it was the best route to prevent our country from being destroyed, from being plunged into war. But that legacy has become less popular with time as black anger started finding its voice. It did not mean he was not angry. Late one Friday afternoon at CODESA, in response to FW de Klerk's arrogance, Mandela strode to the microphone with barely controlled anger. Mandela started speaking. No smile in his tense voice or eyes. People sitting in front of their TVs in Hillbrow, in blocks of flats up and down Olivia Street, erupted in cheers of relief. Mandela too felt angry. We saw. The cheering reverberated in the narrow streets between the highrise buildings of Hillbrow on a sunny Friday afternoon.

There was Mandela, a symbol of strength, suffering and forgiveness. And there was also Albie Sachs. He had already shown very clearly the personal empowerment that came with not being vengeful. As soon as he was out of hospital after he was bombed in 1988 the BBC interviewed him. Albie said he did not seek revenge. In his inimitable style, he stressed he was not in the struggle to create a nation of

one-armed, one-eyed people. Democracy would be his revenge. This was two years before democracy started becoming a concrete reality. Albie's forgiveness too was not facile. How could it be. Once we were home, Albie phoned me one day from Cape Town, highly disturbed after he had a visit from the Portuguese SADF operative who pressed the button to detonate the bomb that nearly killed him and left his body torn with shrapnel and without an arm and an eye. The man turned up in Albie's office in Cape Town and asked for his forgiveness. Albie was taken aback at being confronted. It threw him into turmoil and he could not take the hand that was proffered. He bought time by putting a condition that the perpetrator should make a full disclosure before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The perpetrator did this and returned to Albie afterwards and Albie took his hand of reconciliation.

The images of these two comrades, Mandela and Albie, helped to moderate my anger and hatred. It has taken me a long time and required almost daily effort in the knowledge that a peaceful South Africa was better. My personal patch of reconciliation was not easy but it was liberating and helped me to rise above the pain of the past, the sudden flashes of painful reaction to flitting memories. Although not completely, not all the time. Tears still fill my eyes.

* * * * * *

I once described to a therapist the ant-lions or myrmeleon larvae of my childhood. In the sand dunes at Bonza Bay these larvae would construct deep cone-shaped holes with sloping sandy sides into which an ant would fall. The ant tried and tried to climb up the unstable sandy slopes to escape. It was trapped despite its efforts. Eventually the larva would consume it.

Hate is like that. Destructive. I could feel it. It disturbed me every day.

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13. "I used to be an Afrikaner"

At one of the many meetings held during the excitement of preparations for the future I met Rev. Beyers Naude in London. He was to me and many other people a symbol of the good that white Afrikaners could have chosen. I said to him "*I used to be an Afrikaner*". He looked at me *"What happened ?"*. Flustered, emotional I replied *"I became a South African"*.

My journey with white South Africans outside the exile liberation movement was a difficult process. I found it difficult to function without anger in the physiotherapy professional environment that was dominated by whites in private practice – in itself

a source of anger. They did not think twice when they arrogantly spoke Afrikaans in meetings where there were also colleauges who did not understand the language. A physiotherapist in those early days once said to me that I didn't have a chip on my shoulder, "*you have a boulder on your shoulder*". True and justified. From my adolescent years I refused to speak Afrikaans. I had lumped the language together with the racist injustice espoused by Apartheid, the SADF, the SAP, the Broederbond, Dutch Reformed Church and other white Afrikaner institutions. I identified these institutions as "*the enemy*" who invented Apartheid for the final solution – legally entrenched racist subjugation of the majority of South Africans. To keep the small white minority on top. God's chosen people.

Just before our Harare women's meeting that sought *toenadering* [rapprochement], while I was amongst ANC people I said emphatically "*I'm not going to speak Afrikaans to these people*". Thabo Mbeki was present and he riposted in his usual considered way "*Why are you allowing these people to highjack our language*". Later when I was home again the memory of Thabo's words allowed me a sense of legitimacy in hesitantly trying to rediscover myself as an Afrikaner. Having grown up with the right-wing narrative of the emergence of Afrikaans as a white language, it took me more years to understand that Afrikaans was never an all-white language. It had grown from the efforts of slaves from many countries including the Indonesian archipelago, to communicate amongst themselves and with others who were oppressed; and to communicate with their Dutch and German owners; and later after formal slavery ended Afrikaans developed further as bonded farm workers moved into the interior on sometimes poor and isolated Boer farms. The language was indeed ideologically and politically highjacked in the later 19th century to underwrite growing white Afrikaner chauvinism, becoming a powerful instrument politically, culturally with the outpouring of "patriotic" poetry and literature following the Boer War[96], as a weapon against the power of English. In later years Afrikaans was forced down the throats of black South Africans. Imposing Afrikaans as the medium of school instruction sparked school children in Soweto and across the country to rise in rebellion in 1976.

When I returned from exile I was surprised to find that throughout the country most black people would now speak Afrikaans and not English to white people at petrol stations and other spaces where they encountered whites. And with the speaking of Afrikaans often went an obsequiousness that I found offensive. "*Miesies*" denotes that obsequiousness in a way that "*Madam*" does not. However, as I moved around the country it gradually became clear to me that for many black South Africans Afrikaans was a first language and black Afrikaans speakers exceed the number of whites for whom it is a first language. Many other people are fluent in it as a third or fourth language.

These days urban people also use the language with humour in the playfulness with which a selection our 11 languages can be mixed in one conversation. I still speak Afrikaans with reluctance in the company of whites when there seems an arrogance and exclusion to contend with. But I am sad that my original language will never again be my main language of discussion and thinking. I have no doubt that one's first language has a resonance and emotion that no later learned languages can match. Afrikaans is a beautiful language to me. Much of the language remains evocative of my childhood.

As democracy in South Africa moved on, those who were oppressed and silenced before began to find their voice. This voice found an increasingly strident expression of their anger. There was no way, no personal credentials that could help to escape Whiteness. I am white and responsible for the 400 years of white minority subjugation of Africans, of black South Africans, with arrogance, cruelty and humiliation. I have no escape from that legacy. I believe in the legitimacy of the expression of black anger fanned by the persistence of white racism and arrogance.

14. The TRC : Truth and Reconciliation

Like our 'peaceful' transition from fascism to democracy, like our Constitution, our 1996 Truth and Reconciliation Commission too was hailed internationally as a unique instrument of the new South Africa. Initially there was a suggestion that it should be held in camera to allow the perpetrators of Apartheid atrocities to feel blanketed in coming forward to confess. But secrecy was rejected – we wanted to see remorseful faces of perpetrators as they confessed. We wanted to hear who had scarred our nation, where did they leave our brave murdered children? We wanted those who were responsible to stand up before the nation. As the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was being mooted, I wrote a letter to the Sunday Times protesting against this proposed secrecy. I mentioned John Harris. They chose to publish my letter to the Editor on the front page. Soon afterwards I had a phone call from a woman from California. She told me that she was adopted as a baby. When she was in her twenties, before she left South Africa, she searched for her birth parents and discovered that John Harris was her biological father. He had already been hanged in Pretoria.

In 1996 archbishop Desmond Tutu began to chair TRC hearings across the country. Like many of us, he broke down weeping as people remembered the horrors. Remembering his own. I sat through a traumatic day in Durban when women spoke. Their voices continue to haunt me. Both IFP and ANC women spoke of rape used to cowe them, to break them, to drive them into dark corners. Several women

described rape after rape after rape, from one rapist, from many rapists climbing on top of them one after the other. Pouring water over their vaginas before the next rapist climbed on them. In shame women gave evidence from behind screens, their voices drifting painfully, bravely across the hall where we sat in silence. I do believe the TRC was a worthy attempt at trying to move away from the worst wounds of the past. To feel a little redress from the grossest of human rights abuses. But I do not believe that the TRC could resolve the pain in a catharsis of talking, confessions, remorse and having public acknowledgement. The personal horrors in which our nation was born would take a much longer process to heal, probably never. It will be carried from generation to generation.

We are a wounded nation. A policy of forgiveness came and went before we could catch our breath, before we could believe that we had defeated the evil. We moved on too quickly and our history has become swathed in shadows and distortions. Children today know the name of Jan van Riebeeck but not the names of Dr. Fabian Ribeiro, or Griffths and Victoria Mxenge and others. The evidence of perpetrators seldom contributed to the healing. The main problem was the denial of the Apartheid leaders who were still alive. The last Apartheid president while he was still president and massacres were still our culture accepted a Nobel Prize for Peace alongside his erstwhile prisoner, Nelson Mandela. Too many of those who had actively chosen to become torturers and agents of death, like Craig Williamson, received amnesty and added to the sense that around us walking in the streets are those who doomed our country to an unspeakable history, a crime against humanity.

Like the other women of her generation in the Communist Party, Albie's mother Ray never wavered in her Communist beliefs. She died in her 90s in 1997 having had the joy of welcoming both her sons back from exile and welcoming the end to white minority rule after nearly seventy years of standing with that struggle for liberation.

In 1998 under the new democratic government, our Justice Department files became available. I understood that all Security operational files had been shredded and destroyed during the transition from 1990 to '94 while de Klerk was still president. Hiding their crimes. I retrieved my few remaining file pages and I saw amongst reports from my time in prison that it was my long time friend, comrade and co-accused, Alan Brooks who had revealed my membership of the SACP thirty years earlier in 1964 while we were both detained. I saw him frequently over the 24 years of my exile and I am left perturbed that in all that time he failed to mention to me that he had given my name as a member of the Party. Yet in detention while the Security Police were intent on persuading me to become a witness for the State in an ARM trial, my membership of the SACP never came up in interrogations.

It is distressing now to think of being in prison, in solitary confinement, being beaten up, rushed through the Supreme Court in Cape Town. Over the years my memories became more difficult to bear, not easier with time. "Time" doesn't heal those memories. The further away I was from those experiences, the more bizarre, confusing and painful they became. Sometimes unexpectedly, the clanging of plates in a kitchen down a passage, or the smells, would bring back flashes of that time. For many years, sometimes even now 50 years later, I had physical reactions of anxiety – pins and needles, numbness down my arms and hands, sharp needle-like pain into my sternum. Sleeplessness when memories revisited me. I became very fearful of men in authority. Coming out of solitary confinement and then thrust back there at Kroonstad was almost unbearable. I understand and I have great compassion for those who suffered repeated detentions and then stumbled, fell and were broken. The liberation struggle against a powerful relentless enemy thrust too many of us into situations that an ordinary life does not expect of anyone. Millions of South Africans who did not formally join the struggle, lived over generations through indescribable poverty, casual cruelty and violence, humiliation, hopelessness, fear…… Many survived. Many survived with dignity. While forgiveness brought lightness, brought relief, there were experiences of many who could not find an often elusive forgiveness. Who continue to live with the horrors Apartheid brought to their families, their loved ones, themselves. The new ANC government swept in hope and expectation. Freedom. But the wounds remained. We struggled through the mist of pain into the democracy we had fought for.

15. Adrian Leftwich

During the TRC, in the climate of reconciliation I thought of Adrian. On January 1st, 1965 he left South Africa. Thirty-one years later, in a free South Africa I went to London to settle some outstanding matters from my exile period. I searched on the Internet, found Adrian's phone number and rang him in York where he was still teaching at the university. In the background I could hear the voices of small children. I was very nervous. I felt nervous about the wounds that I was opening up with no knowledge of how he had dealt with his betrayal over the thirty intervening years. He asked why I was phoning him, I tried to explain, clumsily, "*If we can sit and talk with FW de Klerk, if we can forgive those who tortured us, then why not you.*" It didn't come out right. I phoned him again the next day and gave him the number where I was staying in London telling him when I was leaving. He didn't ring back.

Four years later, in 2000, Dr. Helen Karl, an American friend of Adrian, sent a draft document written by Adrian and called, then, "*Rain in Winter*" to Albie, now a Constitutional Court judge. She told Albie that Adrian did not know she was

contacting him and asked that Albie forgive and reach out to Adrian. Albie sent the draft on to me. It was a searing and painful examination of his crumbling that resulted in the detentions and trials thirty-five years earlier; confronting himself "*my behaviour was shameful, harmful and wrong…. I had chosen, I had acted*"; and eventually beginning to pick himself up and restart his life. Receiving the draft gave Albie and me a chance to discuss our reactions to Adrian after all this time. Neither of us had any hesitation in recognizing that Adrian had been a victim of Apartheid's vicious repression and that we felt nothing but compassion for him. I decided not to intrude again. The article, 20 pages, was published subsequently in a British literary magazine, Granta 78, with the title changed to "*I Gave the Names*". Later Adrian told me it took him 17 years to write. It began

> "*In July 1964, when I was twenty-four, my life in South Africa came to a sudden end. The events which brought this about were of my own making. No one else was to blame. In the gulf that opened up between my reach and my limits, between my knowledge and my self-ignorance, between my fantasies and my capacities, I crashed. It did not happen privately, but publicly and in full view of everyone who knew me.*"

At the same time as the publication of Adrian's article, a new edition of "*Bandiet*" a prison autobiography by Hugh Lewin, was reviewed in the South African Sunday Independent newspaper. Hugh Lewin had been Adrian's dearest friend before we were all put on trial and Adrian gave evidence. Adrian had been best man at Hugh's first wedding. Adrian had betrayed Hugh's name to the Security Police and given evidence in his trial. Hugh had spent seven years in prison for his ARM activities in Johannesburg. Curiously in this second edition of "*Bandiet*", he called Adrian Mr. X having given his full name in the first edition. I had never met Hugh but knew of him as a NUSAS leader from a devout Christian family. He was a Commissioner in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, listening to and forgiving Apartheid's perpetrators. During a long interview in the Johannesburg Sunday Independent in 2002, journalist Maureen Isaacson asked Hugh about his reaction to Adrian Leftwich's remarkably frank article just published in Granta. Hugh responded - with palpable irritation that she should bring up this subject, and apparently with complete lack of any compassion - "*He made his bed and will pay for it for the rest of his life*".

I was angry, outraged and wanted to write to the newspapers pointing out what I saw as Hugh's inconsistency and continued intransigent anger against Adrian. I phoned Albie and he advised me that writing to the papers would simply add to what we assumed would still be a very painful issue for Adrian. Unwilling to let it go I renewed a private contact by email, also by telephone, with Adrian in a healing process that lasted for more than 10 years until his death in 2013. And the process helped both of us. Initially I had sleepless nights worrying about the wounds I was

opening up for him, worrying about every phrase and comment I wrote. Sensing how difficult it was for him I immediately promised that I would share nothing he said in our correspondence with anyone, not even with Albie or my sons who were also sympathetic. But for me too the correspondence and remembering exposed my own even unrelated demons that had been buried and were often very painful. We had been so very young. Of course we had been ignorant in our "*self-knowledge*". But we had also been brave.

From the beginning of our correspondence Adrian would not entertain my contention that he was a victim of Apartheid. He insisted very firmly that he needed to take full personal responsibility for having collapsed in detention. He questioned whether he had any business as a white person involving himself in a struggle of African people against oppression. I stressed that he recognized injustice, hated it and did not stand aside. He had the courage to be counted. But for Apartheid we would not have had our very being put to such extreme testing. Many NUSAS and other liberal white colleagues from that time who railed against Apartheid, or not, left the country when things became too frightening, spent years in the UK or USA and then returned without blemish to resume a liberal life at home in a free South Africa. "*I never voted for Apartheid*". It helped Adrian that I could express views that he might share but felt he had no right to express. I felt that if there was a need to forgive then it was a two-way process between him and me. Rather than forgiveness there needed to be recognition of the hell that was Apartheid and the legacy of hell it left behind.

Until 1994 it was vital that there should be no forgiveness for betrayal. During the struggle if one were in the hands of the Apartheid torturers, survival often depended on a clear line between those who clung to principle and those who were traitors. In the confusion of total isolation and torture, the detainee could not always be rational, could not be left with the slightest doubt that to give up meant total rejection from the movement, assassination. During my detention in solitary confinement I had clung to the heroic images of people like Nelson Mandela who had recently escaped a death sentence and had been sentenced to life imprisonment after making a courageous speech from the dock.

Over the years there were some fellow ARM people who made contact with Adrian. Consistently compassionate and forgiving was Eddie Daniels who had spent 15 years on Robben Island. Others had contact with Adrian almost secretly, ashamed to be seen to forgive. But the one person whose forgiveness Adrian sought and who refused it for many years was Hugh Lewin. Adrian wrote to Hugh twice asking for forgiveness but Hugh didn't answer. Until one day Adrian phoned me from York in

the UK. He had had an email from Hugh asking if he could visit him in York. Adrian was wary and frightened. "*What could this mean? Is he coming here to hurt me?*" In the end Hugh came to York with his wife and forgiveness proceeded smoothly. He wanted to write a new book and it was essential to talk to Adrian. The book "*Stone against the Mirror*" is a moving examination of his relationship with Adrian. At a well-attended book launch I asked Hugh from the floor why on the sidelines of a TRC hearing he had taken the initiative to ask to shake the hand of our mutual torturer, Lt. Col. Viktor. Yet he refused to meet state witness John Lloyd's daughter as she had requested. After a prolonged pause Hugh responded to my question "*I don't know*". My son Michael suggested that perhaps it is easier to feel forgiveness for the enemy doing his job than for the friend who betrayed.

Although Adrian and my emails remained a contact around our shared political past, I did learn that Adrian had become a single parent of two children when they were very young. He taught developmental politics and had written a few textbooks that he sent to me. His academic interest had taken him to many parts of the world but Adrian had not returned to the continent of Africa in 40 years. Then he decided to attend an academic meeting on poverty, in Nairobi. I imagined how the hot African air welcomed him as the plane doors opened.

Not much later in 2004 he was invited to be part of a research team meeting in Pretoria. He was terrified. He phoned me even as he walked up the steps into the aeroplane at Heathrow saying it was a mistake to go. He imagined that everyone would hate him wherever he walked. I assured him that people had moved on, that no one would even know who he was or about his past. I was wrong. When Adrian got back to York after an enjoyable few days in Pretoria, he found an email from the young Afrikaans woman who headed up the research programme. She explained that although she really didn't understand what it was all about she had been informed by the chief researcher that he could no longer participate because of Adrian's involvement. It seems that this researcher had reported back to his own university department and thought his left-wing departmental head might object because the research programme was funded by a US multi-national corporation. Instead the departmental head expressed outrage at Adrian's participation. I was very distressed thinking he would not ever come back to South Africa. I knew how important it was for healing to retrace one's footsteps. But again I was wrong. He came for a second research meeting, this time in his beloved Cape Town. On his way to Cape Town we met at OR Tambo airport together with Hugh Lewin. Adrian's wide smile that I remembered was still there. He had less hair. He phoned me as he walked about the Cape Town streets he had known so well, amazed by the changes in the southern suburbs.

Toward the end of 2012, Adrian told his friends that he had lung cancer that was probably terminal. When he was already into his second round of chemo-therapy, Adrian wrote to me after I admonished him to eat properly –

> " *As you write, Ben* [his son] *is working on a wonderful salad - red cabbage, onions, lettuce, tomatoes and feta – which we shall have with grilled turkey breast and potatoes, followed by Brazilian grapes. OK?*
>
> *"Thank you for being such a friend. And support. As you can imagine, there is a side of me that thinks this is the 'punishment' for all the wrong things I have done."*

Very distressed, I responded

> *"My dear, dear Adrian. I know your brain knows there is no such thing as "punishment" and that it is a completely illogical notion. But more importantly, you have been a good person – your children attest to your goodness as a single father for which I admire you a great deal. You have an admirable and long career as an academic behind you.*
>
> *" And as for things that go back to the 1960s, you had the courage to take a very brave stand against an iniquitous system, apartheid forces defeated you momentarily, and you bore the consequences with fortitude and integrity - I mean you never rationalised your way out. On the contrary, you took the full burden of what happened on your very young shoulders. Can you imagine Ben, at his age, enduring what you endured. And you survived. I am in awe of you.*
> *"Cancer is just that - bad luck....."*

Adrian spoke to me on the phone from his hospital bed the day before he died of lung cancer in April 2013. I told him that he was the same person who 50 years previously at 22 years of age, had the courage to take a selfless stand against Apartheid. His life was crushed and the pain and shame of what he did never left him. But he faced his life after South Africa and gave everything he had to his children and his students. He did what few people could do – with courage he went on with his life. The pain of his South African history remained raw until the day he died.

16. To Durban

After six or seven years at Alexandra in Johannesburg, I was invited to apply for a physiotherapy teaching post at the University of Durban Westville (UDW) – formerly Apartheid's small Indian university.I did not have a degree but I had snatched theoretical and practical experience in the complex field of neuro-physiotherapy over all those years. I wondered whether there was a 'me' hiding somewhere inside

my revolutionary self. It seemed that I had had no life outside the struggle for 40 years. I thought I had read only books relevant to revolution, I had listened only to revolutionary music. I wanted to know if this was really me. I did not know the comrades in KZN. Nor they me. I got the job and moved to Durban in 1997. I enjoyed developing a workable syllabus for the 2nd to 4th year physiotherapy students that would give them an approach that could set them on the road to becoming good neuro-developmental physiotherapists. As well as adults struggling after strokes, there were then many adults who suffered brain trauma as a result of gunshots to the head. When the police stopped shooting, criminals took over. Growing violence in South Africa was visible in the hospital beds. We also worked with children whose legs had become paralysed after sniffing glue. Poverty and despair were visible in the hospital beds.

But it is the children who suffered cerebral palsy who are difficult to treat. As they grow, their bodies and their changing needs make increased demands on a compromised brain and body. These are the children presenting the largest group of disabled children in South Africa – and across the continent. Poor antenatal care, poor birth care, meningitis, tuberculosis, malaria, HIV infection, malnutrition, poor services or even no services, all cause brain damage to little children – this rich country of ours attacks its children from the moment they are conceived. Apartheid's legacy of poor knowledge, the medical model of care, largely white health carers who did not know where and how the children lived, the poor delivery of health services both at primary and tertiary levels, meant that parents and therapists are often left devastated and helpless. But often, too, the parents and other adults caring for the children respond with great courage and love.

Once a month I gave a voluntary service to children with Down Syndrome and their parents in an Overport centre. Once a month I drove out to the Bergville area and gave a home service to all who wanted it. On Saturdays I ran a private practice in the Berea Centre. I hoped democracy would improve services to children and adults who were brain damaged. My experience in London had given me hope of the possibility for a system of care that placed each child at the centre of care services. Our South Africa would respect and care for the most vulnerable amongst us. It took me six years to develop an undergraduate teaching programme to my satisfaction and test it in practice. But then I started getting bored. The internal squabbles in the department and at the university did not engage me. Though there were people at UDW whom I felt privileged to get to know. Ashwin Desai, a militant sociologist now at the University of Johannesburg writes extensively about the early history of indentured Indians in South Africa. Pitika Ntuli the wonderful artist, sculptor, poet who lived two houses away from me and briefly taught art at UDW. And Dr.

Deena Padayachee whose anger even now burns undiminished for past theft and humiliations. Mazisi Kunene returned from the USA and settled in Durban. He was hailed as the great poet that he was. When he died in 2006 I went to his memorial service in the Durban Town Hall and met Sobizana who came from Sweden where he still lives. We meet from time to time when he visits his home in Duncan Village. We still connect strongly on our politics.

In Durban I was very happy to reconnect with Jeff Guy. He had written a fine library of books on 19th century Zulu history and colonial Natal. I attended fascinating seminars at the Killie Campbell Centre where Jeff showed us portraits of people in 19th century Natal and then together we tried to analyse what their expressions, body language and dress told us about history. Mwelela Cele who worked there was one of my Durban sons. He has since moved to the Steve Biko Centre in Ginsburg. Jeff happened to phone me not long before a book on British colonial administrator Theophilus Shepstone was published. When he found I was on a visit in Cape Town he immediately roped me in to locate a rather unusual photo of Nkosi Langalibele who led the Hlubi people and spent time on Robben Island following confrontation with the colonial authorities. Jeff knew the photo was at the National Archives and I searched for it and organized a copy for his book. Jeff astonished me not only by being able to identify every bird from the wooden deck at my home but knowing all their Zulu names too. He was gentle, kind, curious, innovative and not given to much smiling. Just after the publication of his book on Shepstone, after I had listened to a discussion about the book, he too passed away.

When I first settled in Westville North I became Chairperson of the Westville, Durban West branch of the ANC. But after a few years in this strange Province I drifted away. I retired from the academic teaching when I was 62. At first I loved the solitude. For the first time in my life I sat quietly and peacefully on my large wooden deck overlooking a pristine valley. I watched vervet monkeys and striped mongooses at play, got to know the amazing birds and went to sleep to the sounds of nightjars and owls.

17. Death in the Time of HIV/AIDS Denial

I didn't have a garden so much as a wild steeply downward cascading hill with wild avocado trees and bush that needed to be kept in check. John took care of the 'garden' and Thabisile helped me inside the house, both once a week. It was the first time I had homehelpers since Ralie in Malmesbury alerted me to the injustice of Apartheid.

I got to know John and Thabisile's circumstances well. John lived in a very small shack in Nduduza, north of Durban and had his home in Gamalakhe, south of Durban where his young wife, his daughter and two sons as well as some extended family, lived. I visited his family in Gamalakhe. They were as poor as I have ever seen people. They owned nothing. John had started building a brick house there when he had full-time work in an industrial company. But he was made redundant and ran out of money some years before. The house stood there without a roof, mocking him. I gave him the money to finish the house. His family didn't move into the house. His young wife was admitted to King Edward Hospital for a mastectomy and was diagnosed with AIDS. The physician wanted to discharge her. After the mastectomy there was nothing more they could do. But John told him in no uncertain terms that she would have to walk for two hours every day to fetch water. King Edward kept her and she died there. John insisted she had the "*Zulu sickness*". She was buried in pouring rain on their land at Gamalakhe. John's daughter had failed her grade 11 twice in Gamalakhe. After her mother's death she brought herself to live with an uncle and his family in Cato Manor so that she could attend school in Durban. When I saw her screwing up her eyes, I took her to an optometrist who said he had not seen such poor eyesight in 40 years of practice. With glasses she passed both grade 11 and 12.

Then I saw John struggle to move a plastic bag of garbage onto the pavement for the council to collect. He walked painfully slowly up the hill at the end of the day to catch a taxi to his shack in Nduduza. He could hardly move. I tried to talk to him and to assure him that I would go on paying him even if he could not work. He insisted repeatedly that there was nothing wrong. A little exasperated I grabbed a nearby coffee mug and put it on the table. "*Do you see that coffee mug?*" He smiled, wondering. *"If you insist there is no coffee mug, John, what can I say?"* Then he laughed, catching my drift. Not long afterwards, he died. As did the next two gardeners who were younger, in their early 30s.

Patrick lived with his girlfriend, Patience, rent-free in the cottage at the back of my home. She was a domestic worker down the street. He was beautiful and strong and took over John's 'gardening'. Again, one day I noticed what seemed like a sudden overwhelming weakness. He went home to Greytown. And died. Soon afterwards his father and brother came to collect his meager belongings from the cottage and called on me. They asked whether I was aware what caused his death. People didn't talk of AIDS then and I was impressed that they brought it into the open. But then they immediately blamed Patience. I said they were a very loving couple. The family seemed bitter.

Eric, the last one-day a week gardener before arthritis forced me to move into a flat, told me he was an orphan since the age of 14. He was in his early thirties and lived by himself in a small shack on the edge of the rolling hills of Clermont. It was a long walk to my house, uphill and downhill on the winding landscape that is Durban. I often drove him home. When he got sores all over his body I took him to a clinic in Westville. A few months later he collapsed and an ambulance took him to RK Khan hospital. After a few days I phoned but they claimed no knowledge of him. He seemed to have simply disappeared, a very sick man. I broke my ankle and spent a week in hospital. When I was discharged I was confined upstairs in my bedroom. Thabisile came in every second day to help me and I phoned the local Spar so that she could get basic foodstuffs for me on account. One day from my upstairs window I saw a pathetic looking Eric walking so very slowly, step by step to reach my house. Again it was clear that AIDS was ravaging him. I had a phone upstairs and started phoning around to see if I could find help for him. I found a hospice and after a lot of discussion with them, I phoned the Young Communist comrades who had my car for the 6 weeks that I was not allowed to drive. I tossed a duvet out of the window down to them and they took Eric off to the hospice in Inchanga outside Durban. A couple of hours later they were back with Eric. The hospice wouldn't take him without a hospital TB check and report. I asked Eric who by now was very weak and exhausted, what we should do and he said he wanted to go back to Harding. This was the town south of Durban where he had told me he grew up and became an orphan. The comrades took him down there. They were gone for a long time. When they got back they told me that Eric had had a hero's welcome – far from being an orphan, it appears he ran away from home at 14. His mother was alive and overjoyed to see him, his brother owned a butchery and the family was doing well. Two days later the brother phoned to tell me that Eric had died.

When Johnny Sachs returned to democratic South Africa, he soon became very angry with both President Thabo Mbeki and Health Minister Manto Tshabalala Msimang for their failure to roll out anti-viral medication for HIV/ AIDS patients in the public health system. Johnny's heart finally caught up with him and he died in 2001. Comrade Manto attended the small memorial meeting at UCT's medical school.

Soon afterwards my parents passed away. I was glad that I had twelve years after my return from exile to be with my parents before they died. At 89 my mother died in 2002 after a brief battle with pervasive cancer. She became weak and a little demented. She told me over and over again the story of her parents, Theo and Ilva Gladwin when they died of the 'Spanish' flu in 1918. "*Theo looked up, smiled and assured the nurse 'it's all right nurse, Ilva is calling me'*". My mother was reassured that Heaven waited for her to join the parents who left her too early. My heart broke

when I saw my mother looking at me lovingly and heard her saying to a nurse "*I think she's my daughter but I'm not sure if she's the oldest*". My father died six months after my mother. For many years his sight had been ravaged by macrodegeneration. He moved on with life without complaining listening to the radio when he could no longer read or see the television. He had a series of small strokes, he had a period of depression and spent his last months phoning Bernice sometimes twenty times a day. But he showed no signs of senile dementia when he died aged 97 years. Now I have learned to appreciate my father a bit more. How difficult it must have been for him as a short insecure young man to take care of a family of five adequately. I was warmed when I recalled that he stood by me when I was in the clutches of the Apartheid security forces. I thought how hard it must have been for him. A shame in front of Dominee Landman.

18. To another SACP

One day in 2002 I was walking behind a young couple in the Pavillion shopping mall. On the back of his t-shirt a slogan read "*Our strength is our sharing*". I tapped him on his shoulder and asked where I could find the Communist Party. He was a little startled but we exchanged details and a couple of days later I was in the SACP branch in Clermont. This comrade too would shortly die of AIDS. I loved being amongst comrades again. I rapidly found myself on the Provincial Working Committee. However it soon became clear that this was not the SACP I knew. The legacy of progressive strategic leadership struggling for fundamental change had left the Party. Soon after its unbanning the Party was weakened as long-standing stalwarts were drawn into national government. Key comrades including Chris and Joe passed away. Others like Thabo Mbeki had decided to leave the party with its unbanning in 1990. SACP leadership passed into the hands of Blade Nzimande who had become a communist recently and had not grown organically into leadership. Under him the SACP quite quickly descended into an unrecognizable husk.

The Party now became subsumed in attacking South Africa's President, ANC president Thabo Mbeki. In 2005 when Shabir Shaik was convicted of many counts of corruption and given the minimum sentence of 15 years, Jacob Zuma's name was on the other side of each of 783 counts. Zuma was by then Deputy President of the country and President Mbeki did what any president of a democratic country would do – he sacked Zuma from his cabinet. He did not make the decision easily. However, I believe that over their time in government Mbeki had seen the deep flaws in this long-standing close comrade of his. Zuma himself resigned from parliament and from his position as ANC Deputy President. It seems from peeve rather than principle. A faction intent on driving Zuma into the Presidency gained

momentum. The SACP became relentless – every meeting I attended was used to attack and villify President Mbeki. ANC T-shirts with his face were collectively burnt, every opportunity was used on manufactured criticisms – he was out of the country too much, he was aloof, he was this, he was that. The same arguments were used and repeated day in and day out. The SACP was determined Zuma would be leader of the country despite having resigned from the SACP on the cusp of freedom.

I went to a funeral in a stadium in KwaMashu. Zuma entered the stadium without any fanfare. 10,000 mourners stood up and convinced me that this man was popular. In those days he had a way of reaching people. He did not need to be an intellectual. They identified with him. In those days he felt them - still poor, humiliated, victimized, excluded from freedom. He was not yet wealthy. He played the victim well, kept quiet and never attempted to lead people away from the atrocious infighting. As factional tensions mounted, SACP meetings had less and less political content and focused more and more on winning support for Zuma and pushing 'the line' against President Mbeki. Zuma 'victories' were greeted with enormous triumphalism but never discussed nor analysed. Not in any meetings I attended as part of the SACP Provincial Working Committee in KZN. I would have expected the Communist Party to discuss the serious issues of gender relations that arose in Zuma's trial for rape. But not so – on Zuma's acquittal there was only cheering in our ranks that he had won and Mbeki, as it was portrayed, was defeated.

Of course, for these Communists the economic direction of the ANC, the 1996 Growth Economic and Reconstruction (GEAR) policy was seen as a "*class project* " that Mbeki entered into as a lapdog of western neo-liberalism, a gatekeeper for *"white monopoly capitalism*" in South Africa. It seemed that Mbeki was motivated solely by a warmth of feeling for White Capital. None of this was analysed, discussed or debated. The President of the ANC, Thabo Mbeki, was regarded as an enemy by the comrades. In KZN it was taken for granted that we all knew this and agreed. Over time an atmosphere was created throughout the country in which both Mandela and Mbeki were held up as having betrayed the struggle, having sold out to white capital. There was no attempt to take a leading role as Communists to examine the conditions that may have created insuperable obstacles to any rapid drive to Socialism. Socialism was never discussed despite the slogan "*Socialism is the Future. Build it Now*". The situation in democratic South Africa was portrayed entirely as a heinous subjective project.

I seemed very alone in KZN ranks in raising questions. I asked the Provincial Secretary, Themba Mthembu once whether he really felt Zuma had the capacity required to lead the country in increasingly complex conditions. He tried to reassure me that

those around Zuma, the workers and in particular the SACP and COSATU would run the country, not Zuma. It seemed to me obvious that Zuma could provide neither progressive leadership nor vision. In those days Zuma's professed ideology changed depending on where he was. On who was standing next to him. His years in the liberation struggle had taught him the language to use in most contexts. Like a chameleon he changed colour depending on the company. He had internalized very little of progressive ideology during his 10 years on Robben Island, the years in the exile leadership of the ANC and SACP and his close association with Thabo Mbeki over two decades. Surprisingly neither he nor his vociferous supporters held him responsible in any way for his leading contribution in negotiations with the regime or in government after 1994. Not even as Chairperson of the National AIDS Council that denied people ARVs. Nor as chair of the quaintly named "Moral Regeneration Commission". I became increasingly appalled and alarmed. It was not only in KwaZulu Natal, Zuma's home ground that these distortions were evident. Throughout the country anyone perceived as an ally of President Mbeki was villified from within the ANC alliance. Intelligent voices who dared to question the unthinking and dangerous support for Zuma were hounded out of the Party. I attended augmented Central Committee meetings in Johannesburg and found discussion had become circumscribed. The international situation was never reviewed. What had gone wrong in the USSR and the socialist world had not raised any interest since Joe Slovo's 1989 pamphlet "*Has Socialism Failed?*" and the rather specious riposte from Pallo Jordan who had never been in the SACP.

I attended a Special National Conference of the SACP in Durban in 2005. Billionaire Patrice Motsepe hovered there in a front row seat, as always silently. I was told he gives money to the Party. The Special Conference was addressed by President Mbeki. He had a polite hearing. Mbeki said that all of us in the Movement relied on the SACP to analyse and help us to understand what was happening in Communist China and other Communist Party ruled countries that were increasingly embracing market forces with the attendant increasing inequalities, the gulf between the rich and the poor and the creation of an oligarchy, a billionaire class. No one at the Special National Conference showed any interest. The Provincial Secretary, Themba, had been in a delegation to China and on his return he told me ruefully that the only remaining sign of Communism in China was the flag.

Even in the SACP poverty and unemployment often drove the quest to get on to election lists. A comrade would repeatedly make loud demagogic speeches filled with slogans of unwavering loyalty to the right faction, sometimes just to women's empowerment, to get on to a list, get elected on to a government structure and draw a decent salary. The comrade could then move out of his shack and in time

move his mother out of her shack too and send his siblings to college. Slogans replaced implementation of principled policies.

Despite my reservations I had accepted deployment as Provincial Gender Coordinator. I am white, my Zulu is very inadequate, I was not from the province. KwaZulu Natal is perhaps the most deeply traditional patriarchal part of South Africa. Often at SACP meetings at all levels, women would be in the majority attending but they hardly spoke. At one of the first District meetings I attended, there were substantially more women present than men but in a whole weekend only one woman raised her hand to speak. I suggested that to get a rhythm of contributions from women there needed to be some sort of quota rule that chairpersons at meetings should call for a woman contributor after each man who spoke. This was rejected with no alternative. At a Provincial meeting I organized a commission on women. I was taken aback that male comrades who had all the answers dominated discussion in the commission. They assumed they would lead the programme to women's empowerment and gender equity.

At another Provincial meeting, for a session on gender I organized for all the delegates to be broken into five or so smaller groups. They were to discuss the reasons for the poor contribution by women within SACP structures, they were to identify obstacles to women's participation, they were to find possible ways of tackling these obstacles. I made a proviso that every woman in each group had to make a contribution to the discussion and that people should use the language of their choice. At lunch one young male comrade came to me, puzzled, "*but qabane, women are not allowed to speak at izimbizo !*"

The Provincial meeting had been going on along quite nicely with a political report from the Secretary who said to me over lunch "*You see, we can have political discussions and we can put the campaign for Zuma to one side.*" I was pleased but after lunch at the plenary session the same Secretary, Themba started going off on a tangent about how Mbeki had klapped Winnie Mandela when she turned up on the platform of a government meeting in Orlando Stadium some months, if not years, earlier. Winnie arrived late at the rally, she had no business on the platform of a government meeting and when I saw the incident on TV, it seemed to me that she had come from behind where President Mbeki was sitting and tried to embrace him. He couldn't see her and raised his hand defensively, accidentally knocking her cap off her head. Now the Provincial Secretary raised this incident with the usual sense of triumphalism. "*Mbeki hit the Mother of the Nation*". I was sitting somewhere in the middle of the raked hall as usual conspicuous as perhaps the only non-African at these meetings. Something snapped. I stood up, gathered all my papers together

and said "*Comrades, we seem to read different newspapers*", turned on my heel and walked out. Out of the meeting and out of the Party. I never did hear the plenary report back from the groups. Later I heard there was some response to my exit at the meeting – no doubt I was dismissed as ill disciplined and counter-revolutionary. An agent of white monopoly capital. Perhaps just white. I didn't hear from anyone in the Party after that.

But my long time, nearly five decades as a Communist Party member was effectively at an end. Sometimes I drove past the building that housed the SACP in the middle of Durban and caught glimpses of comrades I loved. I remembered before meetings when we happily bought white mielies cooked by hawkers on the pavement outside the offices.

19. To COPE, briefly

After years of factional war in the ANC, SACP and COSATU, the ANC's Polokwane Conference in 2007 ensured the election of Jacob Zuma into the ANC's Presidency and the defeat of Thabo Mbeki. The conference itself was shocking and unprecedented for the wild internecine shouting of insults, bad behaviour and lack of respect for leaders. I was disgusted. Adding fuel to the fire, the morning after the Conference ended the new Chairperson, Baleka Mbete, called publicly on national TV for unity. I was distraught as I remembered the precious Unity that had been so carefully nurtured during the liberation struggle by the ANC President, OR Tambo, and the SACP leadership. Now after the destructive years of viciousness fomented primarily by Baleka Mbete's faction culminating in the public display of this factionalism at the Conference, the ANC chairperson could stand up the morning after and glibly call for unity. She seemed to suggest that now was the time for everyone to be quiet and support the winning faction. So that those who wanted to could get on with the business of self-enrichment, it seemed to suggest.

Toward the end of 2008 I received a letter inviting me to join the newly constituted ANC Veterans League. At 67 and with forty-six years of continuous membership behind me, much of it full-time, I qualified. I had gone to several pre-launch meetings of the Veterans' League in KZN and it seemed to me that this could, yet again, be another voting block in support of the Zuma faction in the ANC. I replied to the Veterans' League invitation with copies to both the Provincial ANC and SACP explaining why I could not become a member of the League and at the same time tendering my resignation from both the ANC and the SACP. This came at a huge cost to myself, to who I was.

It seemed self-evident that a new party was needed. A modern social-democratic political party. Indeed, soon the Congress of the People (COPE) raised its hand. Many disaffected ANC and SACP members moved to COPE. It seemed to me that their presence would ensure that the best of ideology and experience would be carried into this new party.The launching of COPE raised enormous hope and optimism throughout the country. The ANC was intent on making sure it would not survive. The ANC fought in the courts to hold on to the new party's historic name and logo, the Congress of the People and the wheel of unity dating to the original 1955 Kliptown Alliance gathering where the Freedom Charter was launched. The legal ANC's upgraded wheel that became integral in its modern logo has too many spokes and looks more like a BMW magwheel, a wheel of fortune, than the original four-spoked wheel of national unity. I was amongst comrades in COPE, many of whom understood exactly how I felt and felt the same. Nevertheless, I was compelled to visit my general practitioner who had thus far seen me only as an elderly patient with extensive arthritis. Now I was in a state of high anxiety and she gave me sleeping tablets and little downers to calm me.

In the years since then I have never regretted the move publicly to leave both organisations that have gone from bad to worse. Ideology in the ANC has become more and more confused, perhaps reflecting the broad church and social classes it represents with little leadership clarity or vision. In the battle between the working class and the ANC oligarchs, the latter are clearly on the winning track, the former voting fodder. If you were a worker you aspired to become an oligarch, raiding the nations coffers. ANC and SACP decline has been far worse than I could ever have imagined possible. Once Zuma ascended to the presidency it took very little time for him to stamp his own traditionalist, patriarchal, pro big capital and Christian fundamentalist leadership on the country.

I missed Chris and Joe's wise counsel in such dreadful times.

I certainly under-estimated the enormous lengths to which the ANC and its allies would go to create mayhem and make sure that COPE could not deliver on the hope that swept the country with its emergence. Many loyal ANC members were infiltrated into COPE as 'moles' and succeeded in creating chaos and division. New COPE members found themselves facing spurious disciplinary issues at work, those in business lost out on tenders. Recently now disaffected Julius Malema revealed that as ANC Youth League president he had access to a budget of R1,000,000 to undermine COPE.

In 2009 I once again enjoyed the fervour of working for elections, this time for COPE. We travelled all over the province and everywhere people were flocking to meet us. We travelled in convoys with cars happily branded with COPE flags without incident through ANC and IFP strongholds. On a hot Sunday in Ulundi everyone naturally spoke isiZulu to you rather as people would speak French to you in Paris. We worked hard and were not dashed by the poor results in KZN especially as COPE had done well in other provinces. In four provinces it became the official opposition to ANC Provincial Governments. At the end of the elections I decided to pack up my life in Durban and move back to Johannesburg. For a brief period after I settled back in Johannesburg, I became a political advisor to Mosiuoa Lekota going to COPE offices in Braamfontein. I found that I really liked him – an open, frank, hard-working and determined politician, despite his apparent penchant for white reactionaries.

For the first time in 50 years, for the first time in the whole of my adult life, I had no political branch as the basis of my social being. I was old and arthritic. I volunteered at two children's organisations. Then I fell over and broke my femur. The final straw.

20. The End

Suddenly I felt isolated. I needed to find new ways of being with people. I found a Book Club near me in Johannesburg. As I expected the Book Club women were white, religious with worldviews that were very distant from mine. After my exile sojourn when I had read extensively, I now read African stories and memories, African politics and fiction almost exclusively. I felt very defensive as my difference, my politics constantly intruded into the book club's preferred reading. Everyone was younger than me. I tried hard and to some extent managed to be with them. The fact is that I have a common language or narrative with almost any black person in South Africa as well as those from beyond our borders. But talking to whites including liberal left whites, is mostly full of traps and minefields that have to be negotiated. Over a couple of years I gradually gained confidence. Three or so people in the book club were genuine in their friendships with me. And I liked them.

In the book club I also found a great friend in the only black woman there – Rebone. She not only became a friend but welcomed me into her family. Even as I became increasingly conscious in the new South Africa of being white, I developed a friendship of trust with Rebone and her family. From her I continually learn even more about the depth of hurt from the past and the ongoing white racism that still dogs our country. The daily slights that black people continue to experience. I was delighted to find Rebone was married to Dr. Pascal Ngakane's nephew. Pascal died in 2015 and just months later Pontsho died. Pascal's funeral was held in Sophiatown in

With my friend Rebone

the iconic King's Chapel church. They were all there at the funeral the Ngakanes, the Morojeles, the Luthulis. The ANC shunned the funeral. Only Moeletsi Mbeki came as a sort of ANC person. Hugh Masekela played an unscheduled trumpet solo. I was honoured to speak as a friend at the funeral.

On a recent morning I had spent a couple of hours at Alex Clinic where I worked from 1990 to 1997. I have in the interim been back in Alexandra and wept that so little has changed; but this was my first trip back to the health centre that has since changed from a prestigious NGO during Apartheid to a Government Clinic in democracy. It was wonderful seeing people I worked with such a long time ago. I walked through all the passages and nooks of the sprawling Clinic and was very impressed at what I saw - every space is devoted to patients. The place where we taught Community Rehablitation Workers is now a large pharmacy; the canteen is a large rehab.facility and I met the two young physios and a speech therapist. Casualty is smaller and less busy and I remembered it in those days of massacres. Everywhere I walked I felt that Dr. Pascal Ngakane was walking alongside me. Sharing our happiness to be home. A very strong and moving feeling.

21. 400 years later, the road to democracy

Freedom heralded in massive expectations. For all of us.

But 400 years of white minority rule could not be wiped out in a moment. The repression, humiliation and subjugation of proud communities and cultures left deep scars. Scars that will be there even in generations to come. As it turned out, much of that old country has clung on tenaciously for too long and continues its existence within the new democratic South Africa. Despite huge persistent popular support for the new ANC government there were almost insuperable mountains to climb to deliver on the expectations of freedom. To deliver an end to the abject poverty and squalor that has no place in a rich and developed nation. To unlock confidence and pride across the nation. Many who had been kicked into the gutter, eke out a hand to mouth existence, begging and hustling by whatever means. Even now, large swathes of the society remain under white control. Except in government, 8% of the population is still everywhere, everywhere at the top.

In the old days as resistance in Apartheid South Africa gained momentum damaging the economy, White liberals insisted that if Apartheid restrictions were removed, if job reservation, restrictions on the free movement of African labour were removed, capitalism itself, the free market, neo-liberal economic growth would organically bring an end to Apartheid. But it hasn't. One has to conclude that among those White capitalists, racism is alive and strong. Despite laws to redress white minority control of free enterprise, very few black people have become leaders of industry or senior managers. Even in smaller enterprises – malls, restaurants, theatres, blocks of flats, private schools – white ownership remains the overwhelming norm. In time, against unrealized expectations and the failure of democratic political leadership, many young revolutionaries who had not seen struggle, began to wish they could put the still privileged white minority against the wall and shoot them. Inexperienced cadres hanker after the revolutionary rhetoric evoking a previous era. Experienced cadres use that rhetoric to keep the voting population in line.

Under the Zuma presidency it has become very clear that South Africa is teetering on the edge of an abyss. We are no different. We are not exceptional. Our power has corrupted. We could never have imagined such venality as we now experience. When Zuma speaks he has no shame, no recognition of the repeated court findings against him. "*I have done nothing wrong*". In parliament he has become notorious for his endless giggling even in the midst of discussions on state brutality against the people. At times of national crises there is a leadership silence. While our social fabric crumbles, there is leadership silence. No one has to go far to see the pervasive

abject poverty. Television exposes to all of us the massive persistence of poverty everywhere in our country. The majority of people are living in appalling squalor. In other places, in stark contrast, we can drive down beautiful tree-lined avenues and, like the small children from Windermere, fall silent at the splendour. We also see TV programmes of the beautiful elegantly decorated homes of the rich with views across our beautiful land and coast. Of the beautiful places where the rich play. Personal wealth is unimaginable – mostly in white hands and a smattering of the new black rich. Since freedom the rich get richer and richer while the poor are mired in poverty. South Africa has the highest unemployment figures in the world, and the highest inequality. The social fabric is being torn to shreds. Violence sees three years olds raped and murdered. Femicide figures are higher than anywhere else in the world. Capitalism at its ugliest.

Under the leadership of Zuma, the door has been flung open to massive, shameless corruption and patronage networks. We have become a kleptocracy. More, our country has been stolen with the assistance of the president and his family. The thieves from elsewhere spread largesse as they take offshore billions belonging to us. Institutions of state have been systematically drawn into the network of the president's patronage. Daily we see and hear of clashes and burnings in rural villages and urban poor habitations across the country. Communities are frustrated, feeling powerless. Freedom's door has been banged shut and they are excluded. On radio traffic reports we are warned of tyres burning on roads here, there, everywhere. The leadership does not wake up.

Our television screens took us to community leader Andries Tatane in Fickburg in a demonstration against a failure of water delivery. He stood stripped to the waist surrounded by our policemen. They shot him. They said with rubber bullets at point blank range. We saw him sinking slowly down to the ground taking his last breath. In 2011 seven policemen were put on trial and seven police were acquitted. Recently his widow was killed in a car crash when she journeyed to Lesotho to fetch water. Periodically xenophobia directed at other Africans – against our brothers and sisters across colonial borders - makes it into the media. In 2008 we beat, stabbed and, while he was still alive, we set alight a Mozambican brother, Ernesto Alfabeto Nhamuave in Ramaphosa informal settlement. We saw him, dramatically standing there engulfed in flames. Dying, alone. No one paid.

On 16th August 2012 I turned on the 4 o'clock television news. I saw live, police with assault rifles line up in orderly formation. A shout and they mowed down platinum workers at Marikana. They followed the fleeing miners. They shot them as they tried to hide amongst the rocks. 34 miners seeking higher wages and an escape

from 19th century labour conditions, paid with their lives. Lives taken by my ANC. Immediatey after the volley of automatic fire, I saw one young policeman turn his back on the bodies, falling on one knee, and putting his head in his hands as he moaned "*damn, damn, damn*" in utter despair. Shame has followed our freedom. The 1960 Sharpeville massacre is commemorated annually as Human Rights Day. The Marikana massacre is officially ignored. Instead of political leadership there is silence. The President pays no attention as he continues to ensure that key institutions of state are commandeered by his acolytes, even when the courts find them unethical. He ignored the finding of the Constitutional Court that "*The President failed to uphold, defend and respect the Constitution as the supreme law of the land.*" Chief Justice Mogoeng warned *"it's time for change in South Africa in order to achieve the goals of the Constitution under ethical leadership."* The President asks defiantly "*What have I done wrong?*" The ANC, the SACP have lost the enormous moral credibility they won during the struggle against Apartheid. Their legacy is in shreds.

During the liberation struggle we always looked to "the people" to ensure that the determination for freedom was taken beyond the most difficult oppressive times. We believed "the people" would ensure that Apartheid was overthrown. Now when the ANC could sink no lower it seemed for a moment that our belief in the people was vindicated. In 2016 local government elections brought a welome crack in the ANC's hold and a glimmer of hope for the future. The Constitution ensures the rights of every individual in South Africa. Rainbowism, the emphasis of individual rights for each person and formal equality has once again stalled the drive to African national liberation. Non-racialism, class contention and individual human rights are not inconsistent with the struggle for African national liberation. However, South Africa as an African country, the liberation of the vast indigenous majority who were robbed and humiliated over centuries, has not been realized. White hegemony and privilege remains. The national question is forgotten and reduced to issues of race and racism. With a little skewed black enrichment.

I am no longer convinced that the enormous effort it would take to restore the ANC is worth it. Nevertheless I have recently added my voice to well over a hundred ANC Veterans joining voices countrywide in trying to engage the top echelons of the ANC to stop us from plunging into the abyss. The SACP has turned 180 degrees and has joined the calls across the country for the President to resign. I was invited to the recent 14th Congress of the Party and loved the energy, the good humour as discussion raged. I loved finding my comrades from the KZN (now called Moses Mabhida) Working Committee of ten years ago. Elsewhere people are beginning to speak out. We hear them. People are saying 'no more'. It is late. There is already pushback from the ruling faction. People are being threatened with death, people

are being killed for their audacity in standing up against the capture of the state, the collusion with those intent of robbing us. Particularly in KwaZulu Natal the killing of comrades in order to secure a place at the trough, has become commonplace.

The president insists he has done nothing wrong. I feel tired and useless but it is wonderful to be among comrades again. The good people with long histories in struggle. And the new young comrades eager to pull us back from the abyss. To pull us through the raging storm. With pain in my heart, I still see our country in a sorrowful political transition from the legacy of 400 years of white minority hegemony. I see now that when I spoke on public platforms in Britain saying that Apartheid was brutalizing the people, this is what I meant. Every day people are murdered, often gratuitously and with horrifying violence. In the absence of a strong visionary guidance from the leadership, our country looks more and more like a post-apocalyptic devastation. Nevertheless despite the political disappointments and the looming dangers to our democracy, these are our failures. We must set them right. We are our own enemy now. I glimpse too, corners where a whole new world of hope and discovery has opened up since democracy. Increasingly the talent and skill of people freed from Apartheid shackles are shining through the gloom. Where I move about in Johannesburg, this South Africa is breathtakingly different.

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Last night I dreamt I was learning rituals in a centre for spirituality. I was part of a large group of believers. The teachers said "*we can't tell you now but something has happened to Joe*". I went on learning the rituals, meticulously following as I was led. Postponing my dread and heartbreak. Obediently postponing my tears. The rituals completed, kind hands and sharing hearts led me along a long path to a place where Joe had been celebrating. There was devastation where a bomb had been thrown.

I woke up stiff and sweating. I could not shake off the pain as I made my morning tea turning on the radio to more news of the day. More news of the ANC being dragged down further and further, nearer to its demise.

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22. Am I still a Communist ?

Am I still a Communist?

It is difficult to give up the dream that gave so much hope to so many. But the 20th century heroism and committed struggle to bring about a just world in the name of

Communism are in ruins. There were people I didn't know but whom I greatly admire who were associated with communism – Paul Robson and Pete Seeger, WEB du Bois and Angela Davis. Ho Chi Minh, Castro and so many others. I still like to locate myself as part of their world.

We did not confront the excesses and authoritarianism that seem an inevitable outcome of the seizure of Communist power. Still loyal Communists have not taken forward the questions opened up by Joe Slovo's "*Has Socialism Failed ?*" to examine honestly whether his optimism is justified when he says that "*we failed Socialism*" and what is needed is more democracy. I ask: Is there a road to Socialism without *"the complete suppression of the exploiters" inevitably being "followed by the strengthening of the instruments of state suppression and the narrowing of democracy for the majority of the population, including the working class."?* Long after the 1953 exposure of the Stalin era's 'excesses' Slovo admits: *"In the socialist world there are still outposts which unashamedly mourn the retreat from Stalinism and use its dogmas to 'justify' undemocratic and tyrannical practices...."* Was it a *"cult of personality"'* as Slovo claims? Or is authoritarian rule an inevitable, the only, route to Communism. *"We make no attempt here to answer the complex question of why so many millions of genuine socialists and revolutionaries became such blind worshippers in the temple of the cult of the personality. Suffice it to say that the strength of this conformism lay, partly, in an ideological conviction that those whom history had appointed as the custodians of humankind's communist future seemed to be building on foundations prepared by the founding fathers of Marxism."*

I do not believe that it is possible to establish Socialism through bourgeois democratic elections. While I have no doubt – or is it irrepressible optimism - that social democratic reform of Capitalism's worst excesses is possible, reality suggests that for now the massive advances of globalized capitalist greed make short shrift of any attempt to turn a country or even a region toward a socialist organization of society. Capitalism continues to manage crisis after crisis. Capitalism wages war, drops drones to further the hunger for power and profit.

In the 21st century there is a crater in understanding the world and how to change it for the better. For a century it has been so crystal clear – a binary world of good and evil, and we were on the side of a forward march of history. We marched with Marx, Engels and Lenin clutched firmly in our beliefs. But now this is no longer true and there has been nothing to replace our clarity of understanding and how to go forward with Communism at the centre of our dreams for a better world. Communism or socialism in theory only, without actively organizing within a collective, without clear concrete strategic obectives, is not communism. And the theory that underpinned our collective activism, no longer supports reality.

23. My life has been a Journey

My life has been a journey. I feel proud to have made the choice to go where I did. Their legacy is now besmirched but I love the ANC and SACP that gave me my adult path. I feel honoured to have known the great human beings I met on the way. I am proud my children have become adults whom I admire, with values that are unshakeable. Values they learned in the ANC and the SACP family. They grew up in a community with a sense of justice and social responsibility. They knew many heroic people. Growing up outside South Africa broadened their horizons; growing up within the ANC was certainly fundamental in making them at ease in democratic South Africa. Like many of their exile peers, other exile children that I still have contact with, they remain proud of their place in the struggle and in the left international movement.

I am glad I have been able to retrieve a little of my Afrikaner culture and Afrikaans language within the non-racial parameters of democratic South Africa. I'm very glad to be alive in this South Africa. The South Africa around me is unrecognizable from the South Africa I knew as a child.

We have transferred the future of South Africa to all the people of South Africa. No matter what today's shortcomings and disappointments are – they are ours. I look around me every day and I am amazed at what we have achieved. I have two grandchildren, Mahlasedi and Lewatle. I'm glad I've helped to make South Africa their country where they can find their own path forward.

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For all these years I have carried with me the glass rosary given to me by an unknown priest in Roeland Street prison in 1964. In exile I replaced the crucifix blessed by the Pope with a rouble bearing Lenin's face. Now the rouble has gone to be replaced by a delicate silver pendant with butterfly wings that belonged to my mother's mother, Ilva Gladwin.

LATER

As my story reached an ending, there was a dramatic shift in the political scene in South Africa. After years of clamour by civil society, academia, churches, opposition political parties and the Stalwarts and Veterans of the ANC for Zuma to go, the ANC voted in a new president by the skin of its teeth. Cyril Ramaphosa and newly elected ANC leaders then set about weeks of persuading Zuma to resign immediately as South African President. He resisted insisting "I did nothing wrong". They drove him into a corner and his support fell away dramatically.

The day after his resignation I announced that I was rejoining the ANC ten years after my resignation. This garnered support from many. Some felt it was too early. The mood of expectation in the country in anticipation of Ramaphosa's State of the Nation address the following day, was palpable. Ramaphosa is steering a cautious path to renewal and unbundling the mess left behind by Zuma both in the ANC and in the country. Corruption arrests and trials abound. In two major speeches to parliament and the nation Ramaphosa went beyond my expectations. He projected a strong African nationalist project especially on the issue of land redress while at the same time building national cohesion. His words spoke to that intersecting of African national liberation with non-racialism.

Now we will take up where we left off in 2009 and take our country forward. We cannot fail again. THUMA MINA.

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Footnotes Part 5

[92] The South African Civil Cooperation Bureau was a death squad during Apartheid that operated under the authority of Defence Minister General Magnus Malan. The Truth and Reconciliation Committee pronounced the CCB guilty of numerous killings, and suspected more killings.
[93] ANC Treasurer General, ANC Secretary General and Umkhonto we Sizwe Commander in Chief respectively.
[94] He started an internet webpage, www.ahmedtimol.co.za.
[95] Convention for a Democratic South Africa set up in 1991, after an agreement in the National Peace Accord was signed by the Apartheid government and 18 other political organizations. Unusually in international practice, negotiations were entirely domestically deliberated. CODESA launched its first session in December 1991 at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park. Negotiations broke down in May 1992 over the major issues of majority rule and power sharing. ANC, SACP and COSATU launched rolling mass action in August. The Multi-Party Negotiating Forum (MPNF) restarted deliberations in April 1993. The first democratic elections took place one year later on 27th April 1994, heralding the end of white minority rule after 350 years.
[96] My father had an anthology of white Afrikaans poetry in which he had carefully marked next to each poet's name who had fought in the Boer War and who had not.
[97] Today in a population of 55 million, whites are 8% - half are Afrikaans speaking and half English speaking. 92% of the population is black. Africans are 82% of the total population. There were 5 Afrikaans medium universities and 5 English universities. In the 1960s black universities were turned into what whites called "bush colleges" catering for specific ethnic groups. A new university for the 2% Indian minority was created. Most of these ethnic black universities were hotbeds of activity against white rule. Many great African leaders were nurtured at Fort Hare University.

ANNEXURE : SOME BACKGROUND NOTES TO THE STORY

1. NUSAS and the White Liberals

On the UCT campus in 1960 the majority of students whom I encountered in my search for political guidance were liberals. As soon as I encountered them, I instinctively rejected white liberalism and NUSAS. The National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) was the main political vehicle on all the white English university campuses – UCT, Wits, Rhodes, Natal. Both the Liberal Party and NUSAS worked hard, though without great effect, to gain black members and to establish themselves on black campuses such as Fort Hare. Leadership always remained with whites[97]. White liberals seemed to feel comfortable as leaders in a society that is overwhelmingly indigenous African and of which they had little first hand experience.

Over the long period of colonialism and white rule, a sense of white superiority and entitlement was reinforced even in the most liberal of us. Whites felt they knew, had the answers, were responsible to lead unfolding history, blacks had to look to whites for a better life. If white liberals knew black individuals they knew them as a handful of black people who entered a white world. It was highly unusual for whites to enter a black world as equals and get to know it. Those whites who did so, often felt good about themselves, worthy of admiration.

White liberals who were overwhelmingly English speaking distanced themselves from the horrors of subjugation of the majority of South Africans by laying the blame on white Afrikaners. They ignored or were ignorant of British intervention in South Africa from the late 18th century that included one hundred years of continuous British colonial wars dispossessing Africans of their land and destroying their social, political, legal structures. They denied their legacy of being on a superior "civilizing mission" in Africa that served their economic grip on South Africa.

It seemed to me that the white liberal notion of liberty was essentially that they should open the doors into a civilized white society for some qualifying black people who had proved their worth by gaining education and property ownership. The white liberals wanted to ameliorate the conditions of the majority black people. While some black people could 'escape' their condition, the majority would remain servants and toilers. Even after they belatedly accepted universal franchise, it seemed to me that liberals wanted to have a South Africa without the excesses of Apartheid but not without white leadership. Their protest was against the worst

human rights violations and it was ahistorical. They espoused non-violence and non-racialism. Non-racialism in Liberal Party terms meant non-recognition of the national question that dominated our lives in South Africa. Not mentioning the terms 'black' and 'white'. They wanted to 'rise above' the reality that people in South Africa were privileged or dispossessed according to racial categories imposed on them by a minority race-based state over three centuries and backed up by a race-based economy and security forces. Reinforced by white attitudes and power internationally. Liberals did not seem to delve into the roots of Apartheid in South Africa – into British colonialism that set about systematically dispossessing Africans of land and culture and, when slavery formally ended in the early 19th century, they implemented instruments including pass laws and mine compounds to deliberately drive African people into burgeoning capitalism as cheap labour. It was the South Africa Act passed by the British parliament that led to an independent South Africa in 1910, giving political control to the defeated Afrikaner white minority that ultimately allowed Apartheid to be established in 1948.

The Liberal Party believed in individuals. They believed that Apartheid needed to end so that the barriers could be lifted and every individual in South Africa could have equal opportunity. The Job Reservation laws that made it illegal for African South Africans to have skills to become electricians, plumbers, or from setting up business enterprises, were, in terms of liberal thinking, a barrier to the free *laissez faire* development of capitalism. The decades of deliberately inferior education for black South Africans would simply evaporate in the face of equal opportunities and black people would be able to enter any previously white space without more ado. If they did not, it was due to their own inherent weaknesses. At the same time many liberals believed that the imperatives of capitalist economic growth would overcome Apartheid without organized struggle. Blacks would become incorporated into the ideas of freedom held by white liberals. Pernicious and prevailing white Afrikaner racism would evaporate. Now, twenty years later with all these apartheid barriers lifted, we still see ownership and management of companies overwhelmingly in white hands. It seems to me that the only explanation one is left with, is that those in control of the economy – whites – are racist, closing doors to the majority of South Africans and falling foul of the common belief amongst whites that blackness means lack of capacity.

Liberals were committed to capitalism and anti-communism motivated a great deal of their political thinking.

2. The African Resistance Movement

I was a member of the SACP for almost 50 years. But I was better known for the 3 years that I spent in a historically insignificant organization called the African Resistance Movement (ARM).

The ARM was ostensibly born in 1961 from white Liberals who were frustrated by the Liberal Party's continued insistence on non-violence despite the Apartheid State's intransigence and mounting violent repression of non-violent protest. My membership of the ARM was an anomaly. I was already a member of the underground SACP and a convinced Marxist-Leninist, also convinced by the SACP's clear-sighted analysis for the liberation of South Africa. I can only understand my joining an anti-Communist, white liberal underground ARM in terms of my own *naivete* in the extremely confusing conditions of a clandestine struggle during a period of mayhem in South Africa. I was not alone. The fact that Alan Brooks, a highly trained academic and close friend, was also a member of the SACP and of ARM simultaneously remains a conundrum. The late Alan Brooks' position is even more puzzling as he was a student in the African Studies Department under the Marxist, Prof. Jack Simons. Perhaps, unlike me, he was first a member of the ARM and then recruited into the SACP. I don't know whether, unlike me, he raised his ARM membership with his underground SACP comrades. Such things were obviously not discussed even amongst close friends in the tense security situation of the times.

The small ARM membership, mainly white, was a motley crew. Strange individuals like Alex Cox, a British businessman, appeared in the ARM from seemingly nowhere. There were two unnamed engineers who did not join the NCL (precursor of the ARM) but provided training in the use of explosives. They were friends with Monty and Myrtle Berman who seemed to have drifted out of the SACP in the wake of the 1956 Hungarian uprising. Amongst the grandiose claims the Bermans made about their centrality in the liberation movement in the early 1960s, they claimed to have almost forged unity between the ARM and uMkhonto we Sizwe through Rusty Bernstein. In any case, as soon as the first ARM bomb exploded, the Bermans left for a long stay in London. From there they sent back plastic explosives hidden under cut glass goods.

There was also John Lang, a Liberal Party member who as an ARM operative seemed to persuade the Government of Ghana to give him large amounts of cash and then disappeared together with the cash. South African intelligence operative, P. Swanepoel, research director of the NIS and author of "*The CIA in South Africa*", believed this funding came from Western Intelligence sources. Lang's support for

sabotage was driven by his desire to "*break the Communist Party's virtual monopoly of the African cause*". In an unpublished article he ventured that the South African "*conflict is between belief in the individual and those in favour of collective solutions to society's problems*". On a search of his home, the Police found letters of introduction to some significant Americans from the USA Consulate. Lang left the country in 1961, never to return.

It could not be insignificant that the most skilled trainer of ARM activists was recently from the British armed forces. Robert Watson both recruited and trained ARM members. He was an officer in the British army having served in the hotspots of Malaya and Cyprus and was also involved with the American Field Servicemen. It is said he initially expressed support for white supremacy when he arrived in South Africa in early 1962. The evidence of Lieutenant van Dyk, the leading security policeman in the subsequent ARM trials, strongly suggested that he had contact with and knew Watson before anyone was arrested for ARM activities in July 1964.

A US Intelligence report of May 1960 gave white rule another 5 years before it would begin to wane allowing the beginning of black participation in government. The Cold War was raging and it seems very likely that the West would want to ensure that the SACP/ANC forces did not go unchallenged. It is an issue, therefore, whether the security forces of the West, and in particular the CIA and MI6, were instrumental in assisting the formation of a sabotage organization in parallel to Umkhonto we Sizwe. After all these years, my view is that the ARM was an insignificant factor in the great historic mission of bringing an end to centuries of white minority rule in South Africa. A curiosity for the handful of whites who used violence against the Apartheid state. Those who were sincere and persistent in participating in its activities, reflected the poverty of analysis common amongst many progressive whites.

The end to white minority rule could only come from the majority, the subjugated led by a seasoned and renewable leadership that was nurtured on the ground, with a strategic vision and tactics forged in the realities of the day, with an understanding of history behind them and with the will and capacity to keep going no matter how great the setbacks. This was not the ARM.

3. General H.J. van den Bergh Obituary

In 1997 in an obituary Mary Braid wrote about vd Bergh –

> *When he died, Hendrik van den Bergh had been a farmer for almost two decades, quietly raising broiler chickens. But during the 1960s and 1970s, "Lang Hendrik" ("Tall Hendrik"), as the 6ft 5in police chief was known, was probably the most feared man in South Africa: the oppressive power behind the governments first of Hendrik Verwoerd, the architect of apartheid, and later, John Vorster.*
>
> *In 1963 van den Bergh founded South Africa's first secret intelligence gathering operation, the precursor to the dreaded Bureau of State Security (Boss), which he started in 1969. Boss was responsible for the apartheid regime's worst excesses, during a period when the Cold War provided the National Party with a front - the combating of international Communism - for its true mission, the prevention of black majority rule in South Africa. Van den Bergh will be remembered as the sanctioner of assassination and torture in defence of the apartheid state and as a consummate blackmailer through his vast network of spies and informers. Almost anyone who was not a rampant Afrikaner was the enemy and he cast his formidable shadow far beyond South Africa's borders, seeking out anti-apartheid activists. He is believed to have been behind the downfall of the British Liberal leader Jeremy Thorpe and Peter Hain's apparent framing for a British bank robbery.*
>
> *Van den Bergh's other main claim to fame still seemed to thrill him in old age. In the early 1960s his investigations led to the Rivonia trial which led to Nelson Mandela's life imprisonment. As recently as last month van den Bergh was insisting that Boss did not operate hit squads. But in the late 1970s he told a government commission investigating covert operations: "I have enough men to commit murder if I tell them to kill. I don't care who the prey is. These are the type of men I have."*

4. The Bogeyman Solly Sachs, Albie's father

Albie's father had a reputation as a difficult person. Even comrades were scathing of him. Albie had a difficult relationship with him. Albie found it difficult to hold his own in the presence of his strong and loud father. My father saw him as a bogeyman, dangerous. Solly Sachs was Jewish and spoke with a heavy Lithuanian accent, his head pushed forward while he peered through thick-lensed glasses, his eyes flicking with a nystagmus. Almost a caricature of an Eastern European Jewish bogeyman.

He was elected General Secretary of the Garment Workers' Union at its formation in 1927. In those early days this Union represented white Afrikaner women. These women flooded off the countryside compelled by poverty exacerbated by the Boer

War that saw their defeat in 1902. They were known at the time as part of the "*poor white problem*". They moved off the land into the cities to find work. Most Afrikaners supported Hitler during the Second World War and anti-Semitism was deeply embedded amongst them. Yet these Afrikaner white women loved Solly. They re-elected Solly as Secretary of the Garment Workers' Union year after year for 25 years. In 1952 he was banned under the newly passed Suppression of Communism Act and the garment workers came out in large numbers to demonstrate support for him as he moved into exile in London. Yet Solly had been expelled in 1933 from the then Communist Party as part of purges. Despite the adoption of the 1928 Native Republic policy, he remained a firm adherent to the notion of class war as the main contradiction spurring the struggle. Despite his expulsion from the party, he remained a staunch friend of the Soviet Union.

Solly wrote several excellent books once he was in exile. He expressed himself in passionate language making no excuse for his strongly held views. His first book "*The Choice Before South Africa*" was written with his close friend, Helen Joseph, just before he left South Africa and demonstrated Solly's romantic belief in sections of the white Afrikaner working class as a putative force for revolutionary change in South Africa. As a Manchester University Simon Senior Research Fellow he wrote "Rebel Daughters" about the Garment Workers' Union – my favourite amongst his writings. The book was published in 1956. Father Trevor Huddleston wrote an introduction. Solly's anathema for racism is clearly reflected –

> "*All over the world, millions are still subjected to indignities, persecution and oppression solely because of their racial origin or the colour of their skin. But, while in other countries racial antagonism is only a small part of the national life, it is no exaggeration to say that in South Africa it is the national life and forms the basis of the economic, social, political and cultural structure of the country.*"

Solly describes the

> "*…Nazi techniques in dealing with their opponents. In their desperate attempt to disrupt and capture the Mine Workers' Union and the Garment Workers' Union, both of which had a predominantly Afrikaner membership, they built up 'bogey men' upon whom they concentrated their fire…..In the Nationalist press, in parliament, from the pulpits of the Dutch Reformed Churches, even at meetings of the Afrikaans Cultural Societies, we were vilified and slandered.*"

Solly's counterpart in the white Mine Workers' Union, Charlie Harris was shot dead in June 1939 by a young Afrikaner Nationalist. It was no wonder that my father had heard of Solly and was alarmed that his daughter should marry the son of the "bogey man".

Throughout the Second World War Solly found himself at the interface of an ideological dichotomy within white Afrikaner politics represented in the Garment Workers' Union. The rising pro-Nazi Nationalists used their strength within the Union to attack those who wanted to side with the English in support of the war effort against Hitler's fascism. Fanatic fascism against a meek democracy. Turbulence within the Union was often visited on its Secretary, Solly Sachs, from Nationalist forces outside the Union. Solly hit back and went to the Supreme Court twelve times, never losing, and winning substantial recompense for defamation and 20,000pounds in legal costs. He won all criminal actions brought against him for Union activity.

He wrote one of the clearest analyses I have seen of General Jan Smuts whom he met and who won the white elections of 1943. Solly convincingly analysed the niceties of the divisions in white politics that brought the Nationalists to power in 1948. But his experience in the Union led him to believe that it was possible "*to change people imbued with violent race prejudice into courageous fighters for freedom and tolerance.*" …and *"after the defeat of the Nazis in 1945, the time for a radical change in the old South African way of life seemed propitious…"* By the time he left, several women from this Union had become Communists – Bettie du Toit, Johanna Cornelius, Anna Scheepers, Dulcie Hartwell who became his second wife, and others. But excluding Helen Joseph who was never a Communist despite her closeness to Solly. Solly retained an affinity for Afrikaner workers whom he believed could be won into the class struggle in South Africa.

But he knew that this would be difficult.

> "*But this [industrial] revolution has roused little interest and most white South Africans still get more emotional satisfaction from watching a black man being kicked off the pavement than from the rise of a large modern factory.*"

With Lionel Forman, Solly wrote "*The South African Treason Trial*" about the 1956 – 1961 trial of 156 leading struggle activists. The book was written and published long before the trial ended and before Lionel Forman died following heart surgery in 1959. It gives fascinating details from the trial and of conditions in South Africa at the time. "*The Anatomy of Apartheid*" a well-researched book traces the origins of Apartheid back to the middle of the 15th century and up to the Sharpeville massacre and the banning of the ANC and PAC in 1960. Solly named his first-born son Albert after Albert Nzulua a brilliant member of the CPSA from which Solly had been expelled not long before his son's birth in 1935.

5. The Way Forward : The Green Book

Towards the end of the 1970s things were changing rapidly. It was a time to regroup, to re-evaluate. At the very beginning of 1979 there was a high-level ANC consultation visit to Vietnam with its vast experience of war first against the French and then against the USA. Not only had the Vietnamese people defeated these two giant military powers but they had gained massive, unprecedented solidarity throughout the world. They had victoriously concluded a protracted struggle that combined a diversity of attack approaches both inside Vietnam and internationally. Following this consultation, an ANC Commission was elected at a combined meeting of the NEC and the Revolutionary Council in Luanda. The members of the Politico-Military Commission were OR Tambo, Joe Slovo, Joe Gqabi, Moses Mabhida, Joe Modise and Thabo Mbeki. After extensive consultation within our ranks, later in 1979 their report was produced – the Green Book. Some of the discussions in our SACP groups – on Bantustans, the nature of people's war – found their way into the Green Book.

The Green Book gave attention to the weaknesses of leadership and using as a model the structure developed in Lesotho where Chris Hani operated, it recommended an integrated political and military model of ANC work. It envisaged the strengthening of leadership structures and renewed clarity of strategic vision as a "launching-pad from which the whole spectrum of mass mobilization and organization can be approached with a new urgency and vigour." The Green Book emphasized the need for a united front of the oppressed in South Africa, led by the oppressed working class, envisaging the *"broadest possible unity of all national groups, classes and strata, organisations, groups and prominent personalities around local and national issues."* This would strengthen underground machinery by drawing in activists thrown up in mass struggle and open the way for *"the creation of a national liberation army, with popularly-rooted internal rear bases,… a key perspective of our planning in the military field. Such an army unit must, at all times, remain under the direction and control of our political revolutionary vanguard."*

The Green Book restated the vision of liberation, of freedom – with a prescient view.

> *"We believe that there can be no true national liberation without social emancipation… seizure of power by the people must be understood not only by us but also by the masses as the beginning of the process in which the instruments of state will be used to progressively destroy the heritage of all forms of national and social inequality. To postpone advocacy of this perspective until the first stage of democratic power has been achieved is to risk dominance within our revolution by purely nationalist forces which may*

see themselves as replacing the white exploiters at the time of the people's victory.
"The colonial conquest, by force of arms, robbed them of their sovereignty and of their land and transformed them into the main object of economic exploitation. The maximum mobilisation of the African people, as a community robbed of its land and sovereignty, is a fundamental pivot of the alignment of national revolutionary forces.

"The popular revulsion which the racial oppression excites, leading to pro-liberation pressures within the imperialist countries, protracted armed struggle, political mobilisation and organisation of the masses of our people into active struggle as a matter of priority.

The Green Book advocated the

•"broadest possible unity of all national groups, classes and strata, organisations, groups and prominent personalities around local and national issues…
• strengthening of a Trade Union movement creating a nation-wide popular liberation front…
• creation of a national liberation army, with popularly-rooted internal rear bases… the growth of the armed struggle depends on the rate of advance of the political struggle, the armed struggle is secondary at this time."

The Green Book set the basis for mounting liberation action that swept through the 1980s. From late 1970s and throughout the 1980s as liberation action mounted it drew increasingly desperate and violent response from the Apartheid state.

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NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE

DEMOBILISATION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that -

No **98032931BX**

Name **STEPHANIE KEMP**

Identity No **410625 0303 089** was honourably demobilised from the South African National Defence Force on **25 FEBRUARY 99** 19 .....

at **DURBAN**

Special Military Qualifications **NONE**

.....

.....

Additional Remarks **NONE**

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Place **DURBAN**

Date **25 FEBRUARY 1999**

.....
Signature of Certifying Officer

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